

PRINCETON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Minutes of Regular Meeting, May 25, 2022 – 7:30 pm

Virtual Zoom Meeting * Princeton, NJ 08540

Opening Statement

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."

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.

Present: Deiseo (Alt. 2), Fichtenbaum, Marcus-Levine, Persky (Alt. 1), Sands, Soos, Tech-Czarny, Watson, Zemle

Also Present: Councilwoman Eve Niedergang, Christine Symington and Jenny Ludmer, Sustainable Princeton

Guest: Meredith J. Hodach-Avalos, MD, Board of Health, Jessica Wilson, Public Transit Advisory Committee, Tineke Thio, Pedestrian & Bike Advisory Committee

Approval of Agenda

The motion to approve the agenda with addition for discussion on Hopes of Our Community organizations by Princeton Future was first moved by Marcus-Levine, seconded by Tech-Czarny, all in favor by voice vote.

Minutes: None

Public Comment: None

Council Report, Councilwoman Eve Niedergang

Councilwoman Niedergang reported that an ordinance was introduced to revise the Accessory Dwelling Units ordinance. There was community feedback and will be discussed to the June 13, 2022 meeting. She reported that there will be a roundabout constructed across from Johnson Park; the goal is to have completed before school begins. We made the recommendation to the County to have the speed reduced to 35 mph on Rosedale. Councilwoman Niedergang reported the consultant submitted their waste proposal to Council. The hope is to reinstate the compost program for residents; she explained the proposed program and what items would be accepted for the compost. It was suggested that bulk pickup be completed by reservation. The Municipality is purchasing its' first hybrid vehicle; building up to increase fleet to include electric vehicles as we construct the EV infrastructures. Deiseo asked what is the measurable of the compost program. There was discussion how the process will work. Fichtenbaum provided details of the process and purpose of the compost. There was discussion on how methane is produced from the landfill. Deiseo addressed issues brought up to him by his neighbors; Councilwoman Niedergang is willing to further discuss issue with Deiseo off line. Marcus-Levine asked if residents can get compost from the program; we would have to ask the vendor once chosen.

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Chair Sands asked Councilwoman Niedergang to provide status on returning to live meetings. Per Councilwoman Niedergang, it has not yet been determined. Per Dr. Avalos, situation is currently still under evaluation. Jeff Grosser, Director of the Health Dept. is in discussions with Dr. George DiFernando and the Board of Health. Councilwoman Niedergang will update BCCs when a decision has been made. Chair Sands asked if discussions can include hosting the meeting hybrid for those who may not be able to attend in person. Councilwoman Niedergang stated that this approach was also being discussed.

Discussion/Decisions:

Recording Secretary Appointment

The motion to approve the resolution appointing Julie Moy as the Recording Secretary was first moved by Zemble, seconded by Deiseo, all in favor by voice vote.

Guest Presenters

Jessica Wilson & Tinker Thio presented the *Princeton Mobility Survey Report* to the Mayor and Council and was asked by Chair Sands to present to this Commission. The report was created in collaboration with Public Transit Advisory Committee, Princeton Mutual Aid and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee. Wilson explained their report and findings. She described the participants in the survey. There were questions and comments from the Commission. This survey implies there is support for walking and biking in Princeton. Wilson will forward report and presentation for Commission's records.

Public Transit

Chair Sands opened the forum for continued discussion. She sent an article regarding the NJ Transit Study, which included four alternative means, for Commission review. The discussion was open for Commission to decide what stand they would like to take regarding public transportation. Tech-Czarny stated there was discussion last night targeted towards West Windsor; he went over the options discussed. Tech-Czarny opined this Commission can have a stand in regards to transit; public transportation will help reduce carbon emissions and promote better lifestyle. He expressed his opinion in regards to the dinky. Zemble expressed her opinion on public transportation in town and how it can be improved. Tech-Czarny explained the proposed new light rail car, replacing the dinky, and the proposed travel route. Soos commented on the areas she liked about the presentation. Fichtenbaum expressed her concerns and support for the proposed transit. All vehicles being considered will be electric and they asked Princeton to consider additional public transportation along Alexander Road.

Chair Sands suggested that this Commission send a letter in support to NJ Transit with copy to the Council. Tech-Czarny moved the motion for the letter of support, seconded by Soos, all in favor by voice vote.

Opposed: Ms. Zemble, opposed to eliminating the dinky

Chair Sands will draft letter and Tech-Czarny will edit. Per Tech-Czarny, they are not looking to get rid of dinky, but to enhance transit in Princeton.

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Princeton Future

Fichtenbaum reported that Princeton Future will be hosting a meeting to discuss issues that be investigated by the subcommittee. This provides another opportunity for Princeton residents to voice their visions. BCCs and other groups were highlighted, and gave their vision and input; she was surprised that this Commission was not invited to participate. Chair Sands is concerned that this Commission has not been receiving correspondence emails as in the past. Marcus-Levine asked if a Commission member can attend the meeting on June 4 and speak on behalf of this Commission. Councilwoman Niedergang has seen other BCC members attending meetings on behalf of their BCC. She also stated that we have not discussed this as a Commission, so it would be tough to pull together a presentation. However, we should stay on topic with the Green Building and Environmental Sustainability Element of the Master Plan as the talking point, since it has already been discussed amongst the members. Councilwoman Niedergang agreed that it would be important that a member should attend the meeting and can represent what the Commission does, but not to present information not previously discussed and voted on.

The motion to appointment a representative of the PEC to attend the June 4th meeting on our behalf was first made by Fichtenbaum, seconded by Soos, all in favor by voice vote.

Annual Goals

Open Space

Watson provided an update on the Community Science Day event. The event went well; approximately 40 participants. The event also included the pilot to collect additional data on the app. When he last checked early during the week, they had 150–200 observations on the app; this number should increase once the Library prepares workshops targeted to families and children to use apps. He reported that they are considering making this a seasonal event at other locations. There was interest to learn more about Rogers' Refuge. Chair Sands thanked everyone for their help. She asked Watson to look for tentative dates so we may move forward with hosting the events. She also suggested that next year we consider another location.

Tree in Memory of Debra Mercantini

Chair Sands reported that the Dog Wood tree in memory of Ms. Mercantini has been planted near Hamilton and Chestnut. The plaque has been ordered and will be installed during a ceremony that will include her family.

Discussions and Decisions

ANJEC Grants for Open Space Grants for Environmental Commissions

Soos reported that ANJEC did not approve our grant application for \$1,500. Soos sent correspondence asking for specific reasons for denial and is waiting for their response. For now, hand written signs will be made up to identify the plants; additional signage is unknown since there is no funding available. Chair Sands thanked Soos for writing the grant. Once we receive feedback, perhaps we can re-apply next year.

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Sustainable Landscaping

Chair Sands reported that she sent out information on the introduction to Legislation A-3906 sponsored by Assemblyman Herb Conaway; she described the legislation. Chair Sands stated that we did not anticipate passing an ordinance for the one for one swap for electric and gas operated equipment. We need to look at sustainable landscaping as a whole. Per Chair Sands, there has been a number of violations throughout the Municipality since the ordinance passed; community wide education is needed. Zemble stated she also tried to speak to the landscapers and was ignored. Per Symington, homeowners are equally responsible and need to be informed. Councilwoman Niedergang stated that it will take time to get the information out to the homeowners and for them to understand ordinance. Per Ms. Symington, they have been going into the community with Spanish translators to distribute the information.

Drinking Water and Quality

Deieso reported that he spoke to DEP regarding their drinking water program. He did online research on the American Water Raritan website and presented his findings. Dr. Avalos stated that the Health Dept. and Board of Health does not have extra testing of the water under review. Dieseo explained the areas tested in his research. Chair Sands asked if a letter to the media to provide information to the public. Water testing was not done in specifically in Princeton, but to the water mains that feed into communities American Water Raritan serve. Deieso and Zemble will review the website, present findings to this Commission and then Commission can decide how to move forward. There was continued discussion regarding the water quality.

Public Educational Sessions

Chair Sands reported that Ms. Marcus-Levine has offered to assist with supporting the educational sessions; sessions are targeted to take place in the Fall. Fichtenbaum reported that they met with Sophie Glovier, Watershed Institute. Glovier shared similar program they developed; Ms. Fichtenbaum explained the program.

Miscellaneous

Bird Flu Influenza

Dr. Avalos reported that *Bird Flu Influenza* has been found in Monmouth County. The Health Dept. Director, Jeff Grosser sent information out in the Municipal Newsletter, with links for more information. Board of Health has an ordinance requiring the registration of Backyard Chickens; they will be notified and provided the links.

Live Meetings

Dr. Avalos stated that the BOH is checking with Cali Index to determine when meetings can return live.

Reports from Liaisons

Sustainable Princeton

Symington reported that they are continuing with their education outreach about Sustainable Landscaping. Information is being sent out by social media and their newsletters. To date, five \$500 grants for equipment replacement has been given out. They received additional applications and are under consideration. They have been notified that a few landscapers have placed equipment orders, but there is currently supply chain

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issues. Symington reported that their Upcycle Event on May 14, 2022 went well. Collection included truck load of Styrofoam; she described additional items collected. Sustainable Landscaping informational handouts were distributed. Symington reported that the *Community Solar* information is on their YouTube channel. Symington reported that they almost complete with updating the 2021 Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

Flood & Stormwater Committee

Zemble reported on the need for neighboring towns to join in the stormwater utility discussions; Princeton is downstream from these towns. We need to discuss as a whole. Zemble reported on other areas that were discussed.

Planning Board

Tech-Czarny reported that there was landscape subcommittee meeting; discussions included Thanet and Avalon's landscape designs. There was a Master Plan subcommittee meeting that went into closed session. He reported that there was a special meeting on May 3 where they discussed Terhune and Harrison Project, known as Winn, which was approved. They could not save much of the forest due to the redevelopment, but will be planting several trees as part of their landscaping design. He reported that on May 5 the main hearing with West Windsor Real Estate, a subdivision across on 206 was canceled. Tech-Czarny reported that there was a concept review for 39 Linden Lane to construct a triplex. There were too many constraints making it not possible to construct. He reported that there was an ordinance referral about the accessory dwelling unit ordinance; it was amended to have restrictions on the attic. Tech-Czarny reported that there is a meeting scheduled the next night to discuss the ad hoc committee regarding the future of the Master Plan.

Tech-Czarny stated that there is a meeting on June 2 and cannot attend; he asked either Soos or Marcus-Levine to attend on PEC's behalf. Discussion will include the Jay Jeyamohan, Preliminary and Final Major Subdivision and Site Plan located at on Van Dyke Road. This Commission sent a memo about two years ago in reference to this project. He stated that Glenwood maybe heard at the June 16 meeting; agenda has not been issued yet. Representative of PEC can only comment on areas already discussed.

Councilwoman Eve Niedergang is still working with Planning and getting everything posted; they are currently short staffed.

Adjournment

The motion to adjourn at 9:58 pm was first moved by Tech-Czarny, seconded by Marcus-Levine, all in favor to voice vote.