

Princeton Environmental Commission
Meeting Minutes Wednesday, April, 27 2022 at 7:30 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

Present: Deieso, Fichtenbaum, Marcus-Levine, Persky, Sands, Soos, Tech-Czarny, Watson (8:10), Zemble (7:40), Symington and Niedergang; **Public:** Janet Robertson; **Absent:** Hodach-Avalos

- I. **Honoring Deb Mercantini, PEC Secretary** -Sands lead a minute of silence in honor of long time PEC Secretary Deb Mercantini and then broke the silence by sharing a personal reflection of Deb as well as offering other attendees to do the same. Sands also shared the status on the tree and plaque dedication and thanked those commissioners, organizations and colleagues that provided donations to obtain the plaque.
- II. **Approval of Agenda** -Approved with revision by Soos to add item about posting development plan memos in a timely fashion. Motioned by Deieso, second by Zemble, with all in favor.
- III. **Approval of Minutes** -Sands stated that the minutes did not get drafted as she was too emotional about Deb's passing to watch the video recording. Sands stated that once appointed the new recorder would draft the minutes but her role will be different more limited than Deb's was. Sands stressed that PEC has to keep Sands in the loop and that commissioners must follow correct legal process.
 - a. March 23, 2022
- IV. **Public comment** -Janet Robertson, who is working with the state's Business Action Center posted in chat about wanting to listen in on the plastics agenda item discussion.

V. **Council Report (Niedergang)** -Provided an update from Princeton's stream cleanup, which included a girl scout troop at Turning Basin park in addition to the main Hill Top Park location. There were 130 volunteers; 1,237 lbs of trash collected -most being water bottles, plastic bags, food and candy wrappers with one unusual item being an unopened Amazon package and air condition unit, sink, TV, bikes, fence and scrap metal. All picked up by PPW. Thanked Sands, Persky, Soos and Fichtenbaum for attending.; Beaver family at Pettoranello Gardens has caused a problem with water flow but the community and municipal staff came together to solve the issue without using lethal means.; Resolution passed to do the 1st phase of a stormwater utility study.; CAPERS team recognized by council for their contributions to the municipality specific to the Climate Action Plan.; Graduate Hotel issue with street not being wide enough so the street will become a one way. All commissioners shared multiple comments related to traffic, timing of construction, pollution, and other miscellaneous concerns about this project -Sands stated that the builder and architect had been invited to present to PEC but declined to do so since they legally were not obligated. Soos stated that SPRAB had commented on all the concerns commissioners were voicing in their memo. Deiseo stated that none of the efforts had teeth and who are we advising? Ourselves? And expressed he wants more to change the dynamic!; Final repairs at Quaker Bridge and Pretty Book Farm from tropical storm Ida will be made and covered by FEMA.; Compliance Officer started on April 11th and Niedergang, Sands and Symington have a meeting scheduled with her regarding sustainable landscaping limitations starting in May.

VI. **Discussion & Decisions**

- A. **Stream Cleanup 2022** -Sands thanked Niedergang for covering that in her report.
- B. **Public Transit** -Sands stated that she was invited to a meeting which Tech-Czarny was also. Tech-Czarny informed about the NJ Transit study and the surveys conducted. Outcome of ideas were presented in a meeting last evening which outlined four alternatives that Tech-Czary described for commissioners. Sands stated at this time PEC would not be taking a stance at this time as additional information is needed. Neidergang stated that the Municipality is not taking a stand.
- C. **Status for Achieving Annual Goals**
- i. Sands shared that for ANJEC's annual event PEC had a slide with a honorary photo of Deb and a statement that the PEC was on a pause to mourn their incredible loss. Sands also attended ANJEC's round table for highly functioning environmental commissions and suggested that PEC consider to distinguish the commission in the community, widely distribute our annual report, which should include proposed annual goals for next year as well as potential

ordinance changes from the results of the ERI, and to include annual accomplishments in a LTE, connect with our youth and pull them into PEC actions. ANJEC has a YouTube channel where PEC can access great information.

- ii. **Open Space** -Soos stated that PEC submitted an ANJEC grant application for the Barbra Bogg Sigmund Park project and are waiting to see if awarded.; Watson discussed that the Community Science Day is happening this Sunday with everything in place including the backpacks and requested help from commissioners. Sands, Niedergang and Deiseo committed to support.
- iii. **Plastic Pollution Reduction** -Persky reported that the Treks company might be able to collect excess plastic bags from our businesses.; Niedergang stated that the Health Officer will be enforcing and educate during their inspections. The places that do not sell food will fall under Fire Inspection.
- iv. **Sustainable Landscaping** -Sands mentioned that Maplewood successfully passed a year round GLB ban.; Questioned compliance in Princeton especially during off hours.; Unknown status of State Bills.
- v. **Community Energy** -Soos stated that they had a short meeting and heard how the Essex consortium is handling community energy. Symington stated that the market price is not favorable right now.
- vi. **Drinking Water Quality** -Sands stated that Zemble and Deiseo can move forward with efforts like setting up meeting with NJWA in hopes to get residents concerns addressed.

VII. **Reports:**

- i. **BOH** -Sands stated that she didn't receive anything from the BOH.
- ii. **Sustainable Princeton (SP)** -Symington discussed that Mercer County Sustainable Coalition will have its Green Fest event on April 30th; May 14th upcycling event -cookware and razors will be collect too as part of Terra Cycling.; May 18th Great Minds community solar.
- iii. **Flood and Storm Water Commission** -Zemble stated the DEP provided a draft of new rules and are requiring specific items but without funding. This affects recycling at the Lawrence Ecological Facility. Purcell was going to draft comments about this as it will affect Princeton.; Muni is going to survey the community about the constructions of basements due to flooding and stormwater issues.; Princeton Hydro awarded the contract for the stormwater utility study.
- iv. **Planning Board** -Tech-Czarny stated that there were no plans to discuss at the last meeting but that they had good discussions about the Master Plan. The building at 72-74

Witherspoon with the cigar shop is to be demolished but many want this to be evaluated by the Historical Preservation Society. Fichtenbaum shared her concern about building demolishing because of carbon store/embodied carbon that would be exposed and in the involvement of building new.; The landscaping subcommittee will be meeting on Friday to discuss the Thanet and Avalon project at the shopping center developments, on May 3rd Terhune Development, May 5th the continuation West Windsor project will be reviewed and the Hun School rezoning will be addressed, May 15th Simplified Living and Lanwin 90 acres proposed for June 16th.; Persky noted that STC was planning to attend the PB meeting to express concerns they noted in their memo. Sands explained that Tech-Czarny is our representative but that anyone would be welcome to join the meetings to speak on their own behalf.

- VIII. **Posting Development Plan Memos** -Soos was approached by community members who had concerns about Terhune application and directed them to the website but the memos were not posted. And when they are they are at the end of the entire packet. Soos asked Neidergang to help with this issue. Neidergang would be willing to help as it is important that community members can easily access through a consistent municipal process.

- IX. **Adjournment** -Motioned by Zemble.

*As a result of the unexpected death of PEC secretary, Deb Mercantini, minutes were drafted by Sands on August 11, 2022 from April 27th video recording.