

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

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **August 19, 2021**

**Meeting called to order** at 7:10pm

*Committee members present (in person):*

Claire Golding (CG), Phil Gott (PG), Corey Burnham-Howard (CBH), Chris Samoiloff (CS), Matthew Charpentier (MC), Charlie Cary (CC)

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

*Associate members present via remote:* Caitlan Davis (CD)

*Also present (via remote):* Forrest Iwanik, EAC member applicant

**Public Comment:** None.

#### **Review & Approve Minutes from July 15, 2021 Meeting:**

- **MOTION** to approve as written with clarification edits and minor grammatical edits  
Motion: CS; 2d: CBH; Vote: 4-0 (abstaining: CC and MC)

#### **New Member Applicant**

- Forrest Iwanik is an applicant to serve as an EAC member. He was present (via remote), introduced himself, his related employment history, as well as his EAC interests which include open space, waste reduction, and drinking water.
- EAC members introduced themselves to Forrest, sharing their backgrounds and interests
- EAC members asked Forrest about the skillset(s) he could offer, his availability to serve and attend meetings, and his willingness to participate with EAC actions.

#### **EAC Code of Conduct**

- CS drafted a Code of Conduct for consideration of adoption by the EAC based on the EAC's mission statement and the Selectboard Code of Conduct.
  - o EAC members discussed the need for an EAC Code of Conduct and agreed it would be useful to hold members accountable if needed.
  - o **MOTION** to adopt an EAC Code of Conduct.  
Motion: CG; 2d: MC. Vote: 6-0.
  - o EAC members discussed edits to proposed EAC Code of Conduct and worked to finalize wording of EAC Code of Conduct.
  - o **MOTION** to accept EAC Code of Conduct with authorization for CG to make final grammatical edits.  
Motion: CS; 2d: PG. Vote: 6-0.

#### **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 the most recent meeting with interested town stakeholders on July 14.

- CBH reached out to Sherry Patch and Sarah Adams for updates on the status of the Green Community funding implementation, as well as to suggest a “point-person” to designate to help with the implementation and/or to see how the EAC might assist. Sherry responded that Phil Connors was coordinating site visits with a representative from Guardian with regard to weatherization audits.
- **ACTION:** CBH to reach out to Sherry Patch and Sarah Adams to follow-up on Green Community funding status.

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

- PG reported that there are no new updates. MVP Plan has been submitted for review by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA), and it is hoped Princeton would soon hear about the official MVP designation.
  - **ACTION:** PG to contact CMRPC/Hilary King for a status update on Princeton’s MVP designation.

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

- PG provide update. (See attached notes.)

### **PFAS Information Sharing**

- MC reported that there were no updates.
- Selectboard had asked for an acronym cheat sheet.  
**ACTION:** MC to create acronym cheat sheet to include with the EAC’s first quarterly PFAS report summary.

### **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. The Selectboard is now contacting those entities who interviewed with interest but ultimately did not bid by the deadline. CG reported that they will likely cancel the RFP and revise it based on hauler feedback.
- CG also reported that a resident brought up the idea of having a transfer station in town and so the WRC is looking into that idea.
- Next WRC meeting is 8/31.

### **Communications /EAC Webpage Updates**

- CS provided updates.
  - The Town has a new newsletter and CS inquired about adding EAC information in that newsletter. The next newsletter issue comes out 10/1, and the EAC will be allowed a whole page for EAC information.
    - **ACTION:** EAC members agreed that at the next EAC meeting in September members should decide what topic to include in the October Town Newsletter.
  - Webpage:
    - CS has made some updates to the webpage.
    - CS has asked the Town Clerk to post the WPI Student Light Pollution presentation video.

- CS posted the latest EAC Environmental Speaker Series flyer on the webpage
- **ACTION:** All EAC members to advise CS as to website updates needed.
- **ACTION:** CG to send WRC updates to CS to post on website.
- Newsletter:
  - CS sent out July “Roundup” Newsletter.
  - September Newsletter: CBH and CG will write 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 September Newsletter.
  - CS suggested “Meet the EAC Members” Newsletter issue and/or provide specific “Meet the EAC Members” in each of the newsletter in which those members author an article.

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

- CBH provided update.
  - The EAC’s next Speaker Series will be on drinking water quality: actions to protect the drinking water supply, how to test well water, and what to do with well water results. The event will be on September 9 at 7p and will feature Jim Starbard of RCAP Solutions.
    - CS sent flyer to Town Clerk who sent out information via Town News
    - **ACTION:** CBH to post flyer and meeting information on NextDoor Princeton and Facebook’s Discussing Princeton, MA page.
    - **ACTION:** CBH to send blurb and flyer on 9/9 Speaker Series to Redemption Rock News.

### **Curbside Composting**

- CG reported update from AW. Black Earth Compost responded to AW’s email inquiry with a short answer that 80 pre-registrants would be needed at a cost of \$17.99/month for a curbside composting service in Princeton.
  - EAC members discussed additional questions—“What do you get for \$17.99/month?” “How often is compost picked up?”
  - **ACTION:** AW to follow-up with Black Earth Compost with additional questions seeking more details on the services offered.

### **WPI Project Updates**

- No updates.
- **ACTION:** CBH and CG to write summary of Student Research Project on Light Pollution.

### **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 annual plant sale.
  - **ACTION:** CS, CD, MC, and Dot Odgren to meet to discuss what plants to purchase and how to collect the purchase order.
- CBH suggested that the Wachusett Garden Club would need to handle all money as EAC is a Town committee.
  - **ACTION:** CS to discuss with Dot Odgren the issue of money handling for native plant sale.

### **Public Safety Building**

- PG provided update. (See attached notes.)

### **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.

### **Priority Actions Items Review**

- CBH had drafted an EAC priority action items list to eventually be sent to the Selectboard.
- PG noted that he was concerned about the bandwidth to tackle all of the items listed. EAC members discussed and generally agreed to move forward with the list with optimism for tackling it.
  - o **ACTION:** CBH and CG to finalize EAC priority action items list and send to the Selectboard.

### **Future Meeting Planning**

- EAC members discuss if they want to continue meeting in-person or only virtually given COVID Delta variant concerns and protocols. EAC members agreed to continue meeting in-person with remote option.
- EAC members discussed meeting space options as it was not clear whether Council On Aging (CoA) space would be open to public meetings in the future. EAC members agreed that they would like to continue meeting in CoA space if possible, and if another space was needed—such as utilizing Wachusett Meadow room—EAC would need to borrow Town microphone/speaker for virtual connection.
  - o **ACTION:** CG to ask about availability of CoA space for continued EAC use and/or to borrow microphone/speaker for new EAC meeting location.

### **New Member Applicant Vote**

- EAC members briefly discussed consideration of EAC member applicant Forrest Iwanik.
- **MOTION** that EAC recommends to the Selectboard Forrest Iwanik for EAC membership.  
Motion: CG; 2d: MC. Vote: 6-0.

### **Agenda Items for Next Meeting (September 16, 2021 at 7p)**

- Public Comment
- Review and Approve Minutes of Aug 19, 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)
- Agenda items for Next Meeting

**Meeting adjourned** at 9:22 p.m.

**MOTION** to adjourn.

Motion: CBH; 2d: MC; 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

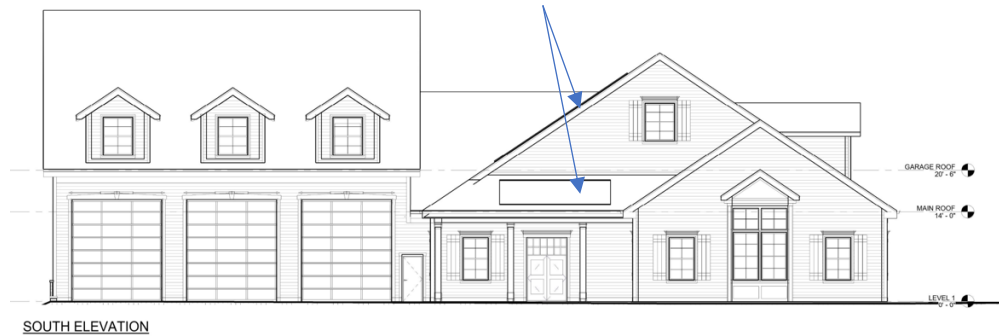
- It appears that some reduction in square footage and can be accomplished by relocation of the fitness equipment of moving the conference room/emergency Operations Center (EOC) into the fitness space of the current (option B) design. However it is unclear if those savings would or would not be offset 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
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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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