

Princeton Environmental Commission

Minutes of Regular Meeting, July 27, 2022 – 7:30pm

Virtual Zoom Meeting * Princeton, NJ 08540

Opening Statement (7:31)

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 live 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: Councilwoman Eve Niedergang (signed off at 8:41), Marcus-Levine, Soos, Sands, Tech-Czarny, Watson

Also Present: Christine Symington and Junny Ludmer (Sustainable Present), Carlo Momo and Leslie Dowling (Public), Erica Mosner (Public), Ralph Petralla (Public), Scott Sillars (Public), Louis R (Public)

Absent: Fichtenbaum, Persky, Zemble

Approval of Agenda

Agenda altered to move Reports from Liaisons before Development Plan Review; Consider a Letter of Support for Municipality & FOPOS application for an RGGI (Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative) Natural Climate Solutions Grant. The motion to approve the altered agenda was first moved by Marcus-Levine, seconded by Soos with unanimous approval.

Approval of Minutes

June 22, 2022 minutes provided by Anne Soos. Approval of minutes first moved by Soos and seconded by Watson.

Public Comment: None

Council Report: Prospect Avenue Historic District passed. Revised accessory dwellings unit ordinance (ADU) to discourage exploitation of prior holes in the ordinance. Engaging in municipal tree survey, passed on 6.27 - going mostly to Shade Tree commission.. The municipality will be transitioning back to in-person meetings in September, though few groups have met to discuss and decide transition to in-person meetings.

Discussion & Decisions:

- a. In-person meetings: PEC meetings will continue virtually for the foreseeable future given the current spike in coronavirus sub-variants BA.4 and BA.5. Motion to approve: Marcus-Levine. Seconded: Tech-Czarny. Unanimous approval. The commission will return to this decision at a later date to consider returning to in-person meetings. Tentative in-person meeting proposed

- by Sands for the end of the year. Considering moving to in-person meetings, the Secretary can help manage room reservations, but is dependent on the commission.
- b. Future agenda(s): Master Plan & ERI: Sands will reach out to Cindy Taylor to obtain a Proposal as well as a Scope of Work for the ERI as well as estimated meeting date discussion on the progress of the ERI, which is to be hosted by PEC. No comments about the Master Plan. Justin Lesko. (active planning director) and Louise Wilson (planning board chair) will be attending the September 28th meeting providing PEC, providing an opportunity for PEC members to ask questions about the Master Plan development process.
 - c. NJ Forest Task Forest: Soos, climate change council meetings on legislative proposals to address Climate as they relate to NJ Public Forests continuing bi-weekly as the deadline for proposal decisions approaches.
 - d. Neighboring Warehouse Development: Sands inquired if PEC should write a letter of support for those against warehouse development in West Windsor and other neighboring communities. Soos volunteers to look into the timeframe for writing the letter; Sands will check with Tirza Wahrman, Sophie Glover, and The Watershed Institute regarding previous letters of concern related to warehouse development.
 - e. Invasive of the month: In response to the bamboo threat posed during the June meeting, Soos suggested an “invasive of the month” feature on the Municipal newsletter. This will now be an “invasive of the quarter” written by Soos. Motion to approve: Watson. Seconded: Tech-Czarny. Unanimous approval (8:20)
 - f. Letter of support – Minor changes from Marcus-Levine, just need approval to send to Municipality and FOPOS. Motion to approve: Soos. Seconded: Marcus-Levine. Unanimous approval.
 - g. Status for achieving goals:
 - a. Open Space: Next community science day at Roger’s Refuge to occur on August 13th. Tables, tent, and bike rack to be provided by Sustainable Princeton. iNaturalist still very active with nearly 1250 observations.
 - b. Stormwater Basin: Fichtenbaum not present but PEC is waiting for the document that will outline the strategy, costs and partners to be involved.
 - h. Development Plans:
 - a. CRX Associates, LLC Preliminary/Final Major Site Plan 70-74 Witherspoon street Block 20.04, Lot 52 Zones CB: The Commission held a lengthy discussion about the development application. Leslie Dowling (design architect) offered comments regarding the development of the green roof: solar panels were initially proposed; however, MEP (the consultant) advised green roof to mitigate stormwater runoff – roof square-footage (1000 ft²) too small. PEC commended the group for incorporating the green roof and looking into solar panel development, permeable pavement, and removing ivy given that it is invasive.
 - i. PEC advises that the group look into solar panel roof development (EC3), permeable surface installation.
 - ii. Additional edits to the document include the following:
 1. Removing “nineteenth century”
 2. Creating a new paragraph based on Soos’s comments.
 3. Soos to send around an infographic on guidelines for development around old-growth open spaces for future recommendations.
 4. Removing the “Transportation” sub-section given there is no on-site parking.
 5. Removing “Landscape” sub-section.
 - iii. Motion to approve changes: Soos. Seconded: Watson. Unanimously approved.

- b. Mt. Lucas Properties, Inc./Final Major Site Plan, 701 Mount Lucas Block 2802, Lot 1.01 Zone OR-1: PEC discussed the environmentally sensitive location of the site, in particular regarding the existing conserved land and further conserving the additional structures of the site. There was additional discussion regarding the on-site parking. PEC recommends that the site development include native plants in the development and ground-source heat pumps for more energy efficient heating and cooling on the site.
 - i. Additional edits to the document include the following:
 - 1. Executive summary – Remove “as a condition of approval for the parking variance...” to begin “Stormwater Management/Landscape” with “Record the eleven acres...”
 - 2. Detailed Recommendations: exploring ground-source heat-pumps in “Building/Energy” section.
 - ii. Given the environmentally sensitive location of the site, PEC recommended to push the project further than the proposed sustainability measures, which includes the following:
 - 1. Preserving the greatest possible extent of existing structures.
 - 2. Conducting life-cycle analyses of materials.
 - 3. Achieving Passive House Zero standards.
 - 4. A recommendation to record the eleven acres of conserved land as preserved green space in perpetuity with other stormwater and landscaping counsel.
 - iii. Motion to approve memo: Soos (first), Tech-Czarny (second), all in favor.

Reports from Liaisons

- a. Sustainable Princeton: Alana Burkes the new communications manager for Sustainable Princeton. Likely to be joining PEC meetings. EV ride and drive event either September 23rd or September 30th (to be updated soon). PEC was invited to host a table at the event.
- b. Flood and Stormwater: Zemble Absent
- c. Planning Board: Met July 7th about the Master Plan, focusing on stormwater utility for some time. No update on the Lanwin 90 acre property.

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 pm. Motion to adjourn: Soos. Seconded: Tech-Czarny. Unanimously approved.

Minutes provided by Harrison Watson.