

PRINCETON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
Minutes of Regular Meeting, June 23, 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 7:33 p.m.

Present were: Sands, Walker, Zemble left at 7:40 pm, Tech-Czarny, Marcus-Levine, Watson, Persky, Soos, Symington, Jones, Perlsweig and Hodach-Avalos (BOH)

Absent: Fichtenbaum and Niedergang

Also Present: Robert Rein

III. Approval of Agenda: A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the agenda with the amendment that a discussion item is added about the Princeton University Campus Plan and its presentation to the Commission as well as the possibility of adding a land acknowledgment as a standard statement to the agenda.

IV. Minutes:

a) May 26, 2021

A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of May 26, 2021 and amending the minutes to reflect the discussion about the need to provide time for yard maintenance for home owners who care for their property themselves and who may be employed in full time jobs during the week.

V. Public Comment:

There was no public comment at this point.

VI. Discussion/Decisions:

a) **Land Acknowledgement:** Sands discussed how the land acknowledgement appears on the Council agenda and on other Boards and Commissions and suggested that the PEC consider putting this on its agenda as well. A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to include this on its agenda.

b) **Princeton University Campus Plan:** There was a brief discussion about inviting the University to come speak with the PEC about its Campus Plan and how the

University representatives felt it was a conflict of interest; however they did express an interest in coming to future PEC meetings to share information on certain issues. Sands stated that she would respond to Kristin Appleget about coming to a future PEC meeting.

- c) **Board of Health Update:** Hodach-Avalos reported that the Board of Health sent a letter of support about the Sustainable Landscaping and she will forward that letter to Sands for distribution to the Commission members.
- d) **Council Update:** (Niedergang could not attend this meeting and the report was given by Sands) Sands reported that Council approved the declaration of the Princeton Shopping Center and some of the adjacent areas as an area in need of redevelopment. This designation gives the municipality more tools with which to negotiate with the property owners to meet the needs of the community. Council also agreed to commemorate Juneteenth as an annual celebration of Black Emancipation. One the agenda for Monday June 28, 2021 (in addition to Sustainable Landscaping) is the final design decisions for the first segment of Witherspoon Street and also on the agenda is the EVCS ordinance part 1. Soos explained the EVCS ordinance to the Commission members.
- e) **Sustainable Landscaping:** Zemble made a presentation to the Board of Health that was well received. Sands and Symington also made a presentation to the Human Services Commission and the Civil Rights Commission – both were good meetings where people had specific questions. It was also noted that it is very important to hear both the homeowner and the landscaper issues. The next presentation will be at the June 28, 2021 Council meeting followed by another public meeting on July 14, 2021. PEC is recommending an early August/September ordinance introduction.
- f) **Time of Listing Audit Update:** (Fichtenbaum could not attend and the report was given by Sands). Fichtenbaum met with Council members to get their input on this. Right now the attorney is investigating where this possible ordinance may sit in the code; one idea is for this to be considered a health issues (like it is in Hopewell) – there will be more forthcoming from the attorney. It is anticipated that Niedergang will have this item placed on a Council agenda in August for it to be presented as a concept.
- g) **Open Space Assessment Survey:** Watson noted that this was first presented to the Commission earlier this year and there were concerns about the wording and clarifying the eco-systems services. Those items were updated to improve the survey and it should be ready to be sent out to the public in the near future. Sands suggested that the link to the survey is placed in Council’s newsletter, Sustainable Princeton’s newsletters and also on the PEC webpage; Watson will draft 2-3 sentences for an introduction to the survey that will be included with the links. It was also suggested that the survey remain open for two months as many people may be away for vacations
- h) **Open Space (General):** Sands noted that the Lanwin application will be presented in July and Dr. Zeyuan Qiu (NJIT professor), Watson and Sands will be making comments for open space/Lanwin properties.
- i) **Sustainable Princeton Update:** Symington noted that the Sustainable Landscape project has been focusing on residential outreach to understand some of the behaviors of the people who maintain their lawns themselves; those who use a

landscaper sometimes and those who always use a landscaper; custom message for these groups are being worked on. The commercial property owners are also being engaged to discuss their landscape practices. The 2020 Green House Gas Inventory data is being updated; how to include the pandemic data is also being looked at. During the pandemic there was quite a drop in the commercial use and an uptick in the residential use. Lastly, with regards to the “Clear Path Tool” that will be utilized through ICLEI, Tech-Czarny will come up with the text about what is needed. It was noted that the meeting with ICLEI is scheduled for June 30, 2021 at 1:00 pm.

j) Updates/Information Sharing for Annual Goals and Other PEC Activities: Sands discussed the carry-over goals from 2020, such as (but not limited to) the open space assessment, EVCS ordinance, educating the public on single use plastics (Cranford would like to use Princeton’s information on this). It was noted that the Green Building Task Force does not need to be a standing item on the agenda, Fichtenbaum will update as information becomes available. Also discussed was the on-going site plan reviews, updating the website and keeping it current, the energy audit, and the fact that the ERI update did not receive funding this year. It was also noted that the PEC is accomplishing a lot this year, there are many issues being addressed and as a result, the secondary goals have been put on hold at this point. Sands thanked everyone for all of the work they have been doing for the PEC this year.

k) Planning Board Update: Tech-Czarny noted that the Planning Board referred redevelopment plans for the Princeton Shopping Center and the senior housing plan for Terhune and Harrison to Council for approval. With regards to the Landmark application, Walker noted that he spoke as a member of the public and his comments focused on some of the points in the PEC memo, but it was clear that the Planning Board had no interest in going through the whole document. Tech-Czarny noted that the Planning Board will revisit this application on July 1, 2021. Tech-Czarny noted that he tries to bring up the PEC memo at the beginning of the discussion on development applications but if he can’t do it then, the memo will come when the Board is discussing the conditions of approval. The eating club application has been carried to another meeting in the future.

l) Green Building Checklist and Memo: Sands read the comments given by James Purcell about how the checklist should be updated. She also went over the PEC memo that discussed the proposed changes and additions to the checklist. Some of the area’s that were discussed were stormwater management, site lighting, EV charging, Energy Star Portfolio Manager, not including waste management and recycling statements and not including the use of certified wood (FSC). Sands went over the actual checklist and discussed how it should be organized better and where bullet points should be inserted. A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the memo and for Sands to clean up the checklist.

VII. Adjournment: A motion was made and seconded and the PEC voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra Mercantini, Secretary

Date Approved: