

PRINCETON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

**Minutes of Meeting of December 7, 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 7:34 p.m.

Present were: Wasserman, Kaczerski, Miller, Fichtenbaum, Ullman, Rojer, Hiltner and Thoft

Absent were: Nemeth, Crumiller, Hamilton, Applegate 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 October 26, 2011 as written and amended.

V. Decisions and Discussions:

a) **Borough Update:** Wasserman noted that the Borough Shade Tree Commission is working with the Township Shade Tree Commission to develop a joint ordinance. He said that Crumiller asked that any comments the PEC has should be sent to her. He also noted that Crumiller received a letter from the Stony Brook Regional Sewage Authority requesting that the Borough and Township take a position for the DEP not to lower the permitted values of certain items in the drinking water. The lowering of those items any further is not providing any health benefits. He said the letter also referenced a cost of 11 million dollars to manage the drinking water. He said they have asked to have a discussion about this with the Mayors and the NJDEP. Crumiller wanted the PEC to know in case anyone wanted to comment on this. Wasserman said he will find out more information and will forward it on to the PEC. It was also noted in the Meeting that the Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association should be contacted about this.

b) **Safe Playing Fields Act:** Rojer stated that the Health Commission would like to review the resolution from the PEC regarding the safe playing fields act before

they take any type of position. Wasserman said that the PEC did not adopt a resolution. Rojer also noted that the Health Commission did find out that Community Park School has not used any pesticides for the past 2 years. Wasserman said that Stentz had a conflict with this PEC meeting but he asked Stentz if he could find out whether or not other municipalities have seen a success with the organic methodology. Wasserman said if the reason it is not being done is solely because of money, then the PEC should push them to switch to organics. He said that lawns can be treated with organic pesticide or it can just be fed organically. The Recreation Department has always asked for an organic price in the bid process but the organics have always come up higher. Wasserman stated that he would go back and check to see if the PEC adopted a resolution, and if so, he would forward it to Rojer. In the meantime, Wasserman said the PEC is really looking for the Health Commission to provide data that these pesticide products should not be used. Kaczerski noted that she found a lot of data a few years ago and she will look for it and pass it on the Recreation Department.

- c) **Environmental Film Festival:** Wasserman said that the film festival will start on January 26, 2012 and will run for 3 four-day weekends. He said Sustainable Princeton will kick off the event on Wednesday January 25, 2012 with the Sustainable Princeton Awards Presentation. (This is the PEC meeting night). He said he would like the PEC to be present for the awards presentation which will be from 7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. – and then he thought the PEC could continue with its meeting in one of the meeting rooms there at the library. The PEC unanimously agreed to have the meeting there. Wasserman asked that Rogers re-notice the meeting for the Princeton Library on January 25, 2012 at 8:30 p.m.
- d) **2012 OPRA Resolutions:**
A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to adopt the 2012 OPRA Resolutions.
- e) **Nominating Committee:** Wasserman asked for 2 members of the Commission to volunteer to be on the nominating committee. Fichtenbaum volunteered to be on the committee. Wasserman said he would send out an email asking for another member to be a part of this committee.
- f) **Municipal Consolidation:** Wasserman said that the PEC needs to think about what it should address with the consolidation process. He said he spoke to Lempert and she stated that one of the big environmental issues that have come up is the Open Space Tax. He said currently the Borough resident's pays 1% and the Township residents pays 2%. He said the will have to determine a new percentage with the new community. Public education about how the money is used was discussed and it was determined that the PEC should know exactly how the money should be used, make a budget, and whatever is done with the money should be beneficial to all residents. It was noted that once a budget is determined, then a percentage could be more easily determined. Some of the items discussed were: Parks Director, Organic Pest Management, Passive Open Space, Trails and additional procurement of open space. Wasserman said he would ask Lempert for a copy of the current open space budget. He said the Township has a budget, the Borough does not. He said a subcommittee could

work from the Township budget and determine numbers for the Borough as well. Wasserman noted that Open Space will be one of the priorities during the municipal consolidation process. It was noted that Recycling should be another priority. Ullman noted that the Township and Borough ordinances should be compared. Wasserman noted that Rogers should gather all the Township and Borough ordinances that relate to the environment. Fichtenbaum said that she spoke with someone who told her that the International Green Construction Code passed in November and it will be issued in March. Then each state and municipality will have to adopt this code. She said with each new revision of this code it will become stricter and stricter. She said she will reach out to him and see if he would be available to come and speak to the PEC. She said once this code is passed, the PEC would not have to fight with developers about green initiatives. She said this would relate specifically right now to the hospital site (Avalon). Wasserman said he reached out to Ed Schmierer about green building codes and his response was that the township could not adopt an ordinance that is not currently in the Universal Construction Code. He suggested that the PEC make recommendation to the Township Construction Code Official (John Pettenati) and let him send the recommendations into the UCC. The question arose as to how the PEC can influence developers to makes the sites more green. It was suggested that a citizen's advisory committee be formed to advocate sustainability. It was noted that the developers of the hospital site – Avalon have met with Borough and Township governing bodies to lobby for what they want. It was suggested that the PEC invite the Avalon developers to meet with them and possibly invite the regional Planning Board, other government entities and the public to attend. Fichtenbaum said she volunteers to do research on the precedence with similar sites to the hospital that were done with sustainable initiatives. She said that the Avalon developers are not interested in green building standards. For them it's about building a resort style living. Wasserman said he would speak with Goerner, Trotman and Moore and ask them to find out if the Avalon proposal will be sustainable as the Master Plan recommends. The question came up about the size of the PEC once consolidation is completed. Wasserman asked Rogers to find out and respond back. Another question that arose was whether or not there would now be one municipal building with consolidation. The PEC held a brief discussion on the location of the Dinky; Ullman noted that the Regional Planning Board is currently working on the circulation element of the Master Plan. Wasserman noted that he attended a meeting recently with Landis, Solow, Weber and reps from Princeton University about joint composting. He said now that the Township has Food Waste Recycling, the University would know how to expand it. The University asked if they would be able to use the River Road facility as their own depot. He right now the University relies on a pig farmer to remove all of the waste. The Township's food waste is taken to Delaware where it is put into a food digester and then turned into compost. The University would like to buy its own digester and has invited the attendees at the meeting to go with them to another university to see how the digester works. He said the University would also like the Borough businesses to be part of this discussion.

He also noted that recycling will continue to be a major point of discussion during the consolidation transition. The PEC then moved on to discuss yard waste and trash in the streets. Hiltner noted that Daniel Harris and Grace Sinden would like to see yard waste collection curtailed and rules enforced, and that it is possible for most residents to keep yard waste on their own properties. He asked how the PEC can approach this in a peaceful way with the goal of getting clean streets. He said perhaps suggesting to the residents that if this collection stops, other services can be initiated because the employees won't be spending all of their time cleaning up the streets. Wasserman suggested coming up with a solution that is transformative. Hiltner said the PEC could request informative data from the Borough and Township to determine the true costs of various services and possibly help in formulating an argument for more composting (data should include costs for claw operation, street sweeper, gas, manpower etc) because this is a tough argument. He said the PEC could highlight the public safety aspect in the argument. Wasserman said he attended a meeting a year ago on this very subject and it didn't go very far. He said this needs to be presented in a new way to get attention and an ordinance that says no leaves in the street – the PEC could write the ordinance and present it to the new governing body. He said there are many services you can tie to this argument – totality of services that will lessen the pain to the residents (i.e. fixing more potholes, road resurfacing etc). Wasserman noted that the following have been identified as priorities of the PEC during the transition into consolidation: Waste, Open Space, ordinances, green building standards (Avalon) and a better more open partnership with Princeton University. It was suggested that the PEC approach the transition team and let them know the topics that are of most concern to the PEC. Wasserman said he will get in touch with the Mayors and find out when the transition team will be in place and then he will set up a time to meet with them and convey the areas of priority.

g) Chairs Report:

- a) Wasserman noted that Stentz said the pool project is going well and is still on budget.
- b) Wasserman said he has spoken to the DVRPC regarding grants for bike trails.

h) Focus Areas:

- a) Parks/Natural Resources: Miller said that he visited the Harrison Street Park and found it to have a lot of pebbles and a clay liner. He said there were very few puddles at the park. He also said that he attended a meeting of Environment New Jersey and one of the hot topics was its upcoming meeting with Senator Bateman. He said they offered some tips on what the PEC should discuss with him. He said they will be having activist and lobby days until 2/15/12. He said in Princeton they want to volunteer a “day of action”.
- b) **Recycling:** Hiltner said he was working on arranging a tour of the MRF (Materials Recovery Facility) where Princeton's curbside recyclables go, after receiving the go-ahead from Pellichero via Landis to arrange the meeting. Wasserman stated that, instead, Dan Napoleon from Mercer County would arrange the tour for some time in January.

- c) **Regional Planning Board:** Ullman said the Planning Board is currently hearing the application for the Institute for Advanced Study faculty housing. She said the last meeting ran very late and it will be carried to another agenda soon.
- d) **Hibben Magie Project:** Kaczerski explained the Princeton University Hibben Magie proposal. She said she is in the process of writing the memo for the PEC and will email it out for approval when it is completed. She noted that the Township Engineer did a great job on his report addressing environmental and tree issues.
- e) **Health Commission:** Rojer said the Health Commission is looking into how it can contact single seniors in an emergency to make sure they are taken care of.

VI. Adjournment:

A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Debra Rogers, Secretary

Date Approved: January 25, 2012