

## PRINCETON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

**Minutes of Meeting of May 25, 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, Machold, Ullman, Miller, Fichtenbaum, Ullman, Rojer, Crumiller and Nemeth (arrived late)

Absent were: Ernst, Kaczerski, Thoft and Hiltner

There was 1 member of the public present.

### **III. Approval of Agenda:** A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the agenda.

### **IV. Minutes:**

A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted to adopt the minutes of April 27, 2011 as written and amended.

### **V. Public Comment:** There was no public comment at this point.

### **VI. Discussion and Decisions:**

- a) **Township Updates** – Nemeth explained that the Consolidation Commission voted to recommend full consolidation to the governing bodies.
- b) **Borough Updates** – Crumiller asked for help in endorsing no hydrofracking in the Borough. Wasserman explained that will be discussed later in the meeting.
- c) **2011 Goals** – Wasserman explained that the PEC wanted to work on a green building ordinance, but that the PEC first needed to determine what the Township and Borough are legally allowed to adopt in this area. He read 40:55-41 from the NJ Municipal Land Use Law saying the law seems to allow municipalities to adopt green building ordinances. It was noted that there are elements that have already been adopted in the Master Plan. Joan Mcgee of the Watershed noted that she believed that the Township and Borough could not adopt a green building ordinance. It was decided that further research was required in this area before additional steps are taken. If an ordinance is allowed, PEC would work to amend the site plan checklist to reflect green building

initiatives, adopt the revised checklist and then review the planning ordinances to ensure they correspond with the new checklists. Hamilton said that if an ordinance can be adopted, she will try to look at other green building ordinances to help develop an ordinance and then she will work with Thoft and Fichtenbaum to construct the ordinance. It was also suggest that she review the Sustainable Princeton checklist that has recently been put together. Wasserman said he would attempt to locate and distribute green building checklists from other towns to review.

- d) **Impervious Surface Coverage Discussion** - Wasserman discussed the data that he has been compiling regarding estimates of impervious coverage in the Township and Borough. He said he has been working to try to determine what Princeton's "net" impervious coverage is. He said he has met with Joan Magee of the Watershed and Lee Solow and they looked at the zoning map and then estimated what the impervious coverage was in some areas such as the Institute woods. He said based on the numbers in Princeton Borough, the center of town is accountable for ¼ of the total impervious coverage (having 100% isc), Princeton University is accountable for ½ of the impervious coverage (having 25-30% isc) and the residential areas are accountable for ¼ of the impervious coverage (having 50% isc). He said the total Township "net" impervious coverage is estimated by him to be at about 18% including 100 miles of road (which encompasses 303 acres) and combined the Township and Borough are estimated by him to have a "net" impervious coverage of about 21%, which is right around where the Watershed would like to see it. He said it is the Watershed's recommendation to bring all impervious surface coverage under 20% in the 26 municipalities that the Watershed encompasses. Wasserman then asked the PEC to make a determination about whether these numbers could justify certain proposed changes to Princeton's impervious coverage ordinance. He said the PEC needs to collectively decide to do something or not do anything and he noted that it was ok to take a leap of faith if the scientific data was not available. Certain members expressed reservations at this approach and a motion was not made. It was noted that the scientific report provided to the PEC members did not support the fact that lowering impervious coverage in a cluster area such as Princeton would have any positive effect on the Watershed and rather, the report provided to the PEC members argued for development in clusters and the preservation of existing open space in the Watershed. Hamilton noted that there are 26 municipalities within the Watershed and the Township and Borough are long-developed clusters within the Watershed. Fichtenbaum suggested color coding the zoning map according to the impervious coverage percentages that Wasserman discussed as it may help the PEC better understand the issue and decide where it goes with the discussion, perhaps taking an approach that is not onerous to the property owners. Wasserman volunteered to do a little more research on this so that the PEC would feel comfortable either taking a position or not taking a position on this. He said he will email any additional scientific studies he finds to the members and to Deb in order to keep them with the minutes.

- e) **SBMWS Stream Buffer Legislation** – Mcgee said that she believes that right now Princeton Township is not compliant with certain state regulations regarding stream buffers and she urged the PEC to ask the governing body to adopt a model ordinance setting 50 foot, 150 foot and 300 foot buffers, depending on the water the development abuts. The PEC held a lengthy discussion on the model stream buffer ordinance, noting that state laws supersede local laws and therefore it did not seem logical that the local law could override the state law. The issue of additional costs to the Township and Borough if new stream buffers were adopted was discussed. Fichtenbaum offered to do more research on the subject before the PEC decides whether or not it would like to recommend adoption of the model stream buffer ordinance. It was also noted that public education is key, and perhaps there should be something done to educate the public on development near water.

**VII. Updates and Regular Business:**

- a) **Chair's Report:** Wasserman reminded the Commission members about the Open Space Plan Meeting on Clusters Tools that is being sponsored by the SBMWS.  
Nemeth noted that Township Committee passed a resolution against hydrofracking in New Jersey. A motion was made by Fichtenbaum that the PEC is in support of resolutions issued by the Township and the Borough that oppose hydrofracking. The motion was seconded and unanimously passed by the Commission.  
Fichtenbaum said it would be good for the public to know about and understand pending legislation regarding hydrofracking and that they should contact their representatives about this.
- b) **Parks:** Miller said that he has been speaking with Ernst and Greg O'Neil regarding the various requests from the park representatives. Nemeth noted that the Citizens Finance Advisory Group decided not to lower the open space tax this year and will re-visit it next year. There was also a brief discussion on the damage that the beavers are doing to Petronella Gardens.
- c) **Sustainable Princeton:** Fichtenbaum said the housewarming project is under way. She said she will be taking a look at her energy bills prior to some energy upgrades that she did and looking at the bills from after and will show the participants of the housewarming project. She reminded everyone that June 9, 2011 is the launch of the "bring your own bag" program.
- d) **Regional Planning Board:** Ullman noted that the Hillier application has been postponed until June 9, 2011 because of technical difficulties with the Township's recording system.

**VIII. Adjournment:** A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:29 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Debra Rogers", is written over a faint, light blue rectangular stamp.

**Debra Rogers, Secretary**

**Date Approved: June 22, 2011**