



Princeton Environmental Commission
Monthly Meeting Minutes
February 22, 2017
Witherspoon Hall-Meeting Room A
400 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08540

Present

Board Members:

Sophie Glovier, Chair
Heidi Fichtenbaum, Vice
Chair
George DiFerdinando, Board
of Health Liaison
Tammy Sands
Christine Symington,
Sustainable Princeton
Zenon Tech-Czarny
Timothy Quinn
Brian Walker
Karen Zemble

Staff:

Ben Strauss, Board Secretary

Guests:

Alexi Assmus
Michael Pisauro, Stony
Brook-Millstone
Watershed
Jack West, Princeton
Engineering

Absent

Board Members:

Lisa Marcus-Levine
Steve Miller, Board of
Health Liaison
Haewon Park
Mia Sacks

Submitted: Ben Strauss, Board Secretary

Date Approved:

At 7:30 pm, Chair Glovier calls the meeting to order by reading the 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 Princeton Clerk.”

I. Roll Call (7:30 p.m.)

Chair Glovier calls roll.

II. Approval of Agenda (7:31 p.m.)

Ms. Zemle motions to approve the agenda. Mr. Tech-Czarny seconds. The Commission unanimously approves the agenda.

III. Approval of Minutes 7:45 p.m.

a. December 14, 2016

Some members suggest amendments. Mr. Tech-Czarny motions to approve both minutes. Ms. Zemle seconds. The Commission unanimously approves both minutes.

b. December 22, 2016 Special Meeting

Above.

IV. Public Comment (7:50 p.m.)

No member of the public wishes to make a comment.

V. Discussions and Decisions (8:00 p.m.)

a. Council Update (Quinn)

Council Member Quinn reports that the construction waste ordinance passed with most of the committee's recommendations. As discussed in the past meeting, the Council did not pass some of the recommendations, because they conflicted with the Uniform Construction Code (UCC) or for other reasons.

At Council's budget workshop at 8:00 am this morning, February 22, Council members discussed rebidding the food waste contract. The current contract will last until the end of this year. Council will then have four options for the program. One of the options, "scrapping the program", Council does not support. Some Council members fear that rebids will lead to higher rates or that they might need to cut the subsidy in a tight budget year. He believes Council still wants to rebid the contract at the end of the year. Princeton, will, thus have the program until at least the end of 2018.

Council Member Quinn suggests the committee work to increase membership in (and thus volume for) the program. A member asks how much more membership the program needs to work. Ms. Symington notes that, given the current contract, where the town subsidizes each member \$65 out of \$130, the costs to the town increase with the number of members in the

program. That situation has caused hesitation about increasing membership. Ms. Symington thinks Council could solve the problem by receiving a bid that no longer has that issue or by asking members pay the full cost for the program.

A member mentions logistics as the other issue for the compost program. If the municipality wants to grow the program, it must have the ability to support the operations of the program. The municipality currently cannot handle addition and deletions of members or track volume in program. A member has not yet received her bill and, when Council Member Quinn suggested someone enroll in the program earlier today, that person had to use a paper form in the municipal building, due to the online form's technical problems.

A member mentions that a transfer station in Ewing owned by Central Jersey Waste, the current hauler for Princeton's organics program, could begin composting on-site there. They have begun the permitting the process. If so, Princeton could potentially have its compost brought there, reducing carbon footprint and potentially reducing costs. A member suggests Mayor Lempert express support for the project to county and state officials. Council Member Quinn will look into the permit approval process and relay it to Mayor Lempert.

b. Building Code Initiative

Chair Glovier introduces Ms. Assmus. Chair Glovier talked with Ms. Assmus about Ms. Assmus' work to change the Uniform Construction Code (UCC). The committee encountered the code in its suggestions on linking recycling tickets to Certificate of Occupancies (COs) and requiring pre-wiring for electrical vehicle charging stations.

Ms. Assmus now works to improve fire safety provisions in the International Code Council's (ICC's) national model code, especially given recent fires in Edgewater and Maplewood. New Jersey adopts their code from the national model code, adopting or not adopting individual components. Any member of the public-the Princeton municipality, the Commission or the Princeton Code Official-could participate in the national meetings and propose code changes. If the Commission becomes involved, Ms. Assmus can help the Commission to understand the process and introduce them to code specialists. She encourages the committee to become involved.

Ms. Fichtenbaum mentions the International Green Construction Code (IgCC), an overlay code developed by the New Building Institute, part of the ICC. New Jersey could adopt the IgCC as one of its codes, when it has a new governor. Ms. Fichtenbaum considers working to have New Jersey adopt the IgCC a better option, given that code has already been vetted and thought out, than the committee working to invent their own code section.

Ms. Assmus asks if the committee had particular issues with the code. A member suggests that other actors already probably work at the national level on the changes the committee wants to have incorporated into the code. He did not think the committee wanted or needed any changes unique to Princeton.

Chair Glovier thanks Ms. Assmus for coming to the meeting and for working to improve the national codes.

c. Update on Ordinances in Development

i. Construction Waste Ordinance Update

The committee does not discuss the construction waste ordinance, instead focusing on the storm water ordinance.

ii. Stormwater Management Ordinance Update

The town needs to combine their former borough and former township storm water ordinances by the end of the year. So, the committee reached out to the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association for help. On January 9, Mr. Waltman, its Executive Director, presented to Council on the four issues (see the video [here](#)). Members of the committee have met individually with all the Council members and with municipal staff members to educate them on the issues. On March 13, the Council will have a working session, open to the public, to discuss them.

Mr. Pisauro, Policy Director for the Watershed, and the committee discuss the four issues. Mr. West and Ms. Stockton, two of Princeton's engineers, have gathered cost data and reached out to other municipalities' engineers for feedback. Mr. West, Princeton's engineer, provides staff's opinion on them:

1) Major development threshold: under the current ordinances, only major development triggers storm water management, with major development defined as the creation of one acre of soil disturbance or one new quarter acre of impervious cover. For example, the Princeton Shopping Center, built in the 1950s, has no storm water management plan. It pipes the water into Harris Brook, which results in flooding and pollution. The Watershed recommends reducing the threshold from one acre of soil disturbance to one quarter acre, and one quarter acre of impervious cover (10,890 square feet) to 5,000 square feet. That way, the ordinance covers more projects.

Mr. West says staff has no objection to the new thresholds, one quarter acre or 5,000 square feet. He has a concern about redevelopment. He thinks it will slow the process. No other towns have done it. Still, staff has no objection.

2) New minor development category: when a developer's project does not create one-quarter acre of soil disturbance or 5,000 square feet of impervious cover but does create at least 250 square feet of impervious cover, the project must capture 500 gallons of storm water, about 3.3 inches of rain or the two-year storm, on site. Developers can choose among the multiple options (for instance, green infrastructure or dry wells) for capturing water. They can then use it on site or release it slowly to reduce peak flow.

Mr. Pisauro mention that some people think Princeton's soils cannot support a rain garden. Yet, Hillsborough has similar soils and has a working rain garden in front of their municipal building.

Mr. West says staff recommends the old borough ordinance's 400 square feet instead of the 250 square feet. Staff has no objection to the 500 gallon, 2 to 1 gallons per square feet threshold.

3) Maintenance: across the state, these systems have not been maintained well. Without maintenance, they stop working. So, the Watershed suggests a maintenance permit, with a fee for large systems. They submit quarterly maintenance reports. The permit gives a factual basis for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP's) certification for storm water system maintenance.

Mr. West reports the Franklin engineer did not express concern about it. So, he has less concern about it. He recommends implementing the ordinance in two phases, first implementing the minor and major thresholds.

Vice Chair Fichtenbaum suggests the ordinance could have a tiered reporting structure: a giant storm water basin probably requires more checking than a backyard rain garden. Mr. West does not have a concern about tiered reporting for larger systems (for instance, commercial or apartment complexes); he has some concern about single-family residential.

4) Waiver provision: people might have a wooded lot, which can only have room for storm water management with cutting down trees, or people might have contaminated soil under their property. That person pays for a waiver, what would have been the cost of the storm water management system on site. The money for the waiver allows the municipality to then fix or retrofit existing basins, or create green streets (rain gardens or other green infrastructure along roadways to collect storm water).

Mr. West says staff have no objection to the fee.

A member asks about elderly, disabled and fixed income residents who already have difficulty surviving in Princeton. They might not have the strength for too many reports.

So, they might need the help of the municipality or the Senior Center. Another member clarifies that the new ordinance only applies to people expanding their homes in a major way. Without the money or strength to expand their house, those people probably will not have the money or strength to expand their houses. A member suggests a modification to help someone stay in their house like a handicap ramp might, if in all likelihood not, trigger the need for a storm water management system. Mr. Pisauro thinks the reporting could be as simple as looking at the system and writing down a few words. He agrees though with a possible hardship exception.

Vice Chair Fichtenbaum suggests razing a building to the ground and rebuilding it creates a bigger opportunity for storm water management than remodeling a kitchen. For instance, the Shopping Center, when repaving their parking lot, slightly decreased their impervious cover. They made a few, minor storm water management system infrastructure considerations. Yet, Vice Chair Fichtenbaum wished they had been required to make more. Otherwise, they have no incentive to develop the infrastructure. Mr. West says he has no problems with such a requirement as a staff member except he has heard the municipal attorney might not like it.

Chair Glovier encourages members to attend the meeting and encourages members to encourage their neighbors, especially those experiencing flooding problems, to attend the meeting. Ms. Symington suggests a one-page FAQ on the proposal. Council members have a PowerPoint yet they might benefit from a more concise one-page document.

iii. EVSE Ordinance Update

Members drafted an Electric Vehicle (EV) Servicing ordinance. It went to the town attorney. Council Member Quinn reads the attorney's memo, which expresses concern with two aspects of the proposal: 1) lack of clarity regarding if the proposal's regulations serve as general zoning requirements or site plan requirements; and 2) difficulty in locating the ordinance given the lack of consolidation of the land use ordinances. Council Member Quinn himself expresses concern that planning staff lack the time to work on this issue given all their other work. For instance, the Council recently approved consultants to work with the planning staff on neighborhood character zoning.

Council Member Quinn suggests waiting for the harmonization of the relevant ordinances. Council plans to complete it by the end of 2017. Vice Chair Fichtenbaum expresses concern given that consolidation started two years ago and it will not end in a year. There also currently does not exist any EV ordinances, so no EV ordinances exist to harmonize. She thinks they can simply improve the ordinance by, for instance, clarifying that it serves as a general land use ordinance.

Chair Glovier asks Ms. Symington about timing given Ms. Symington in part requested the ordinance for Sustainable Jersey certification. The deadline for that certification is in June.

Vice Chair Fichtenbaum requests the written document of the issues. Council Member Quinn will follow up with the attorney.

d. Sustainability Element of the Master Plan Update

Chair Glovier talked with Ms. Mount in Lawrence, because Lawrence has a sustainability element in their master plan. Ms. Mount gave Chair Glovier some reading materials. Ms. Mount felt Lawrence could only create the plan with the help of a consultant. Mr. Tech-Czarny comments that for a consultant to create an element usually costs \$15,000.

Vice Chair Fichtenbaum asks if anyone talked to Planning Board Chair Gunning and if the Planning Board has time to discuss the element. Council Member Quinn has not heard any resistance from her and thinks the Board will have time to discuss it.

e. Invasive Species Community Education

The committee does not discuss.

i. Letter to the Editor, Master Gardeners Talk, ANJEC grant proposal, library talk

The committee does not discuss.

f. Radon Project Update

The committee does not discuss.

g. Bicycle Master Plan Update

The committee does not discuss.

h. Green Building Checklist Update

Ms. Sands and Vice Chair Fichtenbaum developed an Excel spreadsheet to analyze the green building checklist. Vice Chair Fichtenbaum and Ms. Symington also came up with questions for follow up.

i. Development Application Review Committee

The committee does not discuss any development applications.

VI. Reports from Liaisons (9:50 p.m.)

i. Princeton Board of Health (DiFerdinando)

Dr. DiFerdinando gives an update on the past Board of Health meeting (see the minutes [here](#)): the Board has been looking into Health in All Policies, a lead safe cities program, and increasing nursing hours.

The Health Department has also been completing national accreditation. There will be a site visit in June and they might need the support of the Commission, possibly in the form of a letter of support.

Ms. Symington asks about Sustainable Jersey's Health in All Policies award for training staff. The Board will look into it.

ii. Sustainable Princeton (Symington)

1) Recycling brochure: the recycling brochure has been mailed to about 7,000 homes and has been made available online. They have received a lot of positive feedback and some concerns about details, for instance, "you forgot to include that this store recycles Styrofoam." They have distributed it to the University, Princeton landlords and Princeton realtors. They will look into distributing it to public schools.

A member asks about translating the brochure into Spanish. Ms. Symington has been looking into finding a volunteer to translate it. She also wants to use the translation as an opportunity for broader engagement with that community.

2) Spring Street parking Lot EV Charging: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) gave approval on Friday. The town's electrician can now start installation.

3) Climate Action Plan funding: she has found a potential matching grant. She has been looking into a local place-based foundation to match it.

iii. Princeton Planning Board (Tech-Czarny)

Mr. Tech-Czarny reports the Board used the Commission's memo when discussing the Prospect sub-division. The Board received some concessions, with the developer agreeing to turn the

garage and to push back the buildings. When Mr. Tech-Czarny advocated for more green infrastructure, the developer had an engineer say the soil did not work for it.

Chair Glovier suggests future memos include soil information. Vice Chair Fichtenbaum knows a group that does geotechnical work around Princeton. She will ask them for their data.

iv. Princeton Recreation Department (Stentz)

The Department has no update.

VII. Announcements

Do Not Plant List

Chair Glovier reports that the Town Topics ran the Letter to the Editor. Chair Glovier and Ms. Symington talked to the Master Gardeners of Mercer County. They will vet their plants for sale against the list. Chair Glovier and Ms. Symington will also work on the ANJEC grant for money to train residents to identify invasive species.

Recycling Education

Vice Chair Fichtenbaum mentions educational materials-for instance, an example of a ticket-for homeowners and contractors on applying for recycling permits to build something. They need to be aware that they need a plan and need to recycle at least 50 percent. She can share those materials with any interested materials.

Proposed Gas Compressor Station Environmental Forum

Chair Glovier asks that if any member can make the meeting, that member should attend. She has to be away at the time of the meeting.

VIII. Adjourn (10:00 p.m.)

At 9:53, Chair Glovier adjourned the meeting to unanimous consent.