

**PRINCETON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**Minutes of Meeting of September 22, 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 7:37 p.m.**

Present were: Wasserman, Hamilton, Kaczerski, Miller, Fichtenbaum, Applegate, Ullman, Rojer, Crumiller and Nemeth

Absent were: Thoft, Hiltner, Ernst and Eiref

There no members 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 July 20, 2011 as written and amended.

**V. Public Comment:** There were no members of the public present.

**VI. Discussions and Decisions:**

- a) **Township Update** – Nemeth discussed the damage that was incurred from Hurricane Irene and said a full assessment of the damage and repairs will be forthcoming and she will share it with the PEC. She also discussed the need for public education regarding the dangers of storm water. Wasserman said that it will be helpful to see the full assessment and then the Commission can reach out to the Flooding and Stormwater Committee. There was also a brief discussion about tree logs blocking the flow of the Stony Brook – it was determined that that issue was in the jurisdiction of the DEP. Nemeth also noted that she has not sent the letter out yet to Senator Bateman. She has a draft that she would like the PEC to look over and comment on first and then she will send it out to request a meeting. Wasserman said he will research some environmental issues that should be included in the letter. He noted that the draft will then be sent out via email for everyone’s approval. He also asked that anyone interested in attending the meeting with the Senator should let him know.

- b) **Borough Update** – Crumiller noted that the hydro-fracking resolution was approved by Borough Council. She also noted that she will be setting up a meeting with Hiltner and Trelstad regarding the recycling grant money that the Borough receives every year. She said she would like to see that money put to good use. The Commission then held a discussion on the recycling initiatives that are done in the township and that maybe the Township Recycling Coordinator can be shared with the Borough. It was noted that the Borough has a Recycling Coordinator, Sean Burns, and that he should be included in the meeting with Hiltner and Trelstad. It was also decided that the PEC would weigh in on the issue after the consolidation vote in November.
- c) **SHHREDtember Fest** – Wasserman said there is information online regarding this event. He noted that it is for Township residents, however, Borough residents 65 years or older may bring paper to be shredded. He said the PEC, Sustainable Princeton and the Master Gardeners will have tables at this event. He said the event takes place on Saturday September 24, 2011. Ullman also noted that Mercer County holds a similar event in October at the Dempster Fire Center in Lawrence.
- d) **Valley Road School Building** – Wasserman asked if anyone had comments on this issue. He said he placed it on this agenda because it was brought up at the last meeting. Crumiller said the PEC may be asked to comment because there is a group that is raising environmental issues. Ullman noted that she did not think that PEC had the capability to weigh all of the environmental pros and cons of demolition of the Valley Road Building as opposed to a refurbishment of the Valley Road Building. Members of the PEC agreed. **Safe Playing Fields Act** – Hamilton said she has been doing research on this new Act that is being co-sponsored by Senator Bateman. She said the Act calls for natural turf management – no pesticides or integrated pest management (IPM) – on all school fields (K-12), recreation fields and day care centers. She noted that versions of this Act have already passed in NY and CT. She said there are 40 municipalities in NJ that have a ban on pesticides but there is no mandate in place yet by the state. She said that she was told by the non-profit organization that is pushing the Act that there was a good chance that it would pass but if it passes there will be a 2 year waiting period before all pesticides on playing fields, school fields and day care centers would be prohibited. Hamilton provided the PEC with information from Ted Ernst on which pesticides were being used on the Princeton playing fields and how often they were being applied. Information was also provided about the toxicity and danger rating of each of the pesticides currently being used on the Princeton playing fields. Members of the Commission expressed great concern upon learning of the pesticides being used on the Princeton playing fields. Hamilton also cited an article from the American Academy of Pediatricians that explained that pesticides are dangerous to children and should not be used on fields where children play. Hamilton handed out a draft flier that could be provided to sports teams and schools advising parents about how to protect their children from pesticides. The PEC watched a video clip on the concerns of pesticides being applied to municipal recreation playing fields and how natural playing fields are

safer and achievable. It was suggested that the PEC speak with Barbara Bromley about artificial turf management. The video also explained that toxins are found in artificial turf and highly toxic chemicals must be used to clean up bodily spills (e.g., vomit, blood, etc.) when it is on artificial turf. The PEC held a discussion about the current use in Princeton of pesticides on playing fields and the steps needed to eliminate the use of artificial pesticides on the Princeton playing fields. It was suggested that the PEC make a presentation (with the video) to the Princeton Regional Health Commission. Rojer said he would speak to David Henry about giving the PEC time at its next meeting on October 18, 2011. Wasserman noted that he and Hamilton will speak to some of the municipal health commissions that banned the use of pesticides to gather more information as well. Nemeth said she will re-draft the letter to Senator Bateman to request a meeting with the PEC and will move the issue of Safe Playing Fields Act to the forefront of the letter.

- e) **Province Line Woods** – Ullman said this application was approved by the Regional Planning Board. She said this application was actually approved by the Planning Board 20 years and this most recent application was to amend the approval adding 4 more lots to the subdivision. She noted that the applicant referred to the PEC memo at the meeting stating that they would not “cluster” because these lots will be all septic, and that they are exploring non-structural storm water management. She also noted that they will be increasing the number of replacement trees when the construction is completed.
- f) **Deer Management** - Miller noted that the Township is back in talks with White Buffalo to cull the deer. Wasserman noted that the bow hunters have not controlled the population.
- g) **Recreation Dept** – Wasserman referred to a report that he received from Ernst: **-Safe Playing Fields Act**

The Safe Playing fields Act (S.2610/A.3621), as written, will undermine current IPM programs and ban the use of traditional pesticides in all schools, day cares, parks and recreational fields. The bill does not follow good scientific practices. Attached is an information statement from the New Jersey Green Industries Council (NJGIC).

I also spoke with Bill Foelsch. Bill is the former director of the New Jersey Park and Recreation Association and current director of the Recreation Department in Morris Township. For over twenty years, Bill has been involved with the legislative end of bills that deal with parks and recreation. According to Bill, the NJGIC have tried, twice, to present their information to the legislature and have been denied. The NJGIC supports the idea behind the bill, but not as it is written. They are requesting that the bill be based on sound science. The NJGIC is proposing the following amendments to the bill:

- Focus on sound IPM programs for the other areas by expanding the School IPM requirements to parks in the bill (the current school IPM Bill has merits

as it is working to limit pesticide use to only what is absolutely necessary based on monitoring and sound IPM procedures)

- Change the language on ‘NJ Low Impact Pesticides’ that allows for appropriate updating when new products are developed (inclusion of a limited product ‘NJ Low Impact list’ has significant limitations and no mechanism for updating with new products)

Another concern is the inability to control crab grass and clover. If crab grass is not controlled, compaction of the fields occur and become dangerous when participants fall to the ground. Clover attracts bees and other stinging insects, the concern being allergic reactions.

I also attached a FAQ document from Shirley Turner’s office. When I looked through it, I looked up some of the information they referred to.

- The bill only applies to schools in NY and CT.
- The areas that are pointed to in NJ that have organic programs are on facilities that have limited, seasonal use.
  - No matter how healthy or what method you use for turf management, a field begins to deteriorate after 55 uses per year (a use being 1 practice or 1 game) Our fields get 55 uses after 4 weeks of use in the spring or fall.
    - Because of wear and tear, it is the opinion of several people in the recreation field, regardless of what the FAQ says, that this will push municipalities to push for the installation of more synthetic turf fields.

### **-Recreation Department Update**

Pool construction is in full swing. Once PSE&G completes the shutdown of electric to the site, the rest of the buildings will be demo’d. All the materials demo’d have been separated. All metals were sent to recycling centers as scrap. All of the concrete will be milled on site and used as backfill for various aspects of the project. The wood was dry rotting.

- g) Leaf Management** – Wasserman noted that Andrea Malcolm (Sustainable Princeton) is putting together information from the people who were given the leaf corrals last year; he said the report should be available next month. He said once the PEC has the report, it can decide if it wants to make recommendations, continue the program and give people a better idea of what to expect.
- h) Sustainable Princeton** - \* **Re-usable Bags**: PU is distributing a re-usable bag to all 1200 incoming freshman. The bag will have PU information on one side and the BYOBag logo and possibly a list of BYOBag stores on the other side. We are currently looking at three distributors to decide by this Friday which to use. Princeton University office of sustainability has been given a \$3,600

budget to cover the costs. Great opportunity to promote local businesses to incoming students and BYOBag!

\* **Green Purchasing:** Shana believes that their purchasing department would be interested in opening up their green purchasing to the municipality and local businesses. She provided me with the email of the Director of Purchasing to pursue this further. Also, said that Stu Orefice may also help local businesses buy compostable materials at a lower price.

\* **Inline Composter:** After a meeting with some Whole Earth Board members, I realized how useful it would be to purchase an in-line composter in Princeton. So many restaurants do not purchase compostable dinnerware because they have nowhere to compost it. Turns out, P.U. is in the middle of researching a digester and Shana was very interested in partnering with the township and Borough on this project. They have 900 tons of food waste a year. While our food waste pilot may be expanding into the Borough---we do not get the compost at the end of the cycle. She recommended I speak with Kristin Appleget about possibilities.

\* **Sustainable Ambassadors:** PU has created a Sustainable Ambassadors program using the people on campus who have made great strides to mentor others on campus. Same wording and idea we have had for years...I would like to bring our Ambassador program to life this year.

\* **Volunteer Recruitment:** SP representative will be attending the Sustainability meetings on campus to coordinate volunteers for the bike event in October, the 350 event and any additional needs we may have. In addition, we may work with PU on special projects where students will be researching for us.

- i) **SPRAB/Development Review Subcommittee – Wasserman noted that two** new applications have been submitted and the subcommittee will determine the next steps.
- j) **Liaisons Reports:**
  - a) **Shade Tree Commission** – No report
  - b) **Recreation Department** – See above
  - c) **Health Commission** –Rojer noted that the biggest concern with the health commission right now is the longer term effects of the storms as it relates to mold, mildew, allergies, asthma, etc. (especially since parts of the high school was flooded).
  - d) **Flooding and Stormwater Committee** – Fichtenbaum mentioned some flooding and erosion issues at Queenstown Commons. She asked if anyone knew about any federal grants that may be available to help them remediate the problems. Wasserman suggested she speak with Liz Lempert.
  - e) **Regional Planning Board** – Ullman said the master plan subcommittee met and approved the open space element. She said there will be a public

meeting held in November and said she would keep the PEC informed about the meeting.

- k) Municipal Consolidation** – Wasserman asked the PEC if there was a piece of the municipal consolidation that it thinks the Commission should weigh in on. He asked for suggestions from the members. The members offered the following suggestions: recycling, unified garbage collection, under consolidated management there may be the opportunity to develop a parks department, discussions would be with one government not two, possible eligibility for more grant money and that comprehensive thinking of one government would be a benefit to the community. Wasserman said this would be discussed further at the next meeting.
- l) Adjournment:** A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Debra Rogers, Secretary**

Date Approved: October 26, 2011