

PRINCETON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Minutes of Regular Meeting, June 22, 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: Fichtenbaum (arrived 7:48), Marcus-Levine, Persky (Alt. 1), Sands (chair), Soos, Tech-Czarny, Watson, Zemble

Also Present: Christine Symington and Jenny Ludmer, Sustainable Princeton (SP)

Absent: Councilwoman Eve Niedergang

Approval of Agenda

The motion to approve the agenda was first moved by Zemble, seconded by Tech-Czarny with unanimous approval.

Approval of Minutes: March 23, 2022 minutes will not be provided as meeting took place a few days before the death of PEC long-time secretary, Deb Mercantini. April 27, 2022 minutes were not provided by Moy, newly appointed secretary, who has since resigned. Sands will attempt to draft. May 25, 2022 minutes with numerous spelling errors to be corrected and the Princeton Future section to be condensed. Approval first moved by Zemble, seconded by Marcus-Levine, with unanimous approval.

Public Comment: None

Council Report: Given by Sands on behalf of Councilwoman Niedergang. Council approved updated ADU regulations, parts of Rosedale Road closed for much of summer to install roundabout at General Johnson Drive, Sewer Operating Committee and Council addressing ongoing problem of Inflow and Infiltration. Our sewers have been neglected over the last decade and this will start to turn that around and to upgrade this critical infrastructure. Garbage pickup continues to be spotty due to shortage of truck drivers -this is a nationwide issue.

Discussion & Decisions :

- a) Secretary for commission needed. For now, secretarial position will rotate between Commissioners. Town will continue to advertise position. Motion to approve: Zemble, Seconded: Watson. Unanimous approval. Soos took minutes for this meeting.
- b) NJDEP stormwater training: Required by state for site plan review by commissioners. Only 3 Commissioners have completed. Those who have not done so by July meeting may not be able to participate in site plan reviews going forward.
- c) Master Plan: Tech-Czarney and Sands reported PEC not represented in any way on groups working on Master Plan. In the past PEC has had a place at the table. Sands and Tech-Czarney will meet with some planning board members to express concerns. A question was raised if the Master Plan process is de-emphasizing environmental concerns to emphasize community involvement. Or will these environmental concerns be strengthened and updated through community outreach. The Master Plan subcommittee does not include members from various commissions which are responsible for conducting site plan reviews. The Commission asked should it?
- d) NJ Forest Taskforce: Established by Senator Smith. Responsibility is to present to the Senator by this fall possible legislative proposals to address Ecological Health and Climate as they relate to NJ Public Forests. Commission agreed that proposals put forward by Sands and Persky (Ecological Health) and Soos (Climate) may be done in the name of the entire Commission. Motion to approve: Fichtenbaum, Seconded Zemble with unanimous approval.
- e) Solid Waste/Food Waste Proposal. Sands stated that Niedergang has forwarded concerns raised by public and former commissioner Deieso to the working group. Symington posed questions that need to be addressed. Will Princeton resume collection of food waste? How does yard waste fit into this? How can contamination be controlled? Trash pickup contract must be renewed by end of year, then discussion on organic waste can be addressed. Sustainable Jersey/Princeton is involved in these discussions, PEC is not. Commissioners can send questions regarding organic waste pickups to Sands, who will forward them to the Municipal Engineer.
- f) Princeton Futures: Fichtenbaum reported this group is soliciting community input on the Master Plan but is not part of the official Steering Committee or Master Plan Sub Committee who are working with planning consultants to collect community input and rewrite the Master Plan. However, it may be important for the PEC to take advantage of all opportunities engage with the Princeton community regarding Master Plan environmental issues.
- g) Bamboo: not included on “do not plant list” because it does not spread by seeds but rather underground rhizomes. Control is extremely difficult. Education essential. Sustainable Princeton may include information on bamboo in an upcoming newsletter. Soos suggested an “invasive of the month” feature on the Municipal newsletter, as a way of informing the public. Also suggested: That the STC, PEC prominently include information on bamboo on their respective municipal websites.
- h) Goal Updates

- a. Open Space: Watson reported next Community Science Day tentatively scheduled for some time in August, before school begins. iNaturalist being widely used, with over 400 species identified so far.
- b. Drinking Water: no updates
- c. Public Education Session: Fichtenbaum, Marcus-Levine, Sands and Princeton Public Library representative will meet to discuss.
- d. Stormwater basin Redding Circle: Focused on retention basin at Redding Circle. Plans are to work with an Arch. PHA Engineer, Princeton Hydro, and Rutgers University to develop a design and implement this project. Funding will be needed as well as volunteers.

Liaison Reports:

Sustainable Princeton: Nothing additional to above discussion points.

Flood and Storm Water: No report

Planning Board (PB): Active on several projects. Commissioners are urged to consult the posted PB agendas for information on developments to be appearing before the board, as there are many. Fichtenbaum suggested that the Master Plan sub committee consider a net zero overlay zone for areas that are likely to be redeveloped at higher densities.

The meeting adjourned at 9:11 pm. Motion to adjourn: Fichtenbaum, seconded: Zemble with unanimous approval.

Submitted by Anne Soos