**Town of Princeton**

**Environmental Action Committee (EAC)**

**Meeting Minutes – May 8th, 2023**

* Meeting called to order at 7:09 pm
* *Members in attendance:* Corey Burnham-Howard (CBH), Claire Golding(CG), Phil Gott(PG), Kaitlin Kohberger (KK), Gerry Pellegrini (GP), Forrest Iwanik (FI)
* *Members absent*: Matt Charpentier (MC)
* *Public in attendance*: Richard Bisk
* Public Comment: None
* Review of April’s Meeting Minutes
  + PG moved to approve as written, CG second, unanimous
* Updates on Ongoing Initiatives:
  + CG was looking for feedback regarding a potential composting workshop collaboration with the library. This would be a good topic to discuss when considering next year’s goals and focal points.
  + CBH asked if the EAC was interested in providing Princeton Municipal Light Department (PMLD) with information and/or advice on nuclear power. After deliberation, EAC decided not to weigh in as a committee but individual members were encouraged to give personal testimony if so inclined.
  + PG confirmed that PMLD’s battery storage project to replace the diesel generator is going forward.
* Member Recruitment:
  + Steve Jones has resigned.
  + Richy Bisk is applying for full membership once he is legally allowed to join following his stint as Selectman.
  + GP is applying for full membership.
* Outreach Campaign:
  + May Green News Brief (GNB) on Local Food was being edited and formatted for release.
  + May Outreach Event – EAC will host a table at Rattle Root Farm, provide information to attendees and offer them the opportunity to plant their own mammoth sunflower seed. FI, CBH, and GP to coordinate staffing and supplies.
  + June GNB on Invasive Species was being written by KK.
* EAC table at Thomas Prince School’s STEAM Night:
  + KK and CG to collaborate and attend.
* Brainstorm for Next Year’s Projects:
  + An extensive list was compiled by CBH to be distributed to all for consideration.
  + Members were instructed to identify items from the list they’d be interested in working on and which they could potentially lead.
* Next meeting we will need to elect a Committee Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. Members also asked to consider taking the baton from PG as he leaves us for the Selectboard on assignments like PMLD liaison and others.
* New Member Voting:
  + GP for full (3 year) term: CBH moved to approve, FI second, unanimous.
  + RB for full (2 year) term: CG moved to approve, CBH second, unanimous.
  + Brendan Toohey for full (3 year) term: abstained until next meeting.
* Agenda Items for Next Meeting same as always with the following additions:
  + Vote for Committee Officers.
  + Discuss the distribution of PG’s roles and responsibilities.
  + Set EAC theme and projects for next year.
* PG moved to adjourn at 8:56 pm, CG second, unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted by Forrest Iwanik

**EAC Working Group Updates for Review and Discussion at EAC May Meeting:**

**Green Communities Initiative Update (CBH) (PG)**

On May 1, Sherry Patch reported that Ian McElwee of CMRPC was working to get Princeton’s Energy Reduction Plan (ERP) on the WRSD School Committee agenda. Adoption of the ERP by the WRSD will allow for TPS to be included in the ERP and for funding for energy upgrades to be utilized at TPS.

On May 5, Sherry Patch reported that there is a kick-off meeting with the contractor for the Green Communities Lighting Project on 5/16 at 10a.

**Snow & Ice Policy (CBH)**

*No new updates.*

**Climate Resiliency Outreach Campaign (CBH)**

*(See Communications updates below.)*

**MVP (PG)**

*No new updates.*

**PFAS Information Sharing (FI)**

*No new updates submitted.*

**Communications/Newsletter/Website (CG) (CBH)**

- EAC has partnered with Worcester’s Community Rain Barrel sales event to offer Princeton residents the opportunity to order rain barrels from the Great American Rain Barrel website at near to wholesale prices—with order pickup on May 22 at Blackstone Heritage Corridor Visitor Center in Worcester. So far one resident has reached out to EAC to ask for help in picking up their rain barrel. CBH will send a reminder as to deadline for ordering one on May 8.

- CG submitted two abbreviated versions of two Green News Briefs (February and April: energy-saving tips for drivers and sustainable landscaping) to RRNews for May 18 issue.

- **May Green News Brief- Local Food and Agriculture**- FI lead. FI is working on draft for Green News Brief that when ready CG or CBH will format in CANVA and distribute. Publication Date: TBD.

- Ag Commission is hosting Farm Day 5/21 at 4 locations in town: Rattle Root Farm; Mass Audubon Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary; Andean Dawn Alpaca Farm; and Stimson Farm. GP contacted Rattleroot Farm folks to get their approval for EAC activity table at the farm on Farm Day. EAC will host a table at Rattle Root Farm with supplies for Mammoth Sunflower Seed planting in peat pots. EAC will also bring a table, chairs, canopy (secured by Gerry from Mass Audubon), copies of newsletters, QR codes, sign-up sheet, sign, and Environmental Bingo. Farm Day flyer will be included in the May Green News Brief.

- **June Green News Brief- Invasive Species: Plants and Insects** –KK lead. KK is working on draft for Green News Brief. When complete, CBH will format in CANVA and distribute. GP put KK in touch with his sister-in-law with regard to invasive species content.

- Still need to make website corrections/updates. CBH reached out to new Town Clerk who said she’d train CBH as to how to make changes to pages once she is settled into her new position. CBH will reach out again after Town elections and Town Meeting…

**EAC Liaison Updates:**

**Public Safety Building Committee (PG)**

*No new updates submitted.*

**Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC) update** **(CG)**

All three chapters (Land Use, Economic Development, and Open Space/Natural Resources) have been reviewed by MPSC and returned to CMRPC as of 4/7/23. MPSC will meet 5/12 with CMRPC to discuss revised chapters.

**Waste and Recycling Committee Update (CG)**

WRC met 4/27.

Discussed sharing Westminster’s transfer station; according to Irene Congdon, the contract between Westminster/Fitchburg and Waste Management regarding town use of the landfill and transfer station has been recently renegotiated, and there is little chance that any of the parties will be interested in opening new negotiations.

Discussed Holden’s old landfill site, now a yard waste receiving area. Has electricity and a road, but would need other modifications. After discussion of distance from Princeton, necessity of Princeton managing it, and other potential complications, we tabled this idea until we’ve explored other options.

Committee agreed that it was time to update residents on current status of our work and release link to survey results.

Discussed curbside organics collection, as 32% of average trash output is organics (food waste); only 37% of trash is actually trash. Black Earth Compost now has a base in Groton, and is now offering to provide compost to subscribers, not just collect it. **Can EAC or others work with library to organize composting workshops? Organics pickup at farmer’s markets in town?**

Options for Princeton: stricter hauler regulations (these would have to come from the BoH); town contract with a single hauler; negotiations with haulers to offer residents lower-cost options.

WRC will set up a meeting with E.L. Harvey in June to discuss cost of two rolloff dumpsters for potential transfer station, plus cost-reduction options for residential pickup.

**Princeton Solar Farm Working Group (CBH)**

- A SFWG meeting was held on 4/6 but CBH was unable to attend. At that meeting, the group reviewed draft Fact Sheet and Presentation regarding the warrant articles that will be on Town Meeting—asking the Town to authorize the Selectboard to lease the former Town landfill to a solar developer. CBH drafted the fact sheet and the presentation, and had suggested that the group host a public information session, as well as attend the Advisory Committee meeting on warrant articles. CBH is tasked with making minor revisions to the presentation. The SFWG meets on 5/11 at 11a but CBH cannot attend. The SFWG scheduled their public information hearing on the Solar Farm warrant articles for 6/8 at 7p. CBH cannot attend, and given WRHS graduation and TPS’s STEAM festival that night has suggested a date change.

**Earth Month Working Group (CG) (CBH)**

The 4th Annual Earth Month kicked off April 1! Usually, the Townwide Cleanup ends 4/30 but this year it is wrapping up 5/7 (late) because of wet weather in the month of April. It seems perhaps there was not as much enthusiasm with participation this year, but all roads were claimed and are nearly complete. The EMWG will host a “thank you” celebration 5/10 at 6 pm – 7:30 pm to hand out prizes, offer PMLD swag, and thank volunteers. (EAC funds approved at last EAC meeting may help to pay for some of this celebration.) Next year (2024), the group hopes to plan a larger celebration, perhaps on Earth Day itself, as Sterling did—to raise awareness, foster civic pride, get more of community involved, etc.

**Open Space Committee (GP) (CBH)**

Open Space Committee is hosting a series of nature walks this May, guided by various experts, and EAC is a co-sponsor. CBH created flyers advertising the event and posted them on social media.

**PMLD (PG)**

*No new updates submitted.*