

Town of Princeton Environmental Action Committee (EAC)

Meeting Minutes

December 16, 2019

Meeting called to order at 7:12pm

Committee members present:

Chris Samoiloff (CS), Claire Golding (CG), Corey Burnham-Howard (CBH), Phil Gott (PG), Phoebe Moore (PM)

Also present:

Charlie Carey (CC)

Public Comment: None.

Review & Approve Minutes:

December 4, 2019 Meeting Minutes

- Approved as written
- *Motion:* CBH; *2d:* PG; *Vote:* 4-0, CS abstained

CC inquired about access to minutes. CG will submit all past minutes to Town clerk for posting.

EAP Updates / Next Steps

PG gave CBH an updated Environmental Action Plan (EAP), including updates to Energy section and additional information about wood burning. CBH is going to update Green Communities section of EAP, typos she has noticed, and statistics about the Recycling Center that the committee was made aware of.

CBH to give updates to the EAP to CG and CS after the new year, and CG and CS will get the updates into the EAP for official version by the end of January. It will be available in electronic form and possibly a few printed versions for offline access.

Action Items:

- **CBH** to work on EAP updates

Green Communities Updates and Next Steps

- Kelly Brown (KB) presented to the Selectboard on December 10th and the committee members present felt it was a good meeting and that KB was a strong presenter, answering a lot of outstanding questions / unknowns.
- PG recorded the meeting on video and has it available for the future.
- The committee (and KB) felt that one person should be communicating with KB. That may be the Town administrator, Sherry Patch (SP), and the committee would like to have a point person from the EAC to work with other boards and committees within the Town. *Motion:* CS nominated CBH to be EAC Green Communities point person: *2d:* PG; *Vote:* 5-0 approved. It was noted that as we move forward with additional EAP implementation, we should always assign a point person from the EAC. *Motion:* CBH nominated PG to be the point person for Municipality Vulnerability Planning (MVP); *2d:* CG; *Vote:* 5-0 approved.

- CC noted that the video PM sent around re: Green Communities would be good for Town meeting.

Green Communities next steps submitted by CBH, which were a response to an inquiry by Helga Lyons (HL) of the Advisory Committee:

“With regard to ALL of the steps necessary to apply for Green Community designation next fall, here is a summary of the information, generally, as to what the Town will need to do between now and then:

(1) Ensure as-of-right siting for renewable or alternative energy facilities.

We are working with the Planning Board on this. It looks like our existing bylaws may meet this requirement already, as they allow for renewable or alternative energy manufacturing facilities as-of-right in the designated Business/Industrial Zones. There must be an aggregate 50,000 square feet of available land and/or vacant building space in the B/I Zone for this use. We are working with Planning Board members to determine if this criteria is met. If so- the Town simply needs a letter from Town Counsel, citing the relevant zoning bylaws and that this step is met. If not- the Planning Board will explore meeting this step by adopting a solar overlay zoning district at the site of the old town landfill—which would need to be adopted at Town Meeting. CMRPC can provide guidance and work in helping us meet this criteria.

(2) Ensure expedited permitting (within 1 year) for as-of-right energy facilities.

It looks like existing bylaws already meet this criterion—as they provide that the site plan review process must be completed in 65 days. The Town would simply need a letter from Town Counsel stating that this criterion is met.

(3) Establish an energy use baseline inventory for the Town.

This would require working with Town employees, PMLD, and a vendor to determine energy (electric and oil and gasoline) usage in all town buildings, street and traffic lighting, as well as vehicles. CMRPC can help guide us in this process, and DOER offers a free tool—the MassEnergyInsight to which energy data can be uploaded by CMRPC or Town-designated persons.

(4) Adopt an Energy Use Reduction Plan to reduce the baseline energy use by 20% after 5 years of implementation. This would require a team of Town leaders to work with CMRPC to create the written Plan.

(5) Adopt the Massachusetts Board of Building Regulations and Standards Stretch Code.

This would require a vote at Town Meeting to adopt a general bylaw adopting the Stretch Code. CMRPC and Kelly Brown from the Green Communities Division would help draft the bylaw and provide information to residents prior to Town Meeting.

(6) Adopt a Fuel-Efficient Vehicle policy requiring all Town departments to purchase fuel-efficient vehicles when they are looking to purchase a new vehicle.

This requires the drafting of such a policy (a simple statement), and a vote by the Selectboard to adopt the policy. Notably, exempt from such a policy are: heavy-duty vehicles (more than 8,500 pounds), emergency response vehicles (fire trucks, ambulances, police cruisers). If the Town looks to purchase any police and fire department administrative vehicles, those would have to meet fuel efficient requirements. Note that “fuel-efficient” vehicles are defined as at least 24 MPG for four-wheel drive cars, and 16 MPG for four wheel pick-up trucks.

(7) Develop and maintain a vehicle inventory for all four- or more-wheeled Town vehicles, and provide a plan for —when looking to replace non-exempt vehicles—replacing them with vehicles that meet the specified fuel efficiency ratings.

This will require efforts by Town employees/leaders to develop and maintain such an inventory and plan.”

- PG noted (as a result of attending a Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC) meeting), the beneficial nature of community-based solar farms rather than individual residential installations. The community-based farms are equitable across the community.
- CBH created an EAC update (including information on the Stretch Code) to include in the

census. *Motion:* CG moves that we accept the blurb from CBH for inclusion in the town update section of the census as written or modified. *2d:* CS; *Vote:* 5-0 approve.

PM had to leave the meeting early. The committee decided to re-look at meeting dates/times and place and revise if necessary to make it easier for the current members to attend.

Action items:

- **CG & CBH** will meeting with SP after the new year as to how to proceed with Green Communities next steps.
- **CBH** to reach out to Tom Sullivan in January re: the solar overlay to the Town dump property, to see if existing zoning regulations meet Green Communities criterion.

Municipal Vulnerability Planning Program Updates and next steps

Action Items:

- **PG** will prepare a write-up for a grant award if/when it is announced.
- **PG** will talk to Sherry and the regional planning group and get organized, after the new year.

Communications - topic and schedule

- The committee discussed the information CS provided for last meeting and decided that committee members would like to pay for hosting so as not to have advertisements on the web site.
- We discussed putting regular updates in Town News which we can link to on Next Door.
- Redemption Rock News evaluates submissions on a monthly basis to decide if they can fit into the paper that month (and will not publish again until March), and The Landmark subscriptions are declining, so the local papers do not feel like the best avenue to get information disseminated to residents of the Town. We will still submit to them, but can't count on the info getting to residents through them.
- We will allow people to follow our blog, once it is up, to get updates as they are created.
- We felt like we could do another Town Buzz once we have a focused topic for discussion.

Action items:

- **CG** will talk to SP about a separate EAC email for the webmaster and the best way to pay for the website - via members, or submitting a request for a small committee budget to support it.
- **CS** will ask Walt Govey what the Ag Commission is doing for their site.
- **CS** will write up instructions on how to use Google Drive, with screenshots, to help those who aren't as familiar with using Google Drive/docs.
- **PG** will write up an MVP Press release for future use and upload it to the Google Drive.
- **CS** will write up a blurb on radon testing.
- **CBH** will write up a Green Communities overview.
- **CS** will speak to Karen Cruise about getting on the Town Buzz schedule.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting (January 8, 2020)

- Public Comment
- Review and Approve Minutes of December 16, 2019
- Review Meeting Time / Place
- EAP Updates / Next Steps

- Green Communities Updates / Next Steps
- Municipal Vulnerability Planning Program Updates / Next Steps
- Communications - schedule and topics
- Landfill updates
- Agenda Items for Next Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 8:32p.m. (CG moved; CBH seconded)

Respectfully Submitted,

Chris Samoiloff