

# **Town of Princeton Environmental Action Committee (EAC)**

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **May 20, 2021**

**Meeting called to order** at 7:03pm

*Committee members present (via remote):*

Corey Burnham-Howard (CBH), Matt Charpentier (MC), Phil Gott (PG), Chris Samoiloff (CS)

*Committee members absent:* Charlie Cary (CC), Claire Golding (CG)

*Student Committee members present:* Anna White (AW), Paul Fuchs (PF)

*Associate members absent:* Caitlan Davis (CD)

*Also present:* Helga Lyons (HL) present as liaison from Advisory Committee; Rick Rys (RR)

**Public Comment:** None.

#### **Review & Approve Minutes from April 22, 2021 Meeting:**

- **MOTION** to table review and approval of meeting minutes until next EAC meeting.  
Motion: PG; 2d: CS; Vote: 4-0

#### **Green Communities Designation Application**

- CBH provided update.
  - o In April 2021, Princeton was informed that it had been awarded Green Communities Designation from the Department of Energy Resources (DOER), with an award of \$130,869. The Town must, within 90 days designate how those funds will be spent. Sarah Adams from Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) coordinated and held a meeting with interested town stakeholders on April 26. Meeting involved discussion of priority budget items with biggest return on energy savings. Sarah was to then finalize list and then seek bids from vendors.
    - **ACTION:** CBH to reach out to Sarah Adams for update on fund designation response.
  - o CBH inquired with regard to when META funds for TPS energy audit must be utilized. Sherry Patch responded that the audit project needs to be completed by September 30, 2022. On a related note, CBH noted that for TPS to be included in the Energy Reduction Plan (ERP) in future years, the WRSD needs to sign onto the ERP.

#### **Municipal Vulnerability Planning (MVP) Program**

- PG provided update: MVP Plan has been submitted for review by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA). The Princeton MVP liaison at CMRPC is now Dani Martin. It is unclear when MVP funds will be available to Princeton based on plan review and state funding timelines.

#### **Princeton Municipal Light Department (PMLD)**

- PG provide update. (See attached notes.)
- PG is now a recently elected Light Commissioner.

## **Waste and Recycling**

- CG provided update via CBH that the Waste and Recycling Committee (WRC) has submitted Requests for Proposals (RFP) for waste haulers to Town Counsel for legal review.

## **Communications /EAC Webpage Updates**

- CS provided updates.
  - o Webpage:
    - Members discussed the idea of the EAC hosting its own webpage for a more user-friendly information sharing platform.
      - **ACTION:** CS will contact Town Clerk with regard to options for EAC website
    - CS received from Town Clerk statistics on webpage traffic to EAC page, but it wasn't clear if the statistics showed repeat visitors, subscribers to the EAC newsletter, etc.
    - CS has received updates from EAC members regarding various EAC actions, and has made those updates on the EAC webpage.
  - o Newsletter:
    - May Newsletter: WPI project update on the analysis of the supply of available wood as a sustainable energy source. CC wrote article, and PG approves of it.
      - **ACTION:** PG to review and provide comments on article to CG within 24 hrs.
    - June Newsletter: Organic Lawn Care
      - **ACTION:** CS to draft organic lawn care article for June Newsletter.
    - July Newsletter: WPI project update on analysis of public attitudes on light pollution in Princeton and possible methods to mitigate light pollution in Princeton
      - **ACTION:** CBH and CG to draft article for July Newsletter in June.
  - o Redemption Rock News (RRN)
    - Editor has offered EAC to provide paragraph on monthly EAC activity updates. CBH provided brief blurb summarizing current EAC actions for latest RRN newsletter.
      - **ACTION:** CBH to draft monthly update for Redemption Rock News based on meeting minutes and to include link to latest EAC Newsletter
  - o Other Communication Items:
    - CS raised issue of EAC pursuing action of sharing information and/or pursuing the topic of alternative management of pests in town.
      - The state now has the authority to aerial spray for mosquitos in all MA communities unless a community opts-out by the May 28, 2021 deadline.
        - o In order to opt-out a MA community must have an alternative plan. MC questioned what the minimal requirements might be for an alternative plan. PG questioned what infrastructure costs may be associated with an alternative plan, and noted that MVP funds might be available for such costs.
        - o EAC members agreed that the timeline is too short to bring this to the town before the municipal opt-out deadline.
    - EAC members agreed that it might be time to update EAC priority action items to bring to Selectboard for Selectboard approval.

- **ACTION:** EAC members to bring priority action item ideas to next meeting for discussion.
- CBH noted that the Selectboard has asked the EAC to play a role in PFAS information sharing, including possibly sharing regular/monthly updates on reporting; sharing general information on PFAS and its presence in products and environment as well as public health effects; and soliciting and/or receiving resident opinions and input.
  - EAC members discussed this possible role. EAC members had concerns with regard to soliciting and/or receiving public input/opinions on PFAS in town. EAC members supported EAC fact-sharing communication to town residents, including via regular updates on town PFAS information, as well as a more general educational component such as engaging and hosting expert speakers with regard to Water Quality Testing and with regard to PFAS facts and information.
  - **MOTION** to appoint MC as liaison to the Selectboard regarding PFAS and to provide a summary of town PFAS information to residents on a periodic basis as requested by the Selectboard.
    - Motion: PG; 2d: CS; Vote: 4-0.
  - **ACTION:** CBH to reach out to Selectboard with EAC's response to request to fulfill PFAS information-sharing role, and EAC vote as to MC role, and to cc MC on that communication.

### **Curbside Composting**

- AW provided update.
  - AW had previously reported on Blackearthcompost.com, which offers curbside composting service.
  - **ACTION:** AW to inquire with Black Earth Compost as to what would be the threshold number of households participating for them to service Princeton.
- **ACTION:** CS to pursue information/updates on Sterling Townwide Composting project and whether they will invite other communities to participate

### **WPI Project Updates**

- CBH provided updates.
  - CG and CBH had been meeting with a group of WPI students a project related to assessing the issue of Light Pollution in town. Their final presentation was made on 5/11. The students also completed their report on the project, but CBH and CG had not yet received a copy.
    - **ACTION:** CBH to share link to recording to CS for posting on EAC page.
    - **ACTION:** CBH to obtain copy of report from WPI professor for the project.
    - **ACTION:** CBH and CG to share report recommendations with PMLD (per request of RR) with regard to technology options to decrease light pollution
- PG raised idea of possible future WPI project on PFAS fact-finding.

### **Local Cultural Council Grant Update/Speaker Series Update**

- CBH provided update.
  - The Princeton Cultural Council (PCC) awarded EAC a \$1,000 grant to support its Environmental Speaker Series. The PCC gave that award money to the town but because it would have had to be spent before the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2021), the

parties agreed that the town would void the check, the PCC would provide a \$200 grant in June for the EAC's June Speaker Series, and then in July, the PCC will provide \$800 of the grant, which can then be used by the EAC through June 2022.

- CBH reported on the planning work by CBH, CS, and CC with regard to the Speaker Series.
  - o Next event will be on June 10 at 7p and will feature Dan Jaffe Wilder. Speaker fee is \$200, and CBH is coordinating payment. Topic will generally address low-maintenance landscaping, and including native plants.
    - **ACTION:** CBH to finalize details and payment on second event in Speaker Series with speaker Dan Jaffe Wilder.
- EAC members briefly discussed possible topics for September speaker series event, including possibly related to PFAS information. EAC members agreed to leave details and planning to the EAC Speaker Series Subcommittee (CC, CS, CBH)
- The EAC provided gift certificates (coordinated by CC) in lieu of fees as a thank you to the first Speaker Series Event speakers. RR thanked the EAC for the gift and appreciated the thank you.

### **Public Safety Building Environmental/Energy Punchlist**

- CBH provided update:
  - o EAC Public Safety Building (PSB) Subcommittee (CBH, MC, CC, and CD) finalized a punchlist of energy and environmental related items for possible consideration in the proposed new public safety building, and emailed that list to the Selectboard and Sherry Patch along with a statement reaffirming the EAC's interest in being an active participant in Public Safety Building design. That email was well-received. Karen Cruise noted that EAC would be invited to participate in PSB design in the future.
  - o EAC members noted that PSB funding was rejected as the Annual Town Meeting. CBH understood from attending recent Selectboard meeting that a new committee may be getting formed to move forward on creating new proposal.
    - **MOTION** for PG to serve as EAC liaison to PSB committee.  
Motion: CBH; 2d; MC; Vote: 4-0
    - **ACTION:** PG to reach out to Selectboard requesting position/offering services as new EAC liaison to PSB.

### **Town Draft Snow and Ice Policy**

- CBH provided update. No new updates since last meeting.
  - o **ACTION:** CBH, on behalf of the EAC, will analyze existing practices, guides, and plans in other communities; and identify opportunities for action items in Princeton—such as alternative materials or methods.

### **Earth Month**

- CBH provided update.
  - o Thanks to all of the volunteers, 100% of roadsides, trails, and parks were cleaned up in town during the month of April.
- PG complimented the committee and noted it was a model for how committees should run: (1) continuous updates through various media; (2) fun prizes; (3) ambiance of fun and positive process
- HL liked that kids were involved including with their art on the thank you notes
- EAC members note that it would be nice to resolve the action of littering altogether.

### **Agenda Items for Next Meeting (June 17, 2021 at 7p)**

- Public Comment

- Review and Approve Minutes of April 22, 2021 and May 20, 2021
- Green Communities Updates
- MVP Updates
- PMLD Updates
- Waste and Recycling Committee Updates
- Communications/EAC Webpage Updates
- Curbside Composting Updates
- WPI Project Updates
- EAC Speaker Series Updates
- Public Safety Building EAC Subcommittee Updates
- Snow and Ice Policy Updates
- Priority Action Items Review
- Agenda items for Next Meeting

**Meeting adjourned** at 9:02 p.m.

**MOTION** to adjourn.

Motion: PG; 2d: CBH; Vote: 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Corey Burnham-Howard

Princeton Municipal Light Department notes  
Board of Electric Light Commissioners Meeting  
May 12, 2021

Items of interest to the EAC are:

Transmission and Generation Capacity charges:

These are charges added to PMLD costs for power. These charges reflect the maximum power demanded during any one incremental time period over the past year. In essence, PMLD (and every other large power user) pays for the capacity in the transmission lines and generating plants to meet its highest (peak) power demand. Working with MMWEC, PMLD is seeking to reduce these charges in several ways:

- 1) MMWEC is proposing a voluntary power management program in which homeowners can sign up to receive notices requesting they cut their power use for a period of time – usually a few hours – to reduce peak demand and reduce or avoid maxing out peak power demand. There is no direct monetary benefit to the individual homeowner, but if successful, it will reduce PMLD's Transmission and generation charges for the next year, potentially enabling a small reduction in the rates we pay for power. It is also the "right thing to do" and reduces demand for peaking plants which are usually diesel or natural gas fired power plants or generating stations.
- 2) A Diesel powered peaking generator is being installed at the windmill site. This will operate only during periods of very high demand, and will be controlled by MMWEC. Expected operation is 2-5 times per month for 3-4 hours each time during the months of May-September. This is advantageous to the rate payers and the environment in two ways: 1) if the peaks we have recently experienced during those times, as well as those in January can be reduced or avoided, the transmission and Capacity charges saved could be on the order of \$100,000 per year. This is about one cent per kWh on the rate payers bill, and can help avoid a rate increase if not facilitate a slight reduction in rates. 2) by putting this generator in town, line losses in the National Grid network, which run on the order of 5-7% (as I recall) are avoided, as are the associated pollutant and carbon emissions. I have requested that Sean look into the possibility of using bio diesel in this gen set, but the prospects for that seem dim due to the poor characteristics of the fuel, according to other commissioners.

HELPS program:

There is a new HVAC offer on the table that will provide for improved engineering and design of heat pump systems to be installed in town. Rather than having a heating contractor do the system sizing and designing, an engineering firm will undertake that part as well as equipment specification. Right-sized systems will be more efficient and provide optimal heating and cooling. If adopted, PMLD will pay for the up front costs of the this service.

Transformers:

Transformers in town are being tested for PCBs. To date, 2 have been found. These have been removed from service and are being sent out for recycling and proper disposal.

Spare transformers are being moved indoors to reduce the chances of any undetected leaks or spills.

The Nextera contract is under review with the objective of meeting the S9 requirements for MLPs to reduce carbon emissions and increase reliance on renewable power.

Respectfully submitted by Philip Gott: Note that these notes reflect only his understanding of the meeting and have not been reviewed by other commissioners. Any discrepancy between these notes and the official approved minutes of the PMLD meeting is unintentional, and the official notes should prevail.