

PRINCETON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
Minutes of Regular Meeting of January 28, 2015– 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. Fichtenbaum opened the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Present were: Fichtenbaum, Zemble, Molina, Chorney, Marcus-Levine, Walker, Miller, Birge and Simon

Absent were: Wasserman, Spindel

There were approximately 2 members 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 Fichtenbaum may need to rearrange the order of business to accommodate some of the people attending to discuss certain topics.

IV. Minutes:

a) The December 2014 minutes were never distributed.

V. Public Comment: Daniel Harris said he is in attendance to comment on the Bag Ordinance. He said this has been in the works for years and based on many models from around the country. He said he would like to see the PEC support this and he is delighted that the Commission has it on the agenda.

VI. Discussion and Decisions:

a) Administrative Matters:

- i. **Vice Chairman:** A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to appoint Stephanie Chorney as Vice Chairman of the PEC for the year 2015.
- ii. **Secretary:** A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to appoint Debra Mercantini as the Secretary of the Commission for the year 2015.
- iii. **SPRAB:** A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to appoint Dana Molina as the PEC representative to SPRAB for the year 2015.

b) Council Updates: Simon suggested that the PEC have a liaison on the Board of Health. Fichtenbaum said she would like to defer that to the next meeting so she

and Wasserman have time to look into the legalities of that. Simon discussed the Bike Lane Ordinance for Hamilton Avenue and how a majority of the neighbors are not in favor of it because they will be losing parking spaces on the street. He said there will be a neighborhood meeting that will be publically noticed so that the residents have a change to voice their opinions; however no formal action will be taken at that meeting. He said the area under discussion is on Hamilton Avenue between Harrison Street and Snowden Lane, approximately 1,700 sf. He also stated that Council members give a report at each meeting, so if there is something that the PEC would like him to mention he would be happy to do so.

- c) **Bag Ordinance Discussion:** Suri went over the ordinance and stated that every district but district 3 voted yes on the county referendum to introduce a single use bag fee. There was a discussion about the ordinance and one of the main concerns was the welfare exemption and how it would be enforced. Simon noted that the welfare exemption is very important to Council. It was suggested that the Health and Human Service Dept offer education to the public about this ordinance and the exemption that is available to SNAP participants. The Commission then discussed the legality of a bag fee versus a bag refund and whether or not the Merchants who currently give credits to consumers for multi-use bags will be able to continue to do that if this ordinance is adopted. The Commission said it is their understanding that those merchants will be able to continue to do so even if this ordinance is in place. Simon also strongly suggested that there is some sort of outreach to the merchants to get their opinions of this ordinance before it brought to Council. He also suggested that the ordinance be revised to remove the Mayor as the enforcer and change it to the Administrator and the town has a Borough form of government where the Council relies on the Administrator. Fichtenbaum has some questions about the ordinance. First she stated that the ordinance states that the multi-use bag must be made of recycled material, how will that be enforced? She asked they the bags have to have handles? Suri stated that the bags usually note that it is made of recycled material and she stated that the ordinance states that the bag must be able to handle a certain weight so it is easier if it has handles. Simon stated that the wording should be clear that any programs the merchants are currently offering will still be available. Simon also noted that when it comes to Outreach and Education, the Council will ask the Administrator to determine the cost of this and then Council will decide whether or not to pursue it. Fichtenbaum said she wholeheartedly recommend that the PEC request Council to approve this ordinance. A motion was made and seconded that the Commission enthusiastically support this ordinance and recommend Council support and adoption of this ordinance.
- d) **Transco Pipeline:** Fichtenbaum stated that she and Wasserman are waiting for feedback from people in the community who are providing testimony. It was asked if Council will be providing testimony. Simon said they have submitted numerous items but he does not know if they will be providing further testimony. Fichtenbaum stated that the PEC needs to know what type of comment the DEP is requesting. Simon said that he can inquire what the town has submitted so far to FERC and whether or not that has also been submitted to DEP.

- e) **Leaf & Brush Memo:** Chorney said the leaf & brush and waste memos have been submitted to Council. She said she would like to mesh all of the ideas together and send the final recommendations to Council so they can be included in the new waste ordinance that will be adopted this year. Simon said staff has not reviewed the memos yet, specific to Hiltner's request. He said the resident's feels as though their services have been reduced (especially in the former boro) and this request is to tighten it further and he feels that it is problematic. He said because this plan is to add a service that includes yard waste and compost, it will drive the cost up and that is not something that will be favored at this point. Hiltner said this proposal has evolved over time. He said his proposal is to use roll-out carts; these carts are used throughout the county and are much more effective. He said the carts will have lids where as the recycle cans do not and debris flies all over the place and the plastics end up in the waterways which are detrimental to the health of the residents. He said people are not lifting these cans, they are on wheels and roll and then a truck will come pick it up. The truck will have arms lifts on them and that also reduces manpower. Simon noted that the memo that was sent to Council was only for leaf and brush and did not include food waste. Hiltner said the food waste was added because it is something that can be added in the future. He said with the rollout carts, the residents will be able to have weekly pickups and after a storm the town could do a large pickup if needed for the large items and trees. Fichtenbaum said the conversation should be about leaf and brush only and not include food waste at this point. Hiltner said he thinks the town should give this a try. He said staff has given a big "no" to this because of costs – he said the Commission should be very skeptical of staff as they will just say no to this. He said he has been trying to get numbers from staff and it has been very difficult. Fichtenbaum stated that staff has been working on the numbers and has provided information to the PEC and has always worked with the PEC to get the information that is requested. Simon noted that staff has provided costs to him, and they have said that the leaf and brush costs are approximately \$600,000.00 per year. Chorney noted that the PEC would like some feedback from Council and also how it will be implemented. Fichtenbaum stated said the PEC should look at Hiltner's memo and see if it can be incorporated into the PEC memo. She said the PEC should return to this conversation in the future and determine how these ideas can be meshed. Molina stated that the trucks used for the rollout bins are much larger than the current trucks, costs more money, ruin the roads and the curbing with the arm lifts and a main goal of the PEC is to reduce leaf pickup. She said the town needs a roadmap for leaf and brush pickup.
- f) **Development Application Review Committee:** Fichtenbaum reviewed the memo; she said there were 14 recommendations for the applicant. The PEC held a brief discussion about the memo. Fichtenbaum described the difference between the neon lighting and the illuminated lights and stated that the applicant was well within its rights to have the lighting. The commission raised some concerns about the storage of waste on the site. Simon noted that the numerical sequence of the memo needs to be revised. A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the memo.

- g) **Board of Health:** Miller noted that the Board of Health would like to have a PEC liaison. He also noted that the Board of Health did not think that the leaves and brush were a health and safety issue but he will bring it up again.
 - h) **Sustainable Princeton:** Landis noted that the Sustainable Princeton Leadership Awards would be on Wednesday January 29m, 2015 and she encouraged everyone to attend.
- VII.** Adjournment: A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra Mercantini, Secretary

Date Approved: February 25, 2015