

Town of Princeton Environmental Action Committee (EAC)

Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2020

Meeting called to order at 7:04pm

Committee members present:

Corey Burnham-Howard (CBH), Claire Golding (GC), Phil Gott (PG), Chris Samoiloff (CS)

Public Comment: None.

Review & Approve Minutes from December 16, 2019 Meeting:

- Members reviewed and discussed minutes, including suggested amendments for grammatical corrections and for clarification.
 - o Minutes approved as amended.
- Motion: CBH; 2d: CG; Vote: 4-0

Environmental Action Plan (EAP) Updates and Next Steps:

- ACTION: CBH to edit EAP, and then soon pass on to CG and CS with goal to finalize by end of January.
- CBH noted her appreciation of email received from Karen Rossow complimenting the EAP.

Green Communities Updates and Next Steps:

- CBH shared that CBH and CG met with Town Administrator Sherry Patch (SP) regarding next steps in Green Community Designation Grant application. SP will be the external point person (with communications with Green Community Regional Coordinator Kelly Brown, for example), and CBH will continue to be the EAC's point person on Green Communities within Town.
- SP has applied for District Local Technical Assistance funds—to fund work with Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC). SP expects \$12,000, and to get grant confirmation soon. Once grant is confirmed, work will begin with CMRPC and Kelly Brown. SP will coordinate the kickoff meeting.
- ACTION: SP, CBH, and CG will plan to meet monthly with regard to Green Community progress and needed actions.
- ACTION: SP wants EAC to present Stretch Code warrant article at Annual Town Meeting. EAC will also plan to host information sessions. EAC will wait until after kick-off meeting to begin hosting such information sessions.
- ACTION: CBH to draft blurb regarding Stretch Code adoption at Town Meeting for possible inclusion in Town's Excise Bill mailing and/or for sharing on Town News.
- ACTION: CBH to draft email to SP with summary of steps necessary for Green Community application, and the status of each step, as EAC understands them
- ACTION: CBH to follow-up with Planning Board's Tom Sullivan with regard to his offer to calculate available land and vacant building space in the Town's existing Business/Industrial zone. The aggregate calculated will determine if the Town's existing zoning meets Green Communities Designation Criterion 1.
- ACTION: CBH to contact Town of Rutland Town Administrator and/or Energy Committee to receive update on their efforts to include their elementary and middle schools in the Green Communities-required Energy Reduction Plan via authorization from the Wachusett Regional

School District (WRSD) Superintendent and/or School Committee.

Municipal Vulnerability Planning (MVP) Program updates and next steps:

- PG met with SP to discuss next steps regarding MVP grant application which was submitted at end of 2019.
- PG inquired with SP whether PMLD could be included in MVP meetings and grant fund applications, and was told “yes” because they are part of the Town infrastructure (despite the fact that PMLD is an entity separate from the municipal entity).
- If grant received, there will be a series of meetings: (1) First meeting: involving most-relevant municipal department heads who will work with CMRPC to prepare for public meetings by identifying climate change-related vulnerabilities; (2) Second meeting: review conclusions, proposals, and finalize for public presentation; (3) Public meeting: including all interested stakeholders who have ideas and solutions regard Princeton’s climate change vulnerability. PG noted that CMRPC would prepare GIS maps with vulnerabilities identified, and EAC members briefly discussed vulnerabilities that might be included from tornadoes to landfill odor.

Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT)

- EAC priority action items approved by Selectboard included exploring single-hauler, PAYT program. SP suggested to CG and CBH that issue is now timely given chatter on Nextdoor and calls she has received regarding raised waste hauler rates.
- EAC members discussed differing opinions raised on Nextdoor, and the complicating and various factors of PAYT vs. privately selected waste hauler. PG explained how Northboro’s PAYT program worked.
- Motion to appoint CG as the point person/lead for EAC’s research and exploration of PAYT.
Motion: CBH; 2d: PG; Vote: 4-0.

Landfill Update

- EAC members discussed that based on Nextdoor postings, it appears that the operators of the Fitchburg-Westminster landfill have had an enforcement order executed for violations, with a \$60,000 fine and requirement that they provide third-party complaint liaison.
- Information on Nextdoor also indicated that hazardous waste may soon be brought to landfill, but this was not verified, and another Nextdoor user reported that Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) was unaware of such.
- No information heard regarding any new pursuance of landfill expansion.
- Per Nextdoor, Princeton residents have been filing odor complaints with MassDEP.

Communications Topics and Schedules

- CG reported that SP did not want EAC to host its own website, but that SP offered that EAC could administer Town’s EAC webpage.
 - o ACTION: CS to contact Town Clerk for training regarding EAC webpage.
 - o EAC members discussed that if webpage is not sufficiently meeting EAC communication goals, EAC could consider drafting alternative proposal for SP review.
- EAC members discussed posting of information blurbs on Town News. EAC members concluded that focus now should be on timely/priority topics including: MVP Program (PG to draft), Green Communities Designation Application (CBH to draft), Stretch Code (CBH to draft). To fill gaps and get information out soon, CS will also draft a blurb on radon testing and well water testing. PG is interested in drafting future blurb on transportation.
- CS suggested personalization of articles/blurbs, and putting them into Google Docs for compilation once complete.

- CS identified Senior Center Newsletter as another possible outlet for information/blurb sharing. ACTION: CS to contact Aimee Kindorf regarding possible EAC blurb inclusion in Senior Center Newsletter.

Annual Report

- CG shared that Marie Auger reminded EAC that it's time to put together EAC's annual report for Calendar Year 2019, and return it to Marie by January 23 for compilation.
- EAC members discussed/listed EAC's activities in Calendar Year 2019, which included: completed draft EAP; received comments on draft EAP; held public forum and Town Buzz information session on draft EAP; hosted vendor table at Wachusett Meadow's Hey Day, providing information on, and accepting comments on, draft EAP; identified priority action items from EAP, and obtained Selectboard approval of said action items; began actions including pursuing MVP grant and Green Communities designation grant, and communications.
- ACTION: CG to draft EAC's Annual Report and submit to Marie Auger by January 23.

Budget

- CG shared that CG and CBH inquired with SP regarding budget for EAC going forward. SP suggested submitting budget proposal.
- EAC members discussed budget proposal. PG suggested \$4,500 for printings and mailings. Other EAC members thought that was high, and thought EAC should attempt to include any mailings in other Town mailings. CBH noted that given EAC goals, EAC might try to avoid using paper as much as possible. PG suggested \$750 budget proposal. EAC members discussed possible amounts ranging from \$300 to \$750.
- EAC members discussed possible expenses including: information/communication materials, including for Stretch Code/Town Meeting, as well as other initiatives/actions.
- ACTION: CG will inquire with SP regarding other committee budgets, and suggested figure.
- ACTION: CBH will inquire with Mike Howard regarding costs of printing of approximately 12 EAP copies.
- Motion to authorize CG to establish and propose EAC budget. Motion: CBH; 2d: PG; Vote: 4-0.

Meeting Schedule for 2020

- Members discussed potential EAC meeting schedule, and agreed on First and Third Wednesdays of each month, starting in February 2020. Next meeting for EAC is January 22, 2020 at 7p at Senior Center. All future meetings will be at Senior Center pending approval of dates from Aimee Kindorf.
- ACTION: CG to inquire with Aimee Kindorf regarding availability of Senior Center for EAC meetings on first and third Wednesday of each month.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting (January 22, 2020)

- Public Comment
- Review and Approve Minutes of January 8, 2020
- PMLD updates
- EAP updates/ next steps
- Green Communities Designation Application updates and next steps
- MVP Program updates and next steps
- PAYT updates and next steps
- Communications updates and next steps
- Agenda items for Next Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.
Motion: CBH; 2d: CS; Vote: 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Corey Burnham-Howard