

**PRINCETON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**Minutes of Meeting of March 23, 2011– 7:30pm  
Meeting Room A  
Township Municipal Building  
400 Witherspoon Street, 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 Township and Borough Clerks.

**II. Chair Wasserman opened the meeting at 7:33 p.m.**

Present were: Wasserman, Machold, Hamilton, Hiltner, Kaczerski, Miller, Fichtenbaum, Thoft, Ernst, Rojer and Nemeth

Absent were: Eiref, Ullman and Crumiller

There were 7 members of the public present.

**III. Approval of Agenda:** A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the agenda as amended to include a brief discussion on the Province Line Woods development application.

**IV. Minutes:**

A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted to adopt the minutes of February 23, 2011. Thoft abstained.

**V. Public Comment:**

Judith Applegate, Quaker Road, expressed concerns about the clearing of underbrush and ground cover from a slope on neighboring property. She said that, though trees have some protections in Princeton, there is no protection for smaller vegetation that benefits habitat and reduces erosion. Nemeth suggested that an article be placed in the newsletter explaining the importance of ground cover.

**VI. SPRAB/Development Applications:**

**Tenacre Foundation Solar Array:** Active in this discussion was Mark Solomon, Attorney and William Bell, CFO at Tenacre. Thoft gave an overview of the project saying that Tenacre is proposing to install a solar array on the lot across the street from its main campus. The lot is approximately 2 acres and a portion of the lot (20 %) is located within the C-1 buffer area. She said the applicants have obtained a permit from the DEP and an LOI and the C-1 encroachment was found to be acceptable. She said the lot slopes so the array will start off at 2 feet and will go up to 6 feet 4 inches – and there will be 10 foot spacing between the rows. She said that

SPRAB approved the application with some conditions. She said the development review subcommittee is in support of the project but did not write a memo. Joan McGee of the SBMWS said that she is in favor of solar arrays but has some concerns over the placement of these arrays in the C-1 buffer, the re-grading of the lot and excessive fertilizer being used. Mark Solomon stated that there will not be any fertilizer used, the way the arrays are being placed is to minimize tree loss, they have no plans to re-grade the land, and there will be no footings or foundations. The array will be placed in a racking system (steel posts placed into the ground) and it will encroach into the C-1 buffer only to the extent necessary to maximize the return on the investment in the solar field. He said the fire official has asked that stabilized turf be used for a 150 foot grass road for emergency access. When asked if Tenacre would be willing to speak on the project in the future to educate the public, Mr. Bell said they would. Joan McGee expressed other issues asking the applicant about the tree-planting plan. When it was stated that Norway maples were included on the list of species to be planted, Hiltner stated that he would advise against that, given that Norway maple is an invasive exotic species. Joan McGee stated that another major concern is storm-water drainage. Mark Solomon noted that the Township Storm-Water consultant, Joe Skupien, compiled an analysis on this and he was comfortable that there would not be any negative impacts from the storm-water drainage.

A motion was made in support of the application with the recommendation that the applicant not include Norway Maple trees and that the applicant use non-invasive native plantings instead and that the storm-water be measured in the future to assess the impact of encroachment in the C-1 buffer. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved by the Commission.

**J. Robert Hillier Bunn Drive Application:** Kaczerski noted that she circulated a revised memo to the Planning Board with regards to the Hillier application. She said the memo was revised based on the comments that were made at the February meeting. She said the memo discusses the environmental deed restriction on the undeveloped land and that there should not be a paved road in the restricted area. Mr. Hillier noted that he needs to obtain approval of the site plan before he can deed the land over to someone else. When asked who he will be deeding the property to, Mr. Hillier stated that there is no firm agreement for that yet, however, he has spoken to the D&R Greenway and Michelle Byers. Hiltner suggested that 2c of the memo be revised to read “preserve as many native trees and native vegetation as possible.” When asked about the need for blasting, Mr. Hillier said they have run tests pits out there and as of now there is no intention to use blasting.

A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the memo as it was revised and to incorporate additional revisions made during the discussion.

**Province Line Woods:** Hamilton said this application is also known as “Lanwin Development” and they are proposing to build 16 homes off Drakes Corner Road on a 152 acre lot where 25% of the lot is considered wet lands. She said it seems the

homes will be built on 4-19 acre lots. She said the Master Plan states that if this tract of land is developed it should include certain conservation easements, including one that would connect the land to the Montgomery Trail system. She said there are slopes on the lot and the applicant may be doing a lot of grading to flatten the land. She said it really is too pre-mature for the PEC to weigh in on the application but Ilene Cutroneo in the Planning Board wants a response from the PEC by April 15<sup>th</sup>. She said the Zoning and Engineering reports will be done on April 1<sup>st</sup> and after reviewing those reports, the subcommittee will develop a more detailed memo on the project. It was suggested that the PEC invite the applicant to a future meeting to discuss the project. Hamilton explained that the current memo has been developed for the PEC to approve so it can be sent to the Planning Board. However, it should be noted that once the Zoning and Engineering reports are available, the PEC will be amending this memo.

A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the memo understanding that it will be modified in the future.

## **VII. Discussion and Decisions:**

a) **Arts & Transit:** In Kristen Appleget's absence Ms. Karen Jeziemy was in attendance. Hiltner stated that he was able to pull information off of Princeton University's website as well as Princeton Future. He said he walked the 460 feet that it is proposed that the Dinky may move and it took 2 minutes. He also noted that there was a study done of dinky ridership on Tuesdays and Wednesdays: 40% of people walked to the dinky, 30% drive, 10% were dropped off and 10% rode a bicycle. Since another study showed that at least 40% of Dinky ridership is people associated with the university, this brings into question how many Princeton residents currently access the Dinky by walking. He said he was not persuaded that there is a problem with moving the dinky station location. When asked what will happen to the current dinky station if it is moved, Ms. Jeziemy responded by saying that it will remain and have active uses with access to Alexander and University Place. She also noted that there is an existing parking area located behind the WAWA station and that will be moved closer to the new location of the Dinky; plus there is also parking in Lot 7. Lot 7 parking garage is used primarily for staff during the day but off hours and weekends it can be accessed by the public. Kip Cherry stated that she believed that moving the dinky station will ultimately lose riders. Commission members noted that moving the dinky may actually increase ridership and that the University will make every effort to make its shuttles available. Ms. Jeziemy stated that the Transit Plaza will have access to all of the buses and she feels it will be safer for pedestrians. Fichtenbaum noted that mass transit will be the key to reducing greenhouse gases and it will need to be a sea change in the way we live, work and play to achieve it. She said a planning study noted that people are willing to walk ½ mile to get to mass transit and by moving the station you will lose some people in the ½ mile radius, specifically in the northwest section of Princeton Boro. She also noted that if the Dinky is going to be moved further out, there need to be timed shuttles and bringing mass transit up to Nassau St. should be a

consideration. Wasserman asked the Commission how they wanted to proceed with this because there has not been a formal application filed. Some members thought the PEC should endorse the concept, while others wanted to endorse it but with some recommendations about bringing mass transit up to Nassau Street. It was also asked if the PEC could make a general motion to support the University's efforts to develop the arts in Princeton. Wasserman noted that the PEC will have the opportunity to comment when a full application is submitted. It was suggested that the PEC weigh in on whether or not moving the dinky station is unsustainable.

A motion was made and seconded and the PEC voted to approve the following statement: As Princeton University proceeds with negotiations on the Princeton University arts neighborhood project, and future community wide development, the PEC requests that the parties consider developing mass transit options as well as pedestrian and bicycle pathway amenities aimed at increasing ridership on the Dinky. There was one abstention.

Hiltner proposed the following motion: There are many aspects of the proposed arts and transit neighborhood as described that could compensate for the 460 foot proposed relocation of the Dinky Station. We encourage the decision makers to look at the sustainable aspects of the proposal in their totality. The motion was made and seconded but there were 3 yes's and 6 no's. The motion did not carry.

**Township Update:** Nemeth said the Township has reached a settlement agreement on the senior housing project on the ridge. She said it will be going to the judge in the near future. She also noted that the Township is aggressively moving to install solar panels – they have hired a consultant to help with the project.

**2011 Goals:** Wasserman said he has the following subcommittees listed:  
Application review: Thoft, Kaczerski and Hamilton  
Parks & Recreation: Machold, Ernst and Miller  
Recycling/Leaf Mgmt: Rojer, Ullman, Hiltner and Fichtenbaum  
There was concern that the Green Building subcommittee was not being staffed. Wasserman asked Fichtenbaum to do some research on what is possible by law with regards to green ordinances, the results of which will determine whether a subcommittee is a viable option. In the mean time, Wasserman noted that green building initiatives (not ordinance-related) will continue to be handled by Sustainable Princeton for now.

**Township Appointee to SPRAB:** No one volunteered for this

**Housewarming Project Funding of \$500.00:** A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted (with one abstention) to approve the funding for this project through Sustainable Princeton.

**Communiiversity:** It was decided that the PEC would not have a table at Communiiversity this year and, instead, it would consider devoting some time to working with the Borough on its recycling efforts for the event.

**Stream Clean-Up Event:** Wasserman reminded everyone of the SBMWS stream clean-up on April 9<sup>th</sup> at Carnegie Lake on Rt 27 from 1-3pm.

**Health Commission:** Rojer noted that the Health Commission is working on an ordinance to increase the non-smoking radius to 1,000 feet around schools.

**Parks:** Miller stated that he has only received one email response about the adopt-a-park program. Wasserman noted that the Commission is looking for information about the time and dollars spent on their parks. Machold noted that the Master Plan subcommittee will be meeting on May 9 with regards to the Parks & Recreation Element. Machold said she would be able to make comments concerning TRI and Marquand Parks. Ernst noted that he and Stentz will be assessing the Parks & Recreation element as well.

**VIII. Adjournment:**

A motion as made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted,**



**Debra Rogers, Secretary**

**Date Approved: April 27, 2011**