

PRINCETON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
Minutes of Regular Meeting of May 28, 2014– 7:30pm
Meeting Room A, Witherspoon Hall
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. Wasserman opened the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

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

Absent were: Molina, Welles and Zemble

There was one member of the public present for the discussions

III. Approval of Agenda:

A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the agenda with the amendment that the liaisons reports were moved up and talked about prior to the focus areas.

IV. Minutes:

- a) April 24, 2014: A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

V. Public Comment:

No comments were made at this point.

VI. Decisions and Discussions:

- a) **Council Updates:** Crumiller said that residents can now take textile, TV's and computers to the convenience center on River Road. She said she was having a hard time finding out what the hours were, but when she did she would pass the information on. She also noted that the new Shade Tree Ordinance would be heard at the June 16th Council meeting and invited members of the PEC to attend. Spindel said she was in favor of the ordinance and would attend the meeting, Crumiller said the recycling can are finally on Nassau Street. Chorney noted that she has not seen them and perhaps they need more labeling to ensure they are being used properly. Additionally, Crumiller discussed the Landscaper and PEC ordinance. She said the Landscaper ordinance did not pass because they wanted to add language regarding wage theft – however the PEC ordinance did pass with some amendments. Wasserman discussed went over the ordinance

and discussed what was removed and what remained. Lastly, Crumiller discussed the tonnage report. Wasserman said the way the report is set up is it very difficult to come up with true numbers because the trash is charged “per tonnage” and the compost is charged “per person”. Chorney and Wasserman both agreed that the next RFP should have costs for both trash and compost and not a per person charge. Fichtenbaum noted that the spreadsheet does not help the PEC and its push for composting.

- b) **Food & Water Watch:** Lauren Petrie spoke to the PEC about developing an ordinance regarding the ban of fracking. She said the last time she appeared before the PEC she was there to get the town to pass a resolution against fracking, however this time she would like the town to pass an ordinance banning fracking. She said other surrounding towns and Middlesex County have all passed ordinances. She noted that even if the State does not pass a law banning fracking, towns can! Wasserman said when he spoke to Solow about it; Solow said it is not permitted so we don’t have to worry about it. However, Crumiller pointed out that someone can go the variance route to obtain the approval. Petrie said that is exactly why it is important that towns pass these ordinances banning fracking, this is to protect the residents. She also noted that there is a gas line that runs underneath Mercer County and could, in the future, be used for fracking if this is not banned. Fichtenbaum noted that the ordinance can also ban fracking waste. Petrie noted that the “waste” portion is much harder to ban, and noted that Governor Christie vetoed a fracking waste bill. She said she will draft a memo stating that local ordinances are legal and will provide a copy of the ordinance that was passed in Highland Park. A motion was made and seconded the Commission voted unanimously to approve the recommendation to ban fracking in Princeton and to use Highland Park's ordinance as the template. Spindel said the fracking waste should also be included. Petrie said the town can include a statement “we also support the ban of fracking waste”. Miller also said he thinks the waste should be included. A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to include fracking waste in the recommended ordinance. Fichtenbaum noted that it would be good to reach out to some of the Environmental Commissions in other towns and do some PR work on this ordinance. She said he really feels it would prove to be beneficial.
- c) **Chairs Report:** Wasserman discussed changing the June meeting from the 25th to the 18th – everyone approved of the change. Wasserman also discussed the Environmental Film Festival networking breakfast that he attended with Spindel and Fichtenbaum. Spindel said the reason for the meeting was to promote the Environmental Film Festival but it was also a gathering of unique individuals. She said they asked for the PECs support for the Environmental Film Festival and it also exposed the library to a broader discussion about the environment. She said a lot of ideas were shared and she thinks the PEC will be linking other organizations to the PEC website. She said the PEC should do some public relations about this in the local papers.

VII. Reports from Liaisons:

- a) **Board of Health:** He said Avalon bay was discussed at the last meeting and Kiser and West were in attendance giving reports. He said there will be a public meeting on June 2nd with representatives from various departments. Crumiller noted that it will be an informative meeting for the residents with staff members there so they can ask questions. Miller said it would be beneficial if the state officials would come but most likely they will not. Miller also noted that he thinks our local officials are doing a great job with the Avalon bay site and the oversight that they are providing.
- b) **Sustainable Princeton:** Christine Symington said that SP will be having 2 events – a great ideas breakfast and the second is an energy panel with people who participated in the energy audit but never proceed with the recommended work. She also noted that SP is on target for submitting the Silver Certification application for the town; SP received a \$15,000 grant; they are getting a paid intern for the summer and if the PEC would like to utilize the intern, let SP know.
- c) **Planning Board:** Birge said there is nothing to report.
- d) **Recreation:** There has not been a new liaison appointed.
- e) **Shade Tree Commission:** Crumiller that the Shade Tree Commission is looking into the pest that is invading the Ash trees and is trying to come up with a solution. Crumiller also noted that she will be attending an energy seminar at Rutgers – the town is looking at clean energy options and possibly partnering with the schools to bring residents this option.

VIII. Focus Areas:

- a) **Leaf Ordinance Subcommittee:** Wasserman said that he, Fichtenbaum and Zemle recently met to discuss this. He noted that the waste hauler was bought out and the hauler will be sending out a mailing to the residents and offered some space to the PEC on the mailing. He said they tried to come up with something short but educational about the leaves and the benefits of keeping them on their properties. Fichtenbaum said it should convey that it's best to keep the leaf nutrients on the lawn and not in the waterways. There was a brief discussion on the wording and Wasserman said that he will bring the suggestions back to Karen and come up with a powerful statement. Fichtenbaum said the point should be to get people to mulch, compost or bag the leaves and not put them in the street. Wasserman suggested that the PEC talk to the Landscapers and residents to discuss this. He said he thought maybe the PEC could devote its July meeting to this. He said he wants the Commission to think about what the discussion should be and the hurdles associated with the discussion. He said he and Zemle have been able to pull a list of landscapers (the list is about 3 years old) and they would like to reach out to them and invite them to the meeting. Wasserman said he would like the PEC to think about this and it will be discussed and finalized at the next meeting. Spindel suggested having people register – this way whether they show or not the PEC would be gathering name and telephone number information. Fichtenbaum said the PEC needs the landscaper expertise. She said this would be a great opportunity to start the conversation about leaves.

Board Waste Management Ordinance: Chorney noted that Sustainable Princeton had its first waste committee meeting and it was decided that the committee will focus on four areas: increasing business recycling, presenting zero waste resources on the Sustainable Princeton website, increasing compost awareness through a public relations campaign, and a town/university initiative. She said she would like to see compost bins on Nassau Street and at the University. She said they are working hard with the business recycling and trying to help them with more space. She said enforcement has come up – she suggested that as part of the yearly inspections of the Health Officer or the Fire Safety Official they also check to see if they are recycling. She asked if the PEC would like to come out with a recommendation on this. She said what should the PEC waste committee be doing to get the Health Officer or the Fire Safety Official to do the enforcement. She also said when the 2014-2015 waste RFP comes out that it should ask for waste and compost numbers for each resident. Crumiller said regarding the waste contract she thinks the town is just going to re-up the current contract because they have a really good rate right now. Chorney said that it is very possible that if everyone composts, the town will save a lot of money. She said it is much cheaper to compost but we want to see the numbers in the RFP. Wasserman said the PEC believes that based on the tonnage report the waste is costing the town money and composting would save the town money. Birge suggested that someone meet with the Administrator regarding adding the enforcement piece to either the Health Officer or the Fire Safety Officer. She said she does not believe that it is that easy to do. Wasserman said they will coordinate another meeting and invite the Health Officer. Chorney said that we were going to write a memo to the public works department to ask about expanded waste/compost numbers and consideration of an RFP for town wide composting contract.

- b)
- c) **SPRAB:** No report.

IX. Adjournment:

A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:32 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Debra Rogers, Secretary

Date Approved: June 18, 2014