

## PRINCETON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

**Minutes of Meeting of March 28, 2012– 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, Hamilton, Kaczerski, Hiltner, Miller, Fichtenbaum, Applegate, Herlihy, Ullman, Rojer, Crumiller and Lempert

Absent were: Eiref

There were 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 as it was amended by Hiltner

### **IV. Minutes:**

A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted to adopt the minutes of February 22, 2012 as written and amended.

### **V. Discussion and Decisions:**

- a) **PSEG Tree Trimming:** Princeton Township Open Space Manager and Arborist Greg O’Neil discussed the history of the PSEG tree trimming. He said he worked with PSEG to become more aggressive with its tree trimming to reduce the number of power outages in the Township. He said PSEG would trim the branches that had the potential to interfere with the power lines and they would also trim back 8-10 feet to reduced growth of these branches. He said in the future they will be working to do less aggressive pruning and to make it more aesthetically pleasing. He also discussed the state statute for electric company tree trimming. He said he has a very good relationship with PSEG and they work together when it comes to completely removing trees. It was suggested that perhaps smaller trees are planted around the power lines to reduce the “topping of trees”. He said in some cases they will completely remove trees that are in the right-of-way in order to get to the more visually pleasing vegetation behind it. It was suggested that the utility company bury the wires underground instead of having them overhead. O’Neill said that has been discussed – but once the residents hear the cost of it, they don’t want to do it. Wasserman asked

if there was anything the PEC could do with regards to this. O'Neil said not really unless the PEC wanted to generate letters to the Shade Tree Commissions in the Township and Borough regarding the topping of trees. Hamilton said that when she spoke with the Chair of the Township Shade Tree Commission that she (the Chairperson) made it clear that the STC had this issue under control. Hamilton asked O'Neil about stump grinding. O'Neil said PSEG will treat the stumps with herbicide and the stumps will slowly disappear. He also reminded the PEC that he does not have any jurisdiction on County and State roads.

**b) Request from homeowners to remove trees in Woodfield Reservation:**

Wasserman said the PEC received a letter from a homeowner requesting to remove trees in Woodfield Reservation. He said he took a tour of the area and their lot is very long and runs downhill to the reservation. He said it was very obvious that some trees were topped beyond the rear boundary of their property. He said he did not feel the trees should be removed because a) it is a dangerous precedent to set, allowing residents to cut trees on preserved land and 2) the trees lie well beyond the fence-line of the property owner thereby all but eliminating any risk that might be associated with a falling tree. Matt then asked for the opinion of other members. There was a brief discussion by the Commission. A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to deny the request to remove trees at Woodfield Reservation. Rojer abstained from this vote.

**c) Township Updates:** Lempert stated that the community is actively seeking people to sign-up for the curbside composting program to keep it alive.

Wasserman stated that the PEC will be working with Public Works on the trash contract that will go out for bid. He said he feels strongly that whoever is awarded the contract must have the availability to do the curbside composting pick-ups. Fichtenbaum explained what items could go into the containers and she urged people to sign-up if they have not already done so. Wasserman suggested that a promotion of the program could include the PEC funding the costs of the program for the rest of the year to the first 50 people to sign-up. He said he would speak with Kathy Monzo, Township CFO, to see how much money was in the budget and available. It was also suggested that when promoting the program, testimonials should be used from people who are currently in the program.

**d) Vice Chair:** Wasserman noted that since Thoft had to resign, the PEC is now left with the Vice Chair position vacant. He asked for nominations; Miller nominated Fichtenbaum to be the Vice Chair of the PEC for the year 2012. Wasserman asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to appoint Fichtenbaum as Vice Chair. A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to appoint Fichtenbaum as Vice Chair of the PEC for the year 2012.

**e) SPRAB:** Wasserman said that the PEC needs a Borough representative for SPRAB since Thoft resigned. After a brief discussion it was determined that Kaczerski would be the PEC Borough rep for SPRAB.

**f) RGGI Resolution:** Wasserman said the PEC received an email with a proposed resolution from Miller regarding RGGI. (Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative).

He asked for a motion to send this resolution to Township Committee and Borough Council. A motion was made and seconded and the Board voted unanimously to send this resolution on to Township Committee and Borough Council.

- g) ANJEC Bike Grant:** Wasserman said he prepared a draft resolution for the PE to consider. He said this resolution is in support of the Land Use Planning Grant that the Joint Bike Committee is seeking from ANJEC. He said the grant is worth \$15,000.00. The PEC discussed minor changes to the resolution and then a motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to adopt the resolution.
- h) Parks Director:** Wasserman said he has been reviewing the past memos that the PEC has sent in regards to the community establishing a Parks Director. He said he will re-forward those memos to the powers that be.
- i) Avalon Bay:** Crumiller said that Borough Council will be introducing the ordinance for increased density for the Avalon Bay project on April 10<sup>th</sup> and then on April 19<sup>th</sup> the Regional Planning Board will be holding a public hearing on it. Wasserman said he would like to ask Borough Council and the Regional Planning Board to change the ordinance so it reflects the recommendations that were sent from the PEC. The PEC held a lengthy discussion on this discussing such issues as affordable housing vs. workforce housing; environmental checklists and achieving certification; reuse and recyclables and how it relates to LEED; where design standards should be placed in the ordinance; how it relates to the Master Plan; the ordinance should stipulated that 50% of debris must be recycled; Wasserman noted that he will work with a small subcommittee to come up with the exact wording but the memo should be sent to the Regional Planning Board and Borough Council re-iterating the items in the previous PEC memo and citing specifically the area's that should be changed in the ordinance to reflect the items discussed such as but not limited to changing the location in the ordinance of LEED certification; and changing reuse and recycling to demolition and construction and clarifying affordable housing and workforce housing. It was also noted that the memo should be submitted to the regional Planning Board and Borough Council however, it should also be read into the record at both meeting. A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted to send this memo to the Regional Planning Board and Borough Council. Ullman abstained from this vote.
- j) Chairs report:** a) Wasserman noted that Sustainable Princeton has just applied to become a 501© (3) Corporation; b) he said there will be more recycling buckets and volunteers at Communiversy to help with recycling; c) Sustainable Princeton is working on getting more functional recycle bins in Hines Plaza; d) Stream Clean-up will be held on April 29<sup>th</sup> at the canal at Washington Road; e) He said he spoke to Wendy Mager at Friends of Princeton Open Space and she said they take care of the open space issues but would like to have the support in helping to drive the establishment of a Parks Director; f) He said he recently met with the Chief of Staff for Governor Christie regarding open space and land preservation in order to keep the \$200 million dollar line item to keep open space

going; g) he said he took a tour of the new pool complex and was happy to see that almost every ounce of concrete debris was recycled.

**VI. Focus Area's:**

- a) **Open Space Subcommittee:** Wasserman noted that this subcommittee has not met yet and will be doing so in the next week. Lempert inquired as to whether or not the subcommittee would be working on the open space tax question for the referendum. The Borough open space tax rate is currently 1 cent per \$100 assessed property. The Township open space tax rate is 2 cents. Both will expire at the end of the year because of consolidation, so a question will be placed on the November ballot to establish a new rate. To keep revenues flat, the new rate would be set at approximately 1.7 cents. Crumiller noted that the Finance Subcommittee of the Transition Task Force is working on this as well. Wasserman stated that FOPOS would like the town to have a Parks Director and suggested that the open space tax percentage remain at 2 cents so it could fund this position. Lempert noted that the Township had traditionally used its open space fund money for land acquisitions, but that some of it was now being used for maintenance. She explained the law with the regards to the operating budget and the use of this money. It was decided that further research needed to be done to see whether a Parks Director should be funded from the Open Space Tax revenue.
- b) **Green Building Subcommittee:** Fichtenbaum stated that the subcommittee has made a serious start on the green building checklist and that Lee Solow and Andrea Malcolm are also working on this for Sustainable Princeton. She said she is concerned that this list may fall by the wayside if the Planning Board is left to take charge of this because of the amount of work they are doing right now. The subcommittee has a meeting with Lee and Andrea to discuss the checklist. Fichtenbaum said the subcommittee is approaching this checklist in 2 ways; first for the small residential project, and then for the larger site plans. She said they are concentrating on the larger of the two and perhaps Sustainable Princeton will concentrate more on the residential side of it. Wasserman said to make sure everyone meets to discuss this, and Lempert said she will also attend the meeting.
- c) **Waste and Energy:** Wasserman stated that there was nothing to report.
- d) **Development Review Subcommittee:** Kaczerski said she has not received the pending application log from the Planning Board and Wasserman said he would look into it. Kaczerski discussed the Avalon Bay application concentrating on the positive aspects, there will be peak/off peak trips; reduction in impervious coverage; reduction in storm water run-off; providing a fully landscaped public park; no extra water quality treatment will be required; no freshwater wetlands to address; no water recharge issues; they will be using energy star appliance. On the negative side, all of the existing landscaping will be removed which includes shade trees; there will be a net increase of sewage flow and their water use will increase. Fichtenbaum noted that Avalon Bay is comparing themselves to the hospital use when in fact they should be comparing themselves to other similar residential uses. Kaczerski noted that there will be a memo forthcoming from the subcommittee concerning this application. Wasserman asked the

Commission when they felt the PEC should continue its conversations with Avalon Bay. Hamilton stated that she thought the PEC should put its energy into the ordinance and if the ordinance passes then the PEC should strategize on what they would like to see the developer implement.

- e) **Shade Tree Commission: No Report**
- f) **Recreation: No report**
- g) **Health Commission:** Rojer noted that Henry is working on an ordinance to ban the use of pesticides on playing fields and playgrounds for K-8. He said he believes the Health Commission has the authority to pass this ordinance.
- h) **Regional Planning Board: No report**
- i) Fichtenbaum asked if the open space subcommittee may be interested in working on a project to naturalize the detention basins in the community. She said this will improve water quality and possibly be a habitat for some animals. She said there have been up to 3 that have been naturalized already but she will forward the email she received from Bob Kiser to the PEC.

**VII. Adjournment:** A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:03 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted,**



**Debra Rogers, Secretary**

**Date Approved: April 25, 2012**