

**PRINCETON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of Regular Meeting, March 24, 2021– 7:30 pm**  
**Virtual Zoom Meeting,**  
**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. Sands opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m.**

**Present were:** Sands, Walker, Niedergang, Zemble, Tech-Czarny, Marcus-Levine, Fichtenbaum, Watson, Persky, Soos, Symington, Jones, Hodach-Avalos (BOH)

**Absent:** None

**Also in attendance:** James Purcell, Deanna Stockton, Evan Moorhead, Mia Sacks, Michelle Pirone Lambros, Catherine Eiref, Barbara Ajami, Tineke Thio, Peter Tovar, Jeffrey Bergman, Hanan, Sylvie Scheeren, Mary Clurman, Kim Peterson, Paul, Julie Ambra, Elizabeth Samios, Katherine Murt, Jerry N, Lietta Kahn, Krystal Knapp, Edgar Madsen, E Tuan, Linda Kinkler, Jerson, Mary Wilde, Jie, Elliot Krauss, Faith Bahadurian, Virginia Kerr, Eric, Linda, Apple, Jon Durbin, Wendy Mager, Alice Artzt, Xiao Hua, Aaron Burt, Erin, Ria, Jiyan, James Healey, Dori Perrucci, Nancy, Elaine Green, Deborah Hunsinger, Rita Murray, Scott Sillars, M. Gaynor, SA, Joel Schwartz, Beth Yakoby, Nir Yakoby, Linda Gilmore, Will Price

**III. Approval of Agenda:** A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the agenda with the amendment that the development application be placed last on the agenda.

**IV. Minutes:**

**a) February 24, 2021 – Special Meeting**

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

**V. Public Comment:**

There was no public comment at this point.

**VI. Discussion/Decisions:**

**a) Council Update:** Niedergang stated that there is no available funding for the update to the ERI (Environmental Resource Inventory) this year and it will be placed for consideration in next year's budget. Applications have been submitted for the Open Space Manager position and it is hoped to have some progress to report on next month. With regards to the budget, the municipality is looking at a

2 million dollar shortfall, however that shortfall is hoped to be covered by Federal stimulus money and therefore Council hopes not to have to raise taxes this year, but it is a work in progress at this point. Verizon will begin installing 5G and the Engineering Department's consultant says that there are no health risks to be concerned about. Council heard a great presentation on the history of Race and Housing in the municipality; the interactive map is available on the Civil Rights Commission webpage. And lastly, an off-street Parking Ordinance will be on the April 12, 2021 agenda.

- b) **Introduction of New Member:** Sands introduced and welcomed Hilary Persky as the new PEC Commission member (alternate #2).
- c) **HillTop Park:** Fichtenbaum discussed the PEC's research regarding synthetic turf and the follow-up she had with staff to fully understand the project along with its pros and cons. She discussed various parts of the budget that was developed by Fichtenbaum/PEC for this project which included a construction estimate comparison and maintenance estimate comparison. She discussed the hours that the field can be utilized - grass versus turf fields, stormwater runoff, heat islands and field cleaning and sanitation. With regards to the lighting, she discussed concerns over light spillage into the adjacent neighborhoods, concerns that this project is located near a moderate and low income community (inclusion and equity) and how she researched the turf products noting that these are made from virgin plastics. She suggested that the PEC recommend that the fields remain grass fields and not synthetic turf. Tech-Czarny noted that he looked at the American Planners Association standards as well as the National Recreation and Park Association standards and that municipalities should have one soccer field per 10,000 residents, whereby Princeton should have two. He also noted that there are many viable soccer fields in Princeton and surrounding municipalities. Evan Moorhead spoke on behalf of the Recreation Department stating that there was never a statement made that the synthetic fields would be cheaper than grass. It is the intention of the Recreation Department to provide safe playing fields for the youth. He also noted that there are fewer playing fields available as compared to what is needed; the fields are multi-purpose and not just used for soccer. The lighting will allow for additional playing time on the fields. The Recreation Department is trying to provide the best options for the community. Sands noted that there is data that indicates endocrine disruptors as a concern with synthetic fields. Deanna Stockton noted that she is in attendance to hear the public comments and to provide information about the project if needed..

**The following people spoke against the installation of synthetic turf:**

Beth Yakoby

Alice Artzt

Christopher Johnson

Kim Peterson

Tineke Thio

Paul Reiss

Jeffrey Bergman

Junglien Chen

Erica Mosner (read the email received from Barbara Ajami)

Deborah Hunsinger  
Dori Perrucci  
Elaine Green  
Mary Clurman  
Nancy Johnson  
Virginia Kerr  
Nir Yakoby

Councilwoman Mia Sacks said that she would work to have a public meeting at the Council level regarding HillTop Park.

**The following person spoke in favor of synthetic turf:** Jon Durbin

After much discussion on whether or not the PEC wanted to make a blanket recommendation that it does not support or advocate for synthetic turf or PEC does want the opportunity to review plans and projects that include synthetic turf; a motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to oppose synthetic turf at HillTop Park and anywhere else it is proposed in on public lands in Princeton; the PEC does not recommend the installation of synthetic turf anywhere in Princeton on municipally owned property.

- d) **Board of Health:** Hodach-Avalos reported that the Board of Health has been concentrating on Covid and the Covid vaccinations. They have not discussed astro turf but she can bring it up at the next meeting.
- e) **Sustainable Princeton:** Symington discussed the Sustainable Landscaping Project and noted that they have a steering committee and a number of working groups for the tasks of the project. They are planning a workshop on National Green Zone Alliance to get exposure to battery operated landscaping equipment. There will be a Sustainable Landscape event at the Princeton Shopping Center on April 24, 2021. There will be another upcycle event on May 15, 2021 and will be in conjunction with the Pedestrian and Bike Committee who will be having a bike repair event, which will take place at Monument Hall from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. There will be another “Great Ideas” event on May 5, 2021 to discuss the co-benefits of the Climate Action Plan.
- f) **Flood and Stormwater Committee:** Zemble reported that the Committee was notified that Mercer County approved the stormwater ordinance and it should now be in effect; the redevelopment portion is still being worked on. The Watershed Institute gave a presentation on Impervious Surface Assessment and it was very informative. Lastly, the Committee is working on a FEMA Action Plan.
- g) **Planning Board:** Tech-Czarny reported that the Planning Board heard the Princeton University application for the Art Museum on March 4, 2021 and it was approved; he noted that the building is being built to good environmental standards. On March 11, 2021 the Planning Board heard the Princeton University Tiger Facility application and it was approved; March 18, 2021 they heard the Princeton Community Village application and it was approved; the Master Plan subcommittee will be meeting soon to discuss the update to the

Master Plan; and lastly Jim Purcell noted that the Landmark application had been postponed until the June 4, 2021 hearing; Tech-Czarny will be recusing.

- h) Green Building Task Force:** Fichtenbaum reported that the Franklin Task Force will be meeting on April 6, 2021 and she is hoping that the sustainability elements will be incorporated into the plans but she will give an update at the April PEC meeting. She also reported that she has been working with Phil Chao and Christine Symington to develop the framework for a rating system that will become a part of homes when they are listed for sale.
- i) Development Application:**
  - a. Trustees of Princeton University  
ES/SEAS/Prelim/Final Major Site Plan  
Ivy Lane/Prospect Avenue  
Block 50.01, Lot 18; Block 49.01, Lot 5  
File No#P2020-872P

The Commission members discussed the draft memo specifically focusing on increased devoted green roof areas; item #2 listed under the stormwater management recommendations; demolition (embodied carbon); innovative approaches for all future site plan applications; looking at applications through the Princeton University Connectivity Master Plan to increase pedestrian and bicycle usage; pervious versus impervious coverage; tree species and not planting anything on the “do not plant list”; and how the zone designation will be changing over the next several years. A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the memo as amended at this meeting.

- j) Adjournment:** A motion was made and seconded and the PEC voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Debra Mercantini, Secretary**

**Date Approved: April 29, 2021**