



**Princeton Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Meeting of Wednesday, February, 22 2023 at 7:00 p.m.**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
**Princeton, NJ 08540**

**Land Acknowledgement:** "We gather today on the land of the Lenni Lenape. As members of the Princeton community, we aspire to show appreciation, respect, and concern for all peoples and our environment. We acknowledge the genocide and continuous displacement of indigenous peoples and the harm inflicted upon the indigenous communities and people of color across the country. We honor the Lenape and other Indigenous caretakers of these lands and waters, the elders who lived here before, the Indigenous today, and the generations to come. We further acknowledge the millions of enslaved Africans and their descendants on whose backs this nation was created."

**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 Princeton Clerk.

Meeting Attendees: Role	Team Member	Invited	Attended
PEC Chair	Tammy Sands	x	x
PEC Vice Chair	Anne Soos	x	x
PEC Commissioner Alt. 1	Chiara Smorada	x	x
PEC Commissioner Alt. 2	Randy Rutberg	x	x
PEC Commissioner	Lisa Marcus Levine	x	x
PEC Commissioner	Fredi Pearlmutter	x	x
PEC Commissioner	Inga Reich	x	x
PEC Commissioner	Abel Smith	x	absent
PEC Commissioner	Zenon Tech-Czarny	x	absent
PEC Board Secretary	Eva Herzog	x	x
Board of Health Liaison	Rick Strauss	x	x
Sustainable Princeton	Ludmer; Symington	x	x
Council Liaison	Eve Niedergang	x	x
Open Space Manager	Cindy Taylor	presenter	x



Ecotone	Ben Eisenhardt	presenter	x
Ecotone	Ryan Gibson	presenter	x
Planning Director	Justin Lesko	x	x
Deputy Administrator/Municipal Engineer	Deanna Stockton	x	x
Shade Tree Commission	Sandra Chen	x	x
Planning Board Chair	Louise Currey Wilson	x	x
Public/Guests	Janet Stern	x	x
Public/Guests	Sarah Falk	x	x
Public/Guests, Rogers Refuge	Lee Varian	x	x
Public/Guests	Erica Mosner	x	x
Public/Guests	Ian Gray	x	x
Public/Guests	Elena Williams	x	x
Public/Guests	Bob Honore	x	x
Public/Guests	Richard Rein	x	x
Public/Guests	RK Tangen	x	x
Public/Guests	Evie Timberlake	x	x
Public/Guests	Eleni Litt	x	x
Public/Guests	Steve Hiltner	x	x

**I. Approval of Agenda (Sands)**

Approved with following modification: section *VI Reports* moved before *V d Development Plan*

Motion to approve: Marcus-Levine; Second: Soos

→ unanimous approval

**II. Approval of Minutes (Sands)**

a. 25 January 2023

Motion to approve: Marcus-Levine; Second: Pearlmutter

→ unanimous approval



### III. Public comment

None

### IV. Council Report (Niedergang)

Postponed until next meeting due to ERI presentation and development plan review.

### V. Discussion & Decisions

#### a. 2023 Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) (Cindy Taylor & Ecotone, Inc.)

- Cindy Taylor (Open Space Manager, reporting to Deana Stockton) introduced herself, her background and role and introduced the goals of the meeting and the ERI; Ecotone LLC (Ryan Gibson) presented the 2023 ERI activities and timelines; the presentation can be accessed on the PEC website:

<https://www.princetonnj.gov/DocumentCenter/View/12814/Princeton-Municipality-Environmental-Resource-Inventory-2023-Presentation-from-22-Feb-2023-PDF>

<https://www.princetonnj.gov/DocumentCenter/View/12815/Environmental-Resource-Inventory-Activities-2023-Princeton-Municipality-and-Ecotone-LLC-Presentation-from-22-Feb-2022>

The recording can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/cymQRjbrFWs>

The 2023 Recreation & Open Space map can be found here:

<https://www.princetonnj.gov/DocumentCenter/View/12757/Princeton-Recreation-and-Open-Space-Map-PDF?bidId=>

- Ecotone asked to gain Public feedback on Questions regarding Princeton's Environmental resources and knowledge or data to contribute to the ERI process
- Ecotone explained which analyses are being done in 2023 (i.e. update, complement and add to work done for 2010) and summarized current status as follows:
  - *Demographic data:* Comparison to 2010 ERI (based on 2000 data) to



record changes (using newly available 2020 data)

- *Geology, Topography, Soils*: No relevant changes as expected (analysis mostly completed)
- *Land Use*: will include brand new data sets which will include vacant land, water, wetlands, forest, pervious and impervious surfaces, among other data
- *Hydrology*: no major updates compared to 2010 on drinking water sources; more details on type of water areas in Princeton incl. data from NJ State and Rutgers on vernal pools, dams/basin, streams, wetlands/ponds/lakes will be included
- *Vegetation*: new tools can now be used for mapping; historic aerials to be used as references are of interest → Ecotone asked everyone to provide available reference data to come forward (**Action item**); street tree inventory will be done and available within 1 month
- *Climate*: new 2019 numbers might be feasible based on new science available; will allow updating with most recent data on rainfall, storm frequency, temperatures, and growing season. Data will be useful for predicting potential climate related changes (e.g. species, forest change); completion expected by late summer/fall
- *Connectivity*: proximity tools can be run from this data to show which neighborhoods are most connected or underserved, enables habitat connectivity to be analyzed and can be used for Masterplan by municipality
- *Wildlife & Habitat*: Covers degree of change and spread; mostly using crowdsourcing data sources
- *Value and Equity*: Will allow analysis of green space deserts (more than ½ mile to the nearest green space), and affordable housing locations to ensure equity for residents.
- *Critical areas*: which lands are best kept for conservation and which offer unique habitats. This chapter can provide blueprint for the community for lands most important to conserve
- Majority of data is available publicly, can be downloaded, and respected references will be included in the ERI Appendices

→ For additional information and details, please refer to respective documents on PEC website

- The last Municipality of Princeton ERI was completed in Jan 2010 and is available on the Princeton website: [Environmental Resources Inventory for the Township and Borough of Princeton \(princetonnj.gov\)](https://www.princetonnj.gov/EnvironmentalResourcesInventoryfortheTownshipandBoroughofPrinceton)



**Q&A on 2023 ERI:**

Q: Tammy L Sands: Asked Ryan Gibson (Ecotone) to briefly explain 'crowdsourcing' such as the iNaturalist app

A: Data collected by non-professionals in the public; Ecotone will use data that is verified (e.g. by 3 other people that agreed to the data input)

Q: Lee Varian ( from Roger's Refuge): Is the new open space map available online today?

A: Cindy Taylor confirmed it will be available online by end of the week; to note, there will be some changes to the 2010 map numbers as buildings will not be included in the calculations of open space which are therefore more accurate now;

Q: Erica Mosner (Resident of Princeton Community Village): expressed her hopes that the village doesn't get overlooked in the ERI analyses; residents are very conscious of these issues and would be happy to help and participate

A: Cindy Taylor will get in touch to talk about data collection in the village and identification of potential underserved areas; Eve Niedergang will help to connect

Q: Louise Currey Wilson: Was interested in attention to urban tree canopies - public right of way along streets as environmental resource; concerns about loss of trees such as Ash, Red Oaks; Asks if there will be an inventory and vulnerability assessment incl. scale of loss? Information would help to informing long-term plans (i.e. 50 year plans rather than 10 year plans) and help to make decision on land use

A: Cindy Taylor: Municipality arborist is overseeing the street tree inventory data; areas lacking tree cover will be looked at; vulnerability data will include Ash study by High School students (% forest loss and hot spots to identify restoration focus); Ryan Gibson echoed and confirmed

Comment: Niedergang highlighted the availability of deer information collected internally (incl. Inventory by Princeton graduate student) which could be provided if deemed useful; highlighted importance of Environmental Justice aspects of new ERI;

**b. Stream Cleanup 2023 -location (Sands/Smith)**

PEC partners with Watershed Institute for Stream Clean-up:

Date: Sat April 22, 9-11 am, Location: Hilltop park



Participants will have to register → link will be coming out soon and posted in Municipality Newsletter

### **c. Annual Goals Status & Updates (All)**

#### **Green house Tour (Lisa Marcus-Levine):**

- There will be in-person tour and separate video component; working with Sustainable Princeton; will identify houses that will offer most features; PDS might be prime source for video editing (3-6 min videos describing what people can do in their own homes)
- Expected Date: end of September 2023;

#### **Development Plans (Lisa Marcus-Levine):**

- Site tour/walk through at Hun School on 27 Feb 2023 at 4pm to help with the review of their development application; Memo sent out to PEC; tour is not mandatory but considered informative and beneficial  
*Action item:* Hun needs to know number of people expected to attend, intended participants to inform Marcus-Levine/Herzog by Friday morning
- Soos inquired about the possibility of site visit of 217 Witherspoon project to better understand feasibility and scope; Marcus-Levine will ask Kerry Philipps, Secretary Planning Department if possible (*Action item*)
- 1 additional development application by Princeton University coming up
- Sands explained importance that everyone in PEC participates and comes forward with their recommendations; exception are conflicts of interest (e.g. no biased input due to personal relationships); Niedergang highlighted that legal council is available if needed to clarify any potential conflicts

#### **Open Space update (Inga Reich):**

- No communication regarding the next Open Space Community Science Event with Rogers Refuget as yet; Reich to discuss with Tech-Czarny to confirm date (*Action item*)

#### **Climate responsible landscaping - Microforest (Randye Rutberg):**

- Report on meeting with Princeton Public Schools and identification of potential parcel available at the high school; next step includes definition on next steps and action items;
- Agreement that the drafted guidance document needs to be updated and location needs confirmation; need to clarify process of location designation and grant dates by public school in order to partner and help to progress (*Action item*)
- Niedergang cautions that process may be complex due to dependencies with other project elements and partners involved

#### **Invasive Species (Anne Soos):**

- Next 2-3 weeks for next invasive species to be published in Spring



**Climate Justice Focus - Redding Circle Detention Basin (Tammy L Sands):**

- Deadline of one grant was missed and housing authority took initiative to hire Princeton Hydro to analyze the basin;

**Community Energy (Anne Soos):**

No new information to date;

The town's consultant, Gabel Associates, is monitoring the electricity supply markets for when the conditions might be favorable for the municipality to request quotes for another round of the PCRE program. Niedergang confirmed the council would be enthusiastic if Gabel says that the time is right. (Action item)

**Water Quality (Chiara Smorada)**

- List of questions for drinking water survey will be shared with PEC commissioners (Action item);
- Contact with NJ American Water to understand how they test and plan to prepare article to inform public and understand public perception;

**White Paper:**

- Chair takes on ownership in relation to long term goals that will explore Renewable Alternatives & Other Sustainable Methods as well as include life cycles of PEC recommendations.

**VI. Reports:**

**a. Board of Health (BOH Representative Rick Strauss)**

- BOH is taking on the lead pipe issue that has been mandated by the state

**b. Sustainable Princeton (Jenny Ludmer/ Christine Symington)**

- Ludmer: Sustainable Jersey - Municipality has been participating since 2019(?); 23 actions that are expiring and 23 new ones to bring in (first deadline this weekend; next deadline May 12)
- Symington: Sustainable Princeton - Town aims to get certified for sustainability actions; Events: April 15 10am-2pm Recycling Day (styrofoam, batteries); partnering with Morvan to have Earth Day event on April 22nd with workshops on how to convert trash bin into rain barrel or composting bin, master gardener, backyard chicken benefits for upcycling, electric lawn equipment demo, Princeton High School Bike Club Bike repairs,

**c. Flood and Storm Water Commission (Chiara Smorada)**

- Smorada provided update from the FSWC meeting
- Sands: DRCC (Delaware Raritan Canal Commission) - PEC should



keep an eye on due its major impact (**Action item**)

**d. Planning Board** (Sands on behalf of Tech-Czarny)

- Hobson College Application was approved

**e. Waste Transition Team** (Anne Soos)

- New garbage cans are being delivered and should be completed by end of the week;
- announcements for old trash cans to be collected by trash or landscapers - should also be in municipality newspaper; also referred to Sustainable Princeton Demo as announced above
- Organics recycling discussions ongoing, nothing definitive to report yet

**f. Recreation/CP South** (Fred Pearlmutter)

- Steering committee Kick-off took place (about 20 people attending); most discussion on potential use of the park itself; Rather large area mapped as wetlands which needs to be verified; Suggested to committee to include Sustainable Princeton as environmental advocates; suggested to committee to include flora as discussion topic;
- Next tentative meeting at end of March; overall process expected to take about 18 months;
- Sands highlighted the importance of PEC connection to Recreation Department

**V. d. Development Plan Review** (Marcus-Levine & Reich)

Lanwin at Herrontown (planning board request)

Major Development/subdivision

Block 1001/Lots 1, 2 & 14

- Motion to approve memo to send to Planning Director and Board: Reich; Second: Marcus → unanimous approval
- Final Memo can be found here:  
<https://www.princetonnj.gov/DocumentCenter/View/12806/Princeton-Environmental-Commission-Memo-Regarding-Lanwin-Development-Herrontown-Road-PDF>

**Any other Business:**

- Reminder all upcoming regular meetings will be at 7 pm virtually; time of special meeting may vary depending on availability or participants needed to form quorum

**VII. Adjournment**

Move to approve: Pearlmutter; Second: Rutberg → unanimous approval