

PRINCETON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
Minutes of Regular Meeting, May 26 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, Niedergang, Zemble, Tech-Czarny, Marcus-Levine, Watson, Persky, Soos, Symington, and DiFerdinando (BOH)

Absent:

Also Present: Phyllis Teitelbaum, Anthony Lunn, Josh Perlsweig, Mayor Mark Freda, Administrator Bernard Hvozdovic, Eunice Wong, Grace Sinden, Philip Chao, Steve Hiltner

III. Approval of Agenda: A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the agenda with the amendment that the order of the agenda would change whereby all business and reports will be heard prior to the discussion on the development application.

IV. Minutes:

a) April 28, 2021

A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of April 28, 2021.

V. Public Comment:

There was no public comment at this point.

VI. Discussion/Decisions:

a) **Council Update:** Niedergang reported that Council approved amendments to the 2021 budget which included a zero tax increase; The Permit Parking Task Force presented a report and recommendation to Council and they will be going back to gather more data and then present again in the future. This unfortunately will push back the installation of the bike lanes on the Hamilton/Wiggins/Robeson corridor. Council held a special meeting last night to discuss the Witherspoon Street design and it was decided to keep the road one-way but reevaluate the cart-way width. Council and engineering reaffirmed the importance of green infrastructure for the design.

- b) **Sustainable Landscaping:** Sands and Zemble gave a presentation (A Path to Sustainable Landscaping) to the Commission about the work that has been done on this initiative. Gas powered leaf blowers have been a concern for over 24 years and Quiet Princeton was formed to address the problems. Sustainable Princeton has been working on its grant project entitled “Changing the Landscape Healthy Yard = Healthy People.” There have been extensive meetings and focus groups with landscapers, landscape workers, municipal officials, the Mayor and key stakeholders. Based on Landscaper responses, they are concerned about health and the environment. The transition to electric will have significant impacts to the owners. The Landscaper registration process in town needs to be changed and enforcement of the current ordinances needs to happen. Whatever rules are enacted, they should apply to everyone including the municipality. Fines and Penalties should be on both the landscaping company and the property owner. A discussion was held regarding the proposed changes to the following ordinances; Landscaper Registration Ordinance, Noise Ordinance, Leaf and Brush Collection Ordinance, and the Enforcement and Violations and Penalties Ordinance. A presentation to Council is anticipated to be in June but the following actions need to take place first: revise drafted wording (e.g. natural to native, update Saturday hours of operation) to the proposed changes of existing ordinance language and draft a new Sustainable Landscaping Ordinance that will be a more comprehensive ordinance, which is anticipated to be presented in 2022 or 2023. Of importance is that mending existing ordinances is only the first balanced and equitable step in Princeton’s transition to sustainable landscaping. This approach complies with Princeton’s Climate Action Plan goals 6.4 Protect and expand connective corridors between habitats and open spaces and expand no-mow/low maintenance areas & 6.5 Reduce emissions from all public and private lawn maintenance equipment. It was suggested that the PEC consider more of the environmental concerns and these changes meet the needs of the environment. The Commission also had a 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. A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted to move this forward to the Council level after suggested changes are completed. The following people spoke in favor of the changes that the PEC is recommending Grace Sinden, Eunice Wong, Tony Lunn and Phyllis Teitelbaum.
- c) **EVCS:** Sands and Soos presented Princeton’s general stakeholder process and lessons learned from proposing an EVCS ordinance in the town at ANJEC’s *Get Ahead of the Stampede: EV Charging in Your Town* webinar. Soos noted that she is still waiting to see Jim Purcell’s changes to the proposed ordinance and will report back next month.
- d) **Time of Listing Benchmarking:** Chao proposed that when people sell their homes they should be required to fill out an energy profile form and then a model will generate an annual energy cost report which can be posted in the MLS. The goal would be to provide energy information to the real estate market and it would be a way to inform homeowners about energy consumption and how to

reduce costs. This could also create local jobs through energy updates. It was recommended that a task force with stakeholders should be created to work on this. Mayor Freda noted that the Council has many goals on its hands already and this may not be something that can be tackled this year. Hvozdovic questioned the accuracy of the numbers noting that one person may operate a home one way and another person could operate their home differently.

- e) **Green Building Checklist Update:** Sands discussed the suggested changes to C14 and C15 of the checklist items. Some areas that need clarification are the statement, section A-8, B-3 and C-6, the other changes are simple in nature. A motion was to send the recommendations to the Planning Board, Michael La Place, and Derek Bridger once the core team refines the language. However, it was suggested that the PEC discuss this further at its next meeting.
- f) **Open Space Assessment Update:** It was noted that the Lanwin application (90 acre plot) was postponed at the Planning Board level. A discussion ensued and a motion was made for the PEC to recommend to Council to acquire and preserve both Lanwin tracts, this 90-acre tract and a separate 153-acre tract.
- g) **ICLEI Membership:** A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to become a member of ICLEI. The paperwork will be processed immediately.
- h) **Education Session:** Niedergang stated that she is still trying to find a member of the Zoning Board to attend – she will ask Derek Bridger the Zoning Officer if he would be willing to attend. Sands noted that the session should move forward even if there is no representation from Zoning. She asked that everyone try and have their questions for the presenters ahead of time.
- i) **Board of Health:** DiFerdinando reported that he will report the text of the sustainable landscaping ordinance to the Board of Health.
- j) **Sustainable Princeton:** Symington introduced Perlsweig as the new Program Coordinator for Sustainable Princeton. There will be an electric vehicle ride and drive event on October 1, 2021 at the Princeton Shopping Center. There will be events held at the Princeton Shopping Center on July 16th and August 12th to educate residents about the Plastics Ban. Work is being done to restart the Curbside Organics Program and it is hoped to have a Notice to Bidders out in the near future. Work is being conducted with the Engineering Department to install Electric Vehicle Charging Stations at 400 Witherspoon Street.
- k) **Flood and Stormwater Committee:** Zemble reported that the Committee sent out the latest revisions to the redevelopment portion of the ordinance to Princeton University and they are waiting to hear back from them. The Committee has been hearing from residents about the flooding that is occurring around Harry's Brook. The mapping is moving along and the group is looking at the Utility Element of the Master Plan.
- l) **Planning Board Update:** Tech-Czarny reported that the Humbert Street and the Lanwin applications have been deferred to a future date. The Master Plan Subcommittee met to review the draft scope of work and will be meeting to finalize the RFP.
- m) **Franklin Task Force:** Fichtenbaum reported that there is not much to report and she will report back when she has more information.

- n) **Development Application:** Marcus-Levine gave an overview of the 91 Prospect Development application. The Commission discussed the executive summary, energy, passive house, stormwater management, transportation and recommending approval of the buffer variance. They also discussed native vegetation, the roof area for solar panels. After a brief discussion, a motion was made and seconded to approve the memo with the changes and additions as discussed.
- o) **Adjournment:** A motion was made and seconded and the PEC voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra Mercantini, Secretary

Date Approved: