

Princeton Environmental Commission
Wednesday, October 26, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.
Virtual Meeting
Princeton, NJ 08540

Sands began the meeting at 7:31pm with the **Land Acknowledgement**.

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.

Roll Call: Fichtenbaum (Absent). Present were Marcus-Levine, Persky, Sands (Chair), Soos, Tech-Czarny, Zemble, Symington and Ludmer (Sustainable Princeton) and Niedergang (Council Liaison). There were no Board of Health representatives.

Also on the call were the following members of the Public: Peter Epstein, Willam Jemas, Peter Kelly, Ana Stucker, Inga Reich, Fredi Pearlmutter, Abel Smith, Chiara Smorda, Cindy Taylor (Municipal employee), William Atkins, Jess Atkins.

I. Approval of Agenda. Soos motioned and Marcus-Levine seconded motion to approve Agenda.

II. Approval of Minutes

- a. Zemble motioned and Tech-Czarny approved Minutes from September 28, 2022

III. Public Comment

a. Jess Atkins advocated for the PEC to explore ways to incentivize the public to keep mature trees and keystone plants, such as the River Birch. In addition, she encouraged the Municipality to talk with master gardeners before creating sustainable gardens because of the difficulties homeowners encounter with such maintenance. Sands pointed out that we have expertise on the PEC (Soos and Persky), and that the PEC has a larger Sustainable Landscaping goal that encompasses much more than the elimination of gas leaf blowers.

IV. Council Report. Niedergang reported that (a) EV charging stations will be installed in December/Jan in the Municipal parking lot; (b) An off leash dog park at Quarry Park from 7-9am and a temporary fenced in dog park at CP South were approved by Council; (c) PSEG will do extensive gas main replacements (last year there were 360 gas leaks in Princeton); (d) the Hilltop Park project of the Rec Dept will have a courtesy review at the Planning Board on Nov 3; (e) Niedergang and Sands are considering new members for PEC to fill vacancies and to allow, in accordance with Council's priorities, new volunteers a chance to serve on all BCCs.

V. Discussion & Decisions

a. **ERI (Environmental Resource Inventory).** Taylor reported that the Municipality hired EcoTone as a Consultant to update the ERI that currently has data from 2010. EcoTone will

create a living document of Princeton's open spaces using GIS data specific to Princeton. Discussion as to whether Hiltner will update species data and how we reference and do quality control if Inaturalist data is incorporated. Taylor said she'll have a draft for PEC review in December, but Sands commented that the sooner PEC can review the better given the importance of this data for the Master Plan overhaul. There was a comment from member of the public Jess Atkins about how to find information on current open spaces/ easements.

b. **Offshore Wind** (Sands). After discussion, PEC agreed not to write a resolution at this time about the State's Offshore Wind proposals.

c. **Plaque & Dedication for Deb Mercantini**. Sands reported on the beautiful, impactful dedication ceremony this afternoon at Barbara Boggs Park, which was attended by PEC Commissioners Sands, Marcus-Levine, Soos and Zemble, as well as Councilmembers, SP, Police, Municipal employees, friends and family.

d. **NJ Task Forces: Climate Change & Biodiversity**. Persky, Sands and Soos attend bimonthly State level meetings focusing on forest management. Sands and Soos discussed the differing opinions on the Task Force regarding the need for management, whether tree removal is justified, whether one can sell the lumber that is removed, the wisdom of prescribed burns and removal of invasives.

e. **Waste Update**. Soos reported that bids were requested for organics plus weekly garbage pickup and bulk, and also for garbage plus bulk. Neidergang noted that only one bid was received, and it was for garbage plus bulk, and costs will be raised by fifty percent.

f. **Master Plan Recommendations**. Sands and Tech-Czarny went through the PEC memo and it was moved by Soos and seconded by Marcus-Levine, approved as amended to send to Justin Lesko, Acting Planning Director, and Louise Wilson, Chair, Planning Board, to go to the MP consultant. The PEC recommended that (1) PEC be involved more in the MP planning process, as a Commission and together with other similarly interested Commissions; (2) The MP should incorporate sustainability and climate resilience throughout the master planning process; (3) The current Green Building and Environmental Sustainability Element should be reworked and incorporated throughout the MP; (4) The MP should include a new Sustainability Element; (5) The MP should include a new GBESE, part of which should explore green building incentives; (6) The MP should include new Mobility, Conservation, Open Space, Landscape and Recreation Elements; (7) The MP should incorporate the current Environmental Resource Inventory information; (8) The MP should incentive the preservation of older, larger native trees; (9) The MP should use all the recommendations in the Flood and Stormwater Objectives memorandum as well as enhancing the integrity of the quality of Princeton's drinking water; (10) The MP should use the latest modeling and data; (11) The MP should include an Urban Design or Community Design element; (12) The MP should include a Food Systems Element; (13) The MP should include a Waste Element.

VI. Reports

a. **Sustainable Princeton**. Ludmer described the upcoming Trunk or Treat - Vampire Energy (box for candy wrappers to be recycled by Trick or Trash); Sustainable Minds talk; Upcycling Event - 102 attendees, 250 pounds of batteries, ink cartridges, cell phones & tablets that will be reused or recycled by Wireless Alliance, 1,060 cubic feet of styrofoam that will be converted to picture frames by Princeton Molding in Somerville, NJ, 112 reusable bags that will be distributed for reuse by Princeton's Food Insecurity Task Force, 17 metal pots & pans that will be recycled by Terracycle, 11 disposable razors that will be recycled by

Terracycle. Symington reported that 300 people attended ECommuter Fest and gave an update on the Landscape Transition Fund, (SP has dispersed almost all of the \$21,000 raised, only \$1,500 left, to 22 companies). Master Plan survey reminder to take the survey and distribute.

b. **Planning Board.** Tech-Carny reported the Planning Board reviewed and approved 195 LLC Project, Schmitt Hall and the CRX/Terra Momo building (sustainable). Tech-Carny also provided the link

<https://www.princetonnj.gov/DocumentCenter/View/11846/Hilltop-Park-Improvements-Presentation-PDF> to the Hilltop Park Improvement Project Proposal for commissioners review.

c. **Flood & Stormwater Committee.** Zemble reported that the Stormwater Mitigation

d. Soos announced the upcoming Sustainability classes at the Princeton Adult School.

Plan was forwarded to legal counsel for review; that the Flood and Stormwater Objectives were approved and forwarded for inclusion into the Master Plan, and that a draft is being prepared for new Floodplain Management Regulations.

VII. Adjournment. Meeting adjourned at 10pm. Motion made by Tech-Czerny, seconded by Soos.