

Town of Princeton Environmental Action Committee (EAC)

Meeting Minutes

September 16, 2021

Meeting called to order at 7:06pm

Committee members present (in person):

Claire Golding (CG), Phil Gott (PG), Corey Burnham-Howard (CBH), Chris Samoiloff (CS), Charlie Cary (CC), Forrest Iwanik (FI)

Committee members absent: Matthew Charpentier (MC)

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

Associate members present via remote: Caitlan Davis (CD)

Also present (via remote): Helga Lyons, Advisory Committee EAC Liaison

Public Comment: Alfred Pearson: Interested in Town pursuing noise ordinance.

Review & Approve Minutes from August 19, 2021 Meeting:

- **MOTION** to approve as written with minor edits
Motion: CG; 2d: CS; Vote: 6-0

Noise Ordinance

- CBH explained that the Town Selectboard (SB) has asked the Planning Board to consider a noise bylaw as the SB have fielded complaints and have concerns particularly as relates to: earth screening operations; motorcycles; chainsaws; and saw mills. The Planning Board has agreed to consider this in its long-term planning. CBH noted that the EAC's Environmental Action Plan (EAP) has an action item of exploring a noise ordinance/bylaw for protection of Princeton's rural character and the health of humans and wildlife. CBH asked the EAC if the EAC wanted to offer the Planning Board assistance, and she suggested that since she serves on both committees that it should be other EAC members that are involved as representatives of EAC. EAC members discussed including concerns about enforceability of a noise bylaw.
- **MOTION for EAC to be involved in the Town's noise bylaw discussion.**
 - o Motion: CG; Vote: 6-0.
- EAC members CC and FI expressed interest in being involved in noise bylaw efforts.
- **ACTION:** CBH to send to EAC members examples of Massachusetts municipal noise bylaws/ordinances.
- **ACTION:** CBH will let Planning Board know that EAC voted to assist in noise bylaw efforts and that EAC would like to know how EAC might assist Planning Board.

New EAC Member Welcome

- Welcome to FI who has officially been appointed as a new EAC member.
- FI is looking to be involved where he may be needed in EAC actions and where his experience may be relevant.
 - o CS noted new EAC initiatives including Mosquito Control Opt-Out and Pest and Landscape Management Plan.

- CBH noted that next EAC Newsletter is on PFAS.
- **ACTION:** FI and CBH agreed to collaborate on PFAS article for next issue of The Green News.

Green Communities Designation Application

- CBH provided update.
 - 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 was to, within 90 days designate how those funds would be spent. Sarah Adams from Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) was coordinating. CBH reached out to Sherry Patch and Sarah Adams for updates on the status of the Green Community funding implementation, as well as to see how the EAC might assist. Sarah responded that she hoped soon get Sherry a more detailed update/strategy and a draft application for a small portion of the funding. Sarah explained that she recently met with Kelly Brown of DOER and Patrick of Guardian and that they discussed possibly asking weatherization contractors to provide quotes to audit the elementary school for eventual inclusion in the ERP (with funding acquired last year under a Municipal Energy Technical Assistance grant) at the same time that they provide scopes / quotes for weatherization ECMs. Patrick's feedback was that these projects are relatively small and he is having a hard time getting contractors who are willing to take the time to conduct the site visits and prepare scopes for small projects. Sarah suggests that a “meatier project (the TPS audit) may entice more folks to get out to Princeton.”
 - **ACTION:** CBH and CG to ask to meet regularly with Sherry Patch with regard to EAC actions items like Green Communities and MVP to get status updates and assist with propelling projects forward.

Municipal Vulnerability Planning (MVP) Program

- PG reported that he has heard that Princeton has officially been designated as an MVP Community. PG is unsure of next steps.
 - **ACTION:** PG to reach out to Sherry Patch to advocate that Princeton starts moving to submit projects to DOER for funding.
 - **ACTION:** PG to get updates on MVP to CS for website.

Princeton Municipal Light Department (PMLD)

- PG missed the latest PMLD meeting.
 - PG noted that, generally, PMLD is developing the PMLD Roadmap to 2050—when 100% of energy must come from renewable sources. He noted that MLDs must meet that 50% of that percentage goal by 2030 and 75% of that percentage goal by 2045.
 - PG also noted that 11% of power is “lost” (unaccounted for) and PMLD is working to reduce amps and increase volts which will result in lower losses—by converting low voltage utility lines from 4800 to 13800.
- CC had suggested to PMLD an equipment lending library where tools for assessing and managing energy use could be loaned from PMLD to town residents/businesses (e.g., KW measuring of appliances).
 - EAC discussed the idea. PG noted that equipment that is reusable is best for loaning (e.g., infrared cameras). PG and FI highlighted the importance of helping people understand what they can do with the results they obtain from loaned energy use tools.

- EAC members agreed that EAC role should be in such info sharing.
- CG noted PF's idea of other equipment lending ideas (e.g., rototiller)---and PG and FI suggested perhaps instead of taking on role of lender and potential liability, EAC coordinates list of other residents willing to share equipment.

ACTION: CC to reach out to PMLD on possible partnership in energy use assessment equipment lending and information sharing.

ACTION: PF to research what other municipalities or organizations have done with equipment lending.

PFAS Information Sharing

- CG noted that MC will be summarizing most recent Town PFAS Report.
 - HL explained that the report on additional soil testing showed PFAS at reportable but not remediable levels. She said that the report showed run-off of high levels of PFAS from 30 Mountain Road "headed toward the Wachusett Reservoir".

ACTION: MC to summarize most recent Town PFAS Report for Selectboard review and sharing.

- CG noted PFAS Information Public Hearing on 9/27 at 7p.

Waste and Recycling

- CG provided update on the Requests for Proposals (RFP) drafted by the Waste and Recycling Committee (WRC). The RFPs went out and there were 12 requests for more information and 1 proposal received from Waste Management. Because of this lack of response to the RFP, the WRC has cancelled the RFP and will revisit it in 6 months to see if the issue with the lack of response was timing (e.g., current lack of labor shortages and other turmoil in the industry).
- CG noted that WRC is looking at information regarding the option of a transfer station, and that WRC will continue looking for solutions.
- CS suggested that WRC might provide information sharing on recycling opportunities but CG noted that was not WRC charge, yet EAC could take on that information sharing action.

Communications /EAC Webpage Updates

- CS provided updates.
 - Newsletter:
 - Next EAC newsletter, The Green News, is ready to post—article is on Light Pollution work with WPI students, written by CBH and CG.
 - **ACTION:** CS to send out newsletter and post it on NextDoor Princeton and Facebook.
 - October newsletter will be a general article on PFAS by CBH and FI.
 - **ACTION:** Members send to CS ideas for future newsletter issues.
 - The Town has a new newsletter and CS inquired about adding EAC information in that newsletter. The next Town newsletter deadline submission is 9/22.
 - **ACTION:** CS to write and CG to edit submission for Town Newsletter with information on EAC Speaker Series and how to subscribe to The Green News for 9/22 deadline.
 - October Town Newsletter submission idea = EAC priority actions
 - Webpage:
 - Town Clerk posted the WPI Student Light Pollution presentation video.
 - CS sent Water Quality Speaker video to Town Clerk for posting.
 - CS posted the latest EAC Environmental Speaker Series flyer on the webpage
 - **ACTION:** All EAC members to advise CS as to website updates needed.

Local Cultural Council Grant Update/Speaker Series Update

- CBH provided update.
 - o The EAC's held its Speaker Series on drinking water quality with speaker Jim Starbard of RCAP Solutions. About 13 people attended. Presentation was recorded.
 - o CBH, CS, and CC now planning for December event—looking at climate change impacts and MVP planning. Possible speakers: Hilary King from the MVP Program at the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and/or Dani Marini of CMRPC.
 - **ACTION:** CBH, CC, and CS to plan next speaker series event.

Curbside Composting

- AW called Black Earth Compost, left a message, but had not yet received a response. She did get a response to her email inquiry: 80 pre-registrants would be needed to start a curbside composting program in town with Black Earth Compost at a cost of \$17.99/month for a curbside composting service in Princeton. They also take textiles. Registration begets a starter kit with a barrel and liner and a voucher for a bag of compost.
 - o EAC members discussed additional questions—"What do you get for \$17.99/month?" ; "How often is compost picked up?"; "How big is the bag of compost received with registration?"; "Can you purchase additional compost?"
 - o **ACTION:** AW to follow-up with Black Earth Compost with additional questions seeking more details on the services offered.

Plant Sales Group with Wachusett Garden Club Idea

- CS had previously raised the idea of EAC helping Princeton residents to access native plants. CS reached out to Dot Odgren (President of Wachusett Garden Club) and they agreed a collaboration would be good. CS, CD, MC, and Dot met and agreed they'd like to hold a native plant sale in the spring in conjunction with the Wachusett Garden Club (WGC) annual plant sale.
- CD provided update—that she spoke with Dot regarding plant selection—native pollinators via pre-order—and attempting to make the sale educational. WGC will handle all money and EAC will help to coordinate the sale.
 - o **ACTION:** CS, CD, MC to continue planning the plant sale event in coordination with WGC.

Public Safety Building

- PG provided update. PG reported that not much to update as relates to EAC. He noted that the PSB committee travelled to Farmington, NH to look at that municipality's PSB—a \$4 million building. Despite the higher labor costs in MA, the construction technique for that building—insulated concrete forms--could result in cost savings and is LEEDs Gold Standard Compatible). PSB committee is seeking information from Farmington as to what they cut to lower their budget and what they now wish they had. Matthew Moncreaff has suggested the creation of a video for Town Meeting highlighting current conditions in public safety buildings in town and what there should be.

Town Draft Snow and Ice Policy

- CBH provided update. CBH has done more research and would like to propose to Sherry Patch and Ben Metcalf that Princeton's policy include information on material selection, material storage, material disposal, equipment management practices—especially so that these protocols

- and environmental concerns are memorialized especially in case of employee roll over.
- EAC members gave feedback on how to approach the discussion and environmental recommendations for inclusion.
 - o **ACTION:** CBH will reach out to Sherry to set up a meeting with Ben to continue work on the Snow & Ice Policy.

Priority Actions Items Review

- CG sent the EAC priority action to the Selectboard. It is on the Selectboard agenda for 9/21.
 - o **ACTION:** CBH and CG to attend 9/21 Selectboard meeting to answer any potential questions on EAC priority action items.

Library Stargazing Event

- CG noted that the library is hosting an event on 10/15 utilizing its telescope to stargaze with pre-registered attendees. CG proposed that EAC share information at that event on dark sky appreciation and how to mitigate light pollution.
 - o **ACTION:** CG to talk to library director about sharing EAC light pollution information handout at stargazing event.
 - o **ACTION:** CG, CBH, and CS to draft and finalize EAC light pollution information handout for library stargazing event.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting (October 21, 2021 at 7p)

- Public Comment
- Review and Approve Minutes of September 16, 2021
- Green Communities Updates
- MVP Updates
- PMLD Updates
- PFAS communication
- Waste and Recycling Committee Updates
- Communications/EAC Webpage Updates
- Curbside Composting Updates
- EAC Speaker Series Updates
- Plant Sales Group with Wachusett Garden Club Idea Updates
- Public Safety Building EAC Subcommittee Updates
- Snow and Ice Policy Updates
- Priority Action Items Updates
- Proposed Lending Library Initiative (CC)
- Future Meeting Schedule
- Agenda items for Next Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 9:18p.m.

MOTION to adjourn.

Motion: PG; 2d: CC; Vote: 6-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Corey Burnham-Howard

PMLD Board of Commissioners Meeting
August 11, 2021
Items of potential interest to the EAC

Commercial Incentives

Discussion continued about how to support conversion of commercial accounts to more electricity-based systems in support of a lower carbon footprint. Key points made include:

- Vote 3-0 in favor of not incentivizing installation of any fossil-fueled heating system even if it is more efficient than those they replace,
- Provision of two Level 2 EV chargers for each commercial building. PMLD will supply the chargers, customer to fund the installation.

Transformer oil

PMLD has completed the sampling of oil from all transformers in town. Awaiting lab results from the last batch. 11 transformers in the prior batch were found to have PCBs in their oil. These have been removed from service and shipped out of town for proper recycling or disposal.

50% Carbon neutral by 2030

Discussion continues about how to achieve this regulatory goal. The key to this lies with our primary power supplier, Nextera, and how we continue the contract into that time frame. Discussions continue around “buying” our own wind and alternative suppliers of “green” energy to replace or supplement Nextera.

Phil Gott noted that as he understands the contract, contrary to our prior understanding, our “take or pay” threshold is not a rolling average of the most recent three years, but a fixed threshold based on the average of the three years preceding the adoption or implementation of any major energy conservation measures. This works to our advantage if we have an increase in demand due to growth, but is a severe handicap if we have a reduction in demand due to conservation or implementation of a major energy saving initiative such as, for example, community solar or purchase of our own wind.

There was a brief discussion about the cost effectiveness of buying RECS as part of that strategy. The costs for RECS is going to be hard to predict. While some RECS are inexpensive now, that is not likely going to be the case when they are most needed.

It was noted that demand for power in Princeton could double by 2030 due to growth and replacement of fossil energy with electricity.

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.

Public Safety Building Meeting
August 9, 2021
Items of potential interest to the EAC

Discussions continue on ways to cut costs without reducing functionality.

Cost-reductions:

To put the overall discussion into context:

- 50% of the total cost is expected to be “overhead.” That is, items such as teardown of the Center School (\$90,000 plus \$125,000 for known HAZMAT Disposal), A&E fees, land preparation etc.
- Of that 50%,
 - 13% is HVAC
 - 15% is Electrical Systems
 - 7% is Plumbing

Discussions

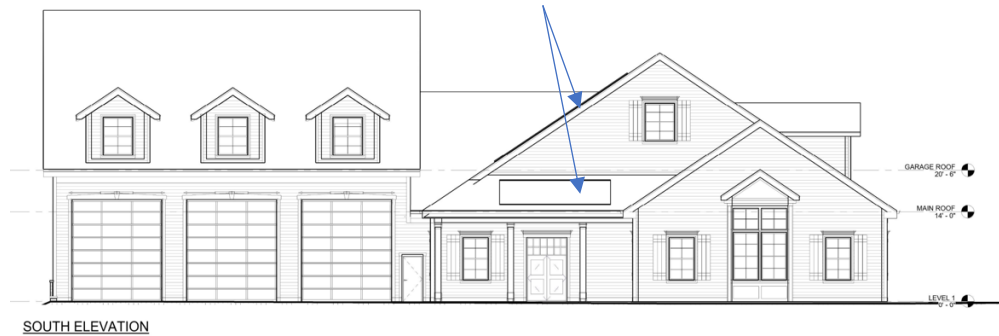
- It appears that some reduction in square footage and can be accomplished by relocation of the fitness equipment of moving the conference room/emergency Operations Center (EOC) into the fitness space of the current (option B) design. However it is unclear if those savings would or would not be offset by the need for ADA compliant access to and HVAC for the fitness area.
- Other cost savings are likely to come from alternative construction methods as opposed to the stick-built nature of the current design. Tours of alternative-built facilities are being arranged.
- In a similar manner, using a portable, modular concept for interior partitions appears to be able to reduce the cost of the building interior, working around, of course, the “hard” installations such as lavatory and shower facilities as well as prisoner holding cells.
- In areas of particular interest to EAC (HVAC and Electrical and insulation), the “wiggle room” for cost impact is relatively small. We are at too early a stage to consider the impact of specific equipment or designs. Inability to directly discuss these issues with knowledgeable architects at this stage of the design is limiting, but as the cost figures are only cook-book level estimates, any cost estimates would be “back of the envelope” level at best ($\pm \sim 20\%$). Nonetheless, I have asked Charlie Cary if he could develop a relative comparison of costs for oil, propane, wood and heat pump systems for this size of building (13750 sq. ft.).

Solar-readiness

By Mass law, the roof will be “solar-ready.” That is, it will be designed to bear the weight of solar panels.

Current drawings on line show solar panels on the roof, but there are no line-item costs for these in the plans, nor was anyone on the committee aware of any plans to install solar. (Stay tuned....)

Solar Panels



In view of the current uncertainties, Phil Gott requested that any costs estimates shown to the townspeople include operating costs 5 years out (5 years into the use of the building after construction), which should help to justify any additional expenditures made to install energy-conserving equipment.

Other

Discussion of using another location were abandoned after the lot for sale on Boylston Ave proved too “wet” to be practical. Use of that lot would significantly limit any future expansion of the facility and/or parking due to the location of the significant amount of wet lands.

Sean has asked if the EAC would assist in a survey of town residents about their preferences for renewable energy,

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