

PRINCETON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
Minutes of Regular Meeting of September 16, 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, Spindel, Marcus-Levine and Crumiller

Absent were: Miller

There were no members of the public present.

III. Approval of Agenda:

Wasserman noted that he wanted to add the Bag Fee Memo and the PEC membership to the discussion items for this agenda.

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

IV. Minutes:

- a) July 23, 2014: A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

V. Public Comment: There was no public present.

VI. Discussion/Decisions:

- a) Council Updates: Crumiller noted that the Fracking ordinance would be heard by the Planning Board and then if it is approved it will come to Council. She noted that this ordinance would be added to the Land Use ordinance.

She also noted that the hospital demolition would be beginning on Friday and the town will continue to pay for an LSRP to be on site.

She stated that there will be a Leaf & Brush presentation by Public Works on October 13th and she encouraged members of the PEC to attend this meeting. The PEC then had a discussion about attending more Council meetings to get their voice heard on various environmental issues. Wasserman asked of the

“Leave the Leaves” campaign would be added to this discussion. Crumiller said she was not sure if it would be discussed or not. Wasserman said he would reach out to Hough and discuss it with him. Crumiller did note that DPW has started enforcing the Brush and Leave ordinance. She said they will leave 2 warning letters and then a violation if it is not mitigated. A discussion then took place about the Robo calls that DPW has been doing to advise residents of the schedule of the Brush & Leaf pick-up schedule. Landis suggested that perhaps at the end of the message something could be added stating that it is more environmentally friendly to “leave the leaves” on the property. Spindel volunteered to draft a memo to Council suggesting that something is added to the Robo call asking residents to “leave the leaves”.

Crumiller discussed the design of the detention basins and suggested that the PEC write a memo to Council favoring the naturalization of the basins. Fichtenbaum said she has been advocating of this for a few years. In fact, she said, a former PEC member Judith Applegate was working on this before her departure from the PEC. Fichtenbaum volunteered to draft a memo.

- b) Wasserman said with respect to the PEC attending more Council meetings, he suggested the PEC formulate a list of topics that could be spoken about at the meetings. Fichtenbaum stated that whether it is leaves, waste in general or energy issues they should be on the front burner. She noted that a task force will be formed in the near future to gain an inventory of the publically owned properties and she thinks it is a great opportunity for the PEC to speak out of green building issues. Wasserman said he will start an email thread about this to gain ideas about topics.
- c) **Leaf & Brush Memo:** Wasserman said draft memo was circulated to the Mayor, Bruschi and Hough. He said this has not been discussed at Council yet and he wants to finalize this document tonight so it can be put in to final form and sent out. Wasserman read the memo to the PEC and then there was a discussion over some of the wording. A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the amended memo.
- d) **Landscaper Meeting Debriefing:** Wasserman discussed the meeting with the landscapers saying the 12 replied that they would be attending and only 2 showed up. He said the 2 that were there suggested that we try and have this meeting again in the winter months. He said when they discussed the bagged leaves and leaving the leaves on the property the landscapers had the following comments: tiny lawns are hard to accommodate the leaves; using the Ecological Facility is not an easy task; corrals take up a lot of room on a lot; bagging can cost the homeowner a lot of money because they have to charge for the extra time to do it; people want perfect lawns and don’t want leaf piles all over; these are not practical options for the elderly; having pick-ups on Mondays are hard for the homeowners and the landscapers because they do not work on weekends and the leaves cannot be out before 7 a.m.; and only the larger landscaping companies actually take the leaves away. Wasserman said they tried to come up with ways to reach the landscapers and it was suggested that there be some sort

of incentives such as mulch and mower raffle; feeding their crews; mower accessories and/or gift certificates. Wasserman said he will be working with Sustainable Princeton to possibly use one of their interns to actually go out and speak with the landscapers.

- e) **Princeton Ridge Stewardship Plan:** Wasserman noted that this topic is on the September 22, 2014 Council agenda. He said he has not had time to read the whole document but was thankful for the Executive Summary. He reviewed the summary with the PEC members and noted that 1.1 million dollars will be needed to implement the plan with most of the money going towards deer management on the ridge. He also went over the concentration area on the map so everyone knew what area this is going to encompass. After discussing the plan, it was decided that the PEC would not take a stand on this at this time. They wanted to take more time to learn and understand the plan before endorsing it. He did however, encourage PEC members to attend the 9/22/14 Council meeting to learn more.
- f) **Bag Fee Memo:** Chorney said this fee will be imposed on single use bags (not including veggie bags) and will eventually include paper bags. She said the County has been very instrumental in this and will place a non-binding question of the referendum in November to see how people feel about this. She said this campaign is to encourage people to use re-usable bags so the plastic does not end up in the landfills and the waterways. She said she feels the PEC can support this memo. She noted one important factor is that the “fee” will go back to the merchants unlike a “tax” that would go to the state. Landis noted that the specifics regarding the actual fee have not been worked out yet, but what is important is that the residents vote yes for this and the details can be worked out at a later date. She noted that this is a countywide initiative and Sustainable Princeton is supporting this and she thinks the PEC should as well. There were some wording changes that were made to the document. A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the amended memo.
- g) **PEC Membership:** Wasserman said that a number of PEC members have given him names of potential PEC members and he suggested that these people go to the town’s website and fill out the volunteer application and if they would like to speak with him he would be happy to talk to them. He said Council will be making the final decision not him.

VII. Updates and Regular Business:

- a) **Chairs Report:** Wasserman said from 9/26-9/28 will be the Battlefield’s 350th anniversary. He encouraged everyone to review the events and attend if possible.

Wasserman said that Gus Esher contacted him about solar farms he wants the town to consider. He said he will give feedback to the PEC after he speaks with him.

Crumiller noted that the Battlefield Housing will be heard at the Planning Board on Thursday.

Wasserman also noted that he spoke with Simon and Hough about the costs of the composting and the garbage.

- b) **Broad Waste Subcommittee:** Chorney suggested that the PEC consider developing a Waste Memo similar to that of the Leaves. She said the Sustainable Princeton Waste Committee has been working with businesses about recycling. She said they will also be meeting with Princeton University about having recycle bins on both sides of Nassau Street. She said they have also been working on a plan to get the whole town on board with the composting. She said they have 1,000 people signed up and they are working on a strategy to get the other 7,000 households to participate.
- c) **SPRAB:** Molina said that Princeton Shopping Center was there for a minor site plan approval for signs and she suggested that they consider planting native species around the signs.
- d) **Sustainable Princeton:** Landis said they resubmitted actions to Sustainable New Jersey this week to get points and they should hear about the Silver Certification soon. She said they also worked with Public Works to obtain the municipality's fleet inventory. She said they wanted to see if the vehicles could be changed over to more sustainable vehicles but she said she doesn't think that will happen. The town doesn't have any mechanics to work on this type of vehicle. She said she is going to speak with the University to see if the town could utilize their mechanics. She said there was a landlord meeting about the business recycling in town and she and others walked the town with Jan Weinberg to learn about the challenges involved with business recycling. She also said that she sent out a diversity survey to the Board and Commissions and noticed there is a lower membership among the black and Hispanic populations. She noted that Sustainable Princeton's twitter following is going through the roof and she is very pleased.
- e) **Climate March:** Fichtenbaum noted that the Climate March would be taking place in NYC on Sunday and she encouraged everyone to attend the important event.

VIII. Adjournment: A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra Rogers, Secretary

Date Approved: