Environmental Action Committee (EAC)

Meeting Minutes – January 8th, 2024

* Meeting called to order 19:11
* Members present: Corey Burnham-Howard (CBH,) Claire Golding (CG,) Gerry Pellegrini (GP,) Kaitlin Kohberger (KK,) and Forrest Iwanik (FI)
* Members via remote access: Richard Bisk (RB)
* Members absent: None
* No public present
* No advisory board liaison present
* Review of December 4th meeting minutes:
  + RB moved to approve as written, CG seconded, unanimous approval
* Compiled Updates:
  + FI provided oral update on the town’s PFAS phase II report.
  + CG reports that the expected Master Plan Steering Committee funding for Phase 2 has been denied and are pursuing a resolution to that. She has still not received all edits for the previously circulated chapters.
  + CG reports that the Waste and Recycling Committee is now a working group and has crafted a new transfer station-related survey that was circulated to residents of Princeton, Hubbardston, and Rutland with each town’s census.
  + Going forward, GP will try to summarize PMLD’s meeting minutes in lieu of attending the meetings which no EAC members are able to commit to attending.
* Old and New Business:
  + February is dedicated to Night Sky Awareness
    - Rick Gardner (of the Open Space Committee and Princeton Land Trust) will be hosting a full moon hike.
    - February 3rd: EAC’s Night Sky Awareness Dark Sky Event
      * 6:30-8:30pm
      * Aldrich Astronomical Society to bring telescope and share info
      * FI to provide fire pit, others to provide smores and hot cocoa supplies
  + Ecotourism Committee
    - RB reports that the committee has focused on encouraging enough eco-related business to lower residential tax rate. EAC unanimously encouraged RB to push for the environmental stewardship/protection aspect.
  + Master Plan Steering Committee:
    - CBH will send CG all chapter edits from the EAC.
  + EAC Annual Report:
    - CBH is seeking EAC comments by January 15th.
  + Member Recruitment ongoing.
* Next meeting scheduled for February 12th, 2024 at 19:00.
* CG moved to adjourn at 20:39, FI seconded, unanimous approval

Documents reviewed at meeting:

* EAC draft December 4 meeting minutes
* EAC Compiled Updates (see attached)
* EAC Draft Annual Report
* 2024 Topics and Activities Leadership Spreadsheet

Respectfully submitted,

Forrest Iwanik

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

**Green Communities (CBH)**

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.) The Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy was on the WRSD Facility Subcommittee meeting agenda for Tuesday, October 24. CBH has asked SP again on 1/5 for any updates on that meeting.

SP reported that DOER approved use of funds from the Green Community Designation Grant for a weatherization study of town-owned buildings (Bagg Hall; Goodnow Memorial Library; Highway Garage; Fire Station #2). Responses to a Request for Quotes for the work are due by 11/10. CBH asked SP on 1/5 for any updates.

**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. CBH asked SP on 1/5 for any updates.

EEA hosted an MVP workshop on 12/5, which SP attended. Any MVP EOIs were due by 12/15. CBH inquired with SP on 1/5 as to whether the Town submitted any EOIs.

**PFAS Information Sharing (FI)**

*No updates provided.*

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

Still need to make **website** corrections/updates/rearranging. CBH has received access to the site from the Town Clerk and will plan to meet with Karen to receive training on how to post/edit on the Town website

The EAC’s Sustainable Holiday Guide was “published” online and via various social media and Town/EAC News on December 6 (thank you Claire!!).

GP has drafted a Green News Brief on Dark Sky Awareness and has sent it to EAC members for review.

GP reports the following progress on the **Winter Night Sky Appreciation Event**: GP has confirmed with Jim Zebrowski that the Aldrich Society will be participating in the sky watch event on February 3, 2024. Gerry previously suggested a $250 donation to them for their participation out of the EAC’s annual budget. Parks & Rec’s February Winter Carnival is Feb. 3, 2024. GP reached out to Ben Metcalf who confirmed ability to turn off all lights at Krashes for the event—which is a known location with plenty of parking. GP and KK are working on coordinating a night hike as part of the event.

**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. The first meeting of the PSB committee is this Thursday night, 1/11.

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

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 was 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 updates provided.*

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

*Updates to be provided at EAC Meeting.*

**Princeton Solar Farm Committee (CBH) (GP)**

The committee next meets on January 18, 2024. 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. *No further updates*.

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

OSC is looking to host nature walks in the spring. *No further updates to report.*

**Ecotourism Economic Development Plan Committee (RB)**

Ecotourism Steering Committee met December 18 at 9 am

Still at the brainstorming stage. My sense is that many committee members are

focusing on economic development with the goal of reducing the

residential tax rate. I’ve been more concerned with environmental

impact and have introduced the idea of promoting bike paths as a

minimally impactful form of tourism. Iwould appreciate feedback

from the EAC. Current action item is to develop a list of potential

stakeholders and interview questions for them.

Next meeting is January 22 at 9 am.

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

Will resume planning in early 2024 for April activities.

**PMLD**

Are any EAC members interested in being PMLD liaison?

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

Housing Implementation Committee met Dec. 15, 9:00 am

MBTA Adjacent Communities – Princeton has received a technical assistance grant to assist

with the associated bylaw changes. Princeton has complied with the initial requirements of the

MBTA Adjacent rules (submit a plan) and is awaiting state approval.

Guest speaker - Caroline (Chris) Kluchman of Community Services Division at

Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities

discussed the proposed Affordable Housing Act.

Septic repair tax offset credits - Jen Shenk reported that MA has tripled the amount of the

septic credit ($6K to $18K). The credits can be used over multiple years

to offset MA tax obligations.

Housing Trusts - Chris recommended Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Guidebook

TO DO Updates: How many (ADUs) are there in Princeton: Ann Neuberg is working with

the Assessor to find the number of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in

Princeton..

Ann has developed Princeton-centric definition of affordable housing for

our review

New TO DOs:

Ann: 5 minute talk about Princeton’s bylaws for ADUs, backlot

development

Jennifer Shenk: look into housing trusts.

All members: think about sites for development in Princeton and keep an

eye out for creative solutions in other towns.

Next meeting is Thursday January 11 at 9 am.

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

*No updates.*