Town of Princeton

Environmental Action Committee (EAC)

Meeting Minutes – October 16, 2023

* Meeting called to order 7:06pm
* Members present: Corey Burnham-Howard (CBH,) Gerry Pellegrini (GP,) Claire Golding (CG,) Richard Bisk (RB,) Forrest Iwanik (FI)
* Members absent: Kaitlin Kohberger (KK)
* No public present
* No advisory committee liaison present
* Review of 9/11 meeting minutes:
  + Minutes amended for clarity
  + Motion to approve as amended from CG, seconded by RB, unanimous
* Compiled Updates:
  + See attached.
  + CG provided updates regarding the shared transfer station project. Sherry Patch held a meeting with representatives from the other potentially interested communities and laid some groundwork. Another meeting scheduled in early November.
  + RB solicited opinion from present EAC members to inform his position on the newly formed Ecotourism Committee.
* Old and New Business:
  + Revisions were offered for the Green News Brief (GNB) on waste and recycling, which is on schedule for submittal November 1.
    - Fall textile event is off, no company interested in hauling.
  + Winter night sky event tentatively scheduled for February 4th.
    - Discussed locations and activities
  + Master Plan Steering Committee chapters
    - Continue sending edits to CBH, she will compile the EAC’s suggestions and share with CG
    - Environmental Action Plan section needs serious edits, didn’t use our language.
  + New member recruitment
    - CBH to post the open position(s); CG included vacancy in the GNB.
* Agenda for next meeting:
  + Same as this month, remove the fall event topic
  + Next meeting scheduled for November 13th.
  + Motion to adjourn proposed by CBH at 8:25, RB second, unanimous.

Documents reviewed at meeting:

* EAC Compiled Updates (see attached)
* Princeton Master Plan Chapter- Natural Resources
* 2024 Topics and Activities Leadership Spreadsheet

Respectfully submitted,

Forrest Iwanik

**EAC Updates for Review and Discussion at EAC October Meeting:**

**Green Communities (CBH)**

In late September, Sherry Patch advised that the Town has requested to use some of the Green Community Designation grant to conduct a weatherization study for Bagg Hall; Goodnow Memorial Library; Highway Garage; Fire Station #2. An RFP went out for this work with quotes due by 10/16.

In August, Ian McElwee of CMRPC presented Princeton’s Energy Reduction Plan (ERP) to the WRSD School Committee. Adoption of an ERP Amendment to include TPS--by the WRSD--will allow for TPS to be included in the ERP and for funding for energy upgrades to be utilized at TPS. Ian reported that a full ERP Amendment would be submitted to them for consideration at the School Committee’s September meeting. In order TPS to be eligible for Green Community funding upgrades, the School Committee would also need to adopt a district-wide fuel-efficient vehicle policy –and the committee wants more information from district staff on numbers and what vehicles would be impacted by such a policy before considering such a policy adoption. Ian intends to continue to work with the Superintendent. (Ian’s work is being funded by Green Communities grant awarded to Princeton.) No further updates received.

**MVP (CBH)**

Princeton needs to submit it MVP Annual Report (e.g., answers to several questions about activities and plans) by end of the year. Sherry asked CBH to meet to work on it in early November.

**PFAS Information Sharing (FI)**

The Town shared an update on October 5 with regard to PFAS. *No further updates.*

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

Still need to make **website** corrections/updates/rearranging. CBH reached out to the Town Clerk again in early September to ask for a time to be trained so that CBH can make changes to the EAC page. Karen Cruise has offered to train CBH, and CBH will reach out for that training soon.

Next **Green News Brief** is planned for mid-October with publication by Nov. 1 on Waste & Recycling/Sustainable Living.

EAC (thanks to CG) hosted a fantastic information table at **Hey Day**.

CBH attended the September Chairs breakfast and shared all of the EAC’s actions and upcoming plans.

CBH sent to the Selectboard the EAC’s letter re: updates on priority action items.

GP reports that he and KK have made progress on a winter night sky appreciation event. After looking at potential costs, they have decided not to pursue a PCC grant. They have an astronomy group (the Aldrich Society) willing to participate, and Gerry suggests a $250 donation to them for their participation out of the EAC’s annual budget. GP notes they will advertise the event via email and Town website, etc. They are working to coordinate the event with Parks & Rec’s February Winter Carnival that looks like to be held Feb. 3, 2021.

**Public Safety Building Committee (CG)**

The Selectboard has created a new Public Safety Building Committee. CG has been appointed as the EAC Member on the Committee. No meeting has yet been scheduled.

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

MPSC met on August 30, 2023.

All three chapters—Economic Development, Land Use, and Natural Resources and Open Space—have been reviewed and amended by CMRPC and the committee now and are under review by various Town committees. The proposed deadline for response from committees is Thanksgiving. It is unclear at this time when a committee will be formed to create Phase II of the Master Plan, but Phase II grant funding announcements are expected around Thanksgiving. Princeton has applied for $100K. *No further updates.*

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

WRC last met on July 6, 2023.

On October 12, Town Administrator Sherry Patch was to meet with the Town Administrators of Rutland and Hubbardston to discuss a possible regional transfer station. No further updates.

**Princeton Solar Farm Committee (CBH)**

The new Solar Farm Committee has been formed and given a charge. CBH serves as a member on the Committee and GP serves as EAC liaison on the Committee. The Committee met for the first time on 10/13. The Committee will meet monthly on the 3rd Thursday of each month. There are several hurdles that must be addressed before moving forward with drafting an RFP to lease the former landfill for solar development—primarily (1) whether an interconnection to Sterling will go forward—which is necessary to have the transmission capacity on the grid for a 1 MW solar facility in Princeton: (2) whether DCR will provide a utility easement over their land so that transmission lines can run from the solar field to the road (currently the access easement over DCR land allows only for foot and vehicle traffic); (3) failing culverts on the access road to the site over DCR land may need replacement before construction vehicles could traverse them and this would likely need to be included in the RFP for solar developer to take on. The Committee is pursuing an informational meeting with MassDEP to discuss this potential post-closure use of solar and obtain MassDEP insight and guidance.

**Open Space Committee / Nature Walks (FI) (CBH)**

The OSC’s Deb Cary reports that there will no longer be a series of Fall Nature Walks as potential volunteer walk leaders are busy and unable to commit. OSC is looking to pursue this in the spring, but if EAC wants to host a program or session in the fall or winter, OSC is happy to co-host.

**Ecotourism Economic Development Plan Committee**

In September 2022, at Town Administrator Sherry Patch’s application, the Town received a $33,425 grant from the state to create an Ecotourism Economic Development Plan. In late September, the Selectboard formed the Ecotourism Steering Committee “to develop an ecotourism development strategy that respects, protects, and leverages the economic opportunities offered by Princeton’s natural rural character.” Richy Bisk applied to serve as the EAC liaison on the committee.

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

Will resume planning in early 2024 for April activities.

**PMLD (GP)**

**Housing Production Plan Implementation Committee (RB)**

**CMRPC Regional Emissions Reduction Planning (GP)**