

PRINCETON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
Minutes of Regular Meeting of February 26, 2014– 7:30 pm
Meeting Room A, Municipal Building
400 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08540

I. Opening Statement

Adequate notice of this meeting as required by Sections 3d and 4a of the Open Public Meetings Act has been provided and filed with the municipal Clerk.

II. Fichtenbaum opened the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

Present were: Zemble, Fichtenbaum, Chorney, Rojer, Wasserman, Spindel, Welles Marcus-Levine, Birge and Crumiller

Absent was: Wasserman and Molina

III. Approval of Agenda:

A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the agenda.

IV. Minutes:

A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of February 26, 2014.

V. Public Comment:

Kip Cherry gave the Commission an update on the Transco Pipeline project saying that Williams has started their field studies but FERC is not releasing all of them. She said she has requested copies of the studies and has only received a few.

VI. Discussions and Decisions:

- a) Council Update: Crumiller stated that the proposed PEC ordinance has been presented to the subcommittee. Zemble noted that they were not very receptive to increasing the PEC powers. She said can compromise some of the items in the ordinance and at the end of the day they will agree to increase the powers of the PEC. She said they were also a bit hesitant about the PEC entering into agreements with other non-profits. Crumiller said the town Attorney is working on a re-draft of the draft that was presented.

Crumiller said the neighbors lost in the latest round of litigation regarding the Avalon Bay project. She said the town has hired its own LSRP who is reviewing the issues and will discuss his report at the March 10, 2014 Council meeting.

Fichtenbaum asked if there would be someone from the PEC that could attend that meeting to represent the PEC. Welles and Chorney volunteered.

Crumiller said she sent information via email to all of the PEC members regarding the leaf costs. She said most of the numbers are estimates. She explained the document saying side 1 are the numbers that were estimated by the Transition Task Force and side 2 are the numbers she worked with staff to get. Fichtenbaum inquired as to why there may be a savings. Crumiller said there were more frequent pick-ups in the former Boro and since consolidation it has been reduced to the former Township schedule. She noted that there has been a big outcry in the former Boro because the pick-ups are less frequent.

b) Save the Dinky Discussion:

Ms. Neumann said she appeared before the Commission last month and asked the PEC to write a letter in support of the “save the dinky” initiative. She said moving the dinky farther from town is detrimental and will cause more car traffic. She said the PEC has spoken out about the Princeton Ridge and she thinks the Commission set a precedent by doing that. She asked the PEC to consider writing a letter for this cause as well. She said Princeton University is not just moving it 480 square feet – it will be moved onto private land and people will have to walk through the campus to access it. She stated that the PEC could develop a letter that would put pressure on New Jersey Transit. She noted that in the 2012 memo that the PEC sent to the Planning Board one of the recommendations was to establish community connectivity – she asked that the PEC consider its past recommendations and consider writing a letter. Kip Cherry said there are concerns over the walkability of the town and how this will be less walkable. She said one goal is to get people out of their cars and into mass transit and by moving the dinky it puts people in their cars to drive to the new location. She said there are also long term discussions over what to do with the dinky in the future. Neumann said walkability is what the group wants restored and to preserve the right of way to where it was. Cherry noted that the numbers indicate that ridership has gone down 13% since the dinky location has moved. She said that should be a concern to the PEC. Fichtenbaum inquired as to the reasons why the ridership has decreased. She said perhaps the construction gives an impression that the station is not open. Kristen Appleget of Princeton University said that the total ridership between Princeton and Princeton Junction is actually up. She said the University implemented a free shuttle service because of the construction. She did note however that there was a decline in ridership after hurricane Sandy. She said after March 17th of this year, there will be meters in the parking lot. She also noted that the fee for a parking permit in Princeton is significantly cheaper than in Princeton Junction. Chorney asked Appleget what Princeton Universities view is on less walkability and the right-of-way. Appleget said she is part of a task force that is looking at ways to connect Alexander & Nassau Street. She said any future transit is going to serve more than people that are traveling from point A to point B. She said she does

not agree that moving the dinky station has caused less walkability; she said it is actually closer for some people. Fichtenbaum said she is concerned with all the building in the north-end of town (Merwick, Stanworth, Avalon Bay and Paul Robeson townhouses) and the dinky moving further south, that these people are not connected to mass transit. Appleget suggested that the PEC invite Ralph Witmer to a meeting to discuss the other options that are available to those people such as Tiger Transit, walking paths, FreeB etc. Fichtenbaum said she would love to have one of the PEC members attend the task force meetings. Appleget said a new task force has been formed and there may be an opportunity for a member of the PEC to be there. Birge inquired as to the most recent plans for the arts & transit development. Appleget said the plan is on the website Princeton.edu/artsandtransit. Neumann said there is not decreased walkability for everyone, but most people do come from the east side of town. She said the dinky should have gone behind the arts complex and the task force did not consider keeping the dinky where it was. Fichtenbaum said the PEC has discussed this, reviewed the arts & transit development and it stands by its memo. She said the PEC feels that they put forth what they thought was important. She said the PEC resolution recommended looking at options to increase the ridership. She said that resolution was strongly worded and a resolution is the strongest tool the PEC has to publicly state what the PEC feels is key. She also noted that she followed up on whether or not the PEC would be able to file an amicus brief and was told that it is not within the PEC's preview to do that. She said as a Commission the PEC used its tools and it wants to keep an open-line of communication with the community and Princeton University. Neumann asked if the PEC could or would be willing to send its resolution to the papers. Zemble said she is less concerned about where the dinky is and more concerned about transportation links and where it is stopping on its route. She asked what is the future or vision and how can it connect to the center of town. Fichtenbaum said she would like someone to present to the PEC or have a PEC member attend one of the task force meetings. Appleget noted that all of the task force presentation documents are located on the website. She suggested inviting Kevin Wilkes to come and speak to the PEC, he is the Chair of the task force. Cherry stated that she is very concerned about the ridership and suggested the PEC come up with ways to increase it.

c) Sustainability Calendar:

Welles stated that she thinks the idea of a sustainability calendar came up as a way for the PEC to keep track of sustainability events throughout the year, or meetings that the PEC should attend. Zemble suggested creating a Facebook page for the PEC. Crumiller noted that the PEC has a webpage on the town's website. Fichtenbaum said that any documents that need to go on the website can be emailed to Deb and she will have it posted. Landis said that the PEC can have a link from its website to the Sustainable Princeton website.

d) PEC Overview:

Spindel said she and Welles have been working to put together a description of the PEC and what it does. She said the Commission can discuss it and then a final copy will be sent to Deb to place on the website. The PEC discussed the wording with the most important inclusion being that the PEC is an “advisory” Board to many other entities and is appointed by the Mayor and Council. The document will also state the PEC’s priorities and primary focus areas. The Commission then discussed its liaison’s and who chooses what liaisons will work with the PEC. It was decided that Crumiller would go back to Council and express the PEC’s interest to have a Public Works and Engineering liaison attend each meeting. Fichtenbaum suggested that the final draft be brought to the next PEC meeting for a final approval prior to it being put on the website.

e) Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association Stream Clean-up:

Fichtenbaum said as far as she knows there have not been any definite dates for this event. She said she will have Wasserman follow-up on this.

VII. Focus Areas:

a) Broad Waste Management Ordinance: Chorney said that she met with Welles and Spindel to discuss a broad waste ordinance to see if something could be pulled together in time for the 2015 bids. She said right now garbage is paid in taxes and recycling is free through the County. She said it would make sense that if someone has to pay for their garbage, they would think about the trash that they are throwing away and may utilize the composting option more. She said they are looking at a “pay as you throw” program. She noted that every town does it differently and Princeton can choose its own options; paying for extra bags, stickers etc. She said they need to prove that its cost effective. Crumiller said this is something that she is totally in favor of, however the big obstacle will be asking people to pay for something that they now receive for free (well they think its free even though they are paying for it in their taxes). Zemble asked how much savings there would be if the compost program was more plausible. Crumiller stated that she has those numbers and she will get them to the PEC. Welles noted that towns have been doing the “pay as throw” programs since 2006. Crumiller said there would have to be a big campaign to get this idea to move forward. Landis said pushing a big “pay as throw” campaign is not a problem, its getting everyone on the same page. Crumiller suggested speaking with Hough to find out how to structure bid specs for this; she said the 2015 bid packages will go out in September. Fichtenbaum said this really has to do with the habits people have. She said the PEC needs to think about changing peoples habits; once people do that, change will come much easier. She said she doesn’t think the PEC can do everything at once (pay as you throw and mandatory composting). She said its going to take a strong outreach to the community. She

suggested that the PEC start with the “pay as you throw” program first. Landis said she is working with Janet Pellichero on this, and that she and Janet will have to show that the program will pay for itself. Fichtenbaum said the PEC should get a resolution to Council stating that they would like to see a “pay as you throw” bid in the September bid specs for the refuse hauling. Fichtenbaum suggested that either Hough or Pellichero come to the March PEC meeting. Fichtenbaum said she would speak to Wasserman about this. She said she thinks the PEC needs to set aside a big chunk of time at the next meeting to discuss this and possibly have a presentation and to develop a resolution to send to Council. Crumiller said the PEC needs to find a model from a town that doesn’t pay for garbage. Zemle said more than once that she feels strongly that the composting program should be free to the residents. Chorney said every town has a different program and Princeton could tailor the program to its specific needs.

b) Recreation Department:

Herlihy stated that the Recreation Department will now be maintaining all of the parks. She said this is an exciting thing for the Rec Dept.

c) Shade Tree Commission:

Crumiller spoke about the tree recovery plan after hurricane Sandy. She said the town will be getting 1,000 seedlings.

d) Board of Health:

Miller reported that the Board of Health is currently interviewing for a new Health Officer and hopes to have a new officer in place soon.

VIII. Adjournment:

A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Debra Rogers, Secretary

Date Approved: March 26, 2014