



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, October 7, 2020 7:00 PM

**PRESENT:** Tom Frazier, Ned Jackson, Jim Kielbaso, Bill McConnell, John Sarver (Chair), Rose Vadnais (Vice Chair), Courtney Wisinski (Trustee Liaison), Luca Wisinski  
**STAFF:** LeRoy Harvey, Stephen Gebes, Samantha Diehl, Phil Deschaine (Treasurer)  
**GUESTS:** Cliff Walls, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission  
Kendra Grasseschi, Resident

**Approval of Agenda:** Approved unanimously with addition of Environmental Commission Grant.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes approved unanimously.

**Public Remarks:** Gebes mentioned the call in #: 517.349.1232. Grasseschi mentioned her interest in Green Infrastructure.

**New Business:**

**2021 Grant to E.C.:** Deschaine provided an update of the Township Budget including the addition of \$300,000 for solar (towards our 2030 100% renewable goal) and \$10,000 for a Green Infrastructure grant to the Environmental Commission. Because 95% of revenue comes from property taxes, the budget is in relatively good shape. Wisinski also mentioned \$30,000 to hire a consultant for a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiative. This might relate to our environmental justice efforts.

Sarver invited ideas for the \$10,000 grant to the E.C.

- McConnell mentioned a demonstration related to **Green Infrastructure**.
- Vadnais voiced support for an educational initiative such as a **green roof**.
- Jackson mentioned **porous pavement** – possibly test zones at local schools. L. Wisinski mentioned a parking shortage at Okemos High School. The tennis courts at Chippewa Middle School are a potential site. Jackson cited a study.
- Harvey and Kielbaso mentioned **rain gardens**. Possibilities include the Market on the Green and learning from the Towar Garden 100+ rain gardens.
- Sarver encouraged exploring permeable pavement before the next meeting.
- McConnell mentioned a **tree project** in Haslett.
- Deschaine mentioned a potential **competition** between schools, involving youth which might also be fundable by local service clubs such as Rotary and Kiwanis.

Please send additional ideas to Harvey. Rose, Ned, and LeRoy (and anyone else who desires) will meet to review ideas and present for further discussion at our November Meeting.

## Old Business:

**Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) Audit:** Cliff Walls provided an overview of his recommendations. Many GSI decisions are in the hands of the Drain Commissioners' office so Walls focused his recommendations on those practical to us, such as clarification of green infrastructure terms (deep-rooted plants), etc. Walls recommends two phases...

**PHASE I:** Encouraging Green Infrastructure – low hanging fruit.

**PHASE II:** More technical such as reducing parking requirements and other recommendation mention in the GSI Audit Tool.

Grasseschi suggested that there are opportunities to clarify and simplify the existing code. Sarver mentions that this could happen simultaneously, but is different than the Phase 1 suggestions.

McConnell offered to poll the Planning Commission for their receptivity to support a resolution to the Board supporting modifications to the Code of Ordinances. The Planning Commission may also be interested in GSI-related language in Form-based Code changes Mixed Use Planned Unit Development guidelines. McConnell also suggests the vegetation ordinance could be a logical starting point.

Walls also hopes to move this along on a regional level through the Greater Lansing Committee for Stormwater Management. He will approach the developer of the audit tool about a boilerplate that may have been used elsewhere. McConnell mentions a related document from the MSU Sea Grant. Harvey also invites Walls to suggest materials that might help with Grasseschi's interest in educating people about wetland protection, maintenance, and codes. Walls mentioned that a point person in the township could be helpful for folks who have interest in GSI-related ideas such as rain barrels, rain gardens, etc. Frazier suggested a breakdown between the Phase 1 and Phase 2. Walls offered to help. C. Wisinski will ask the Supervisor about how we might move forward including a possible presentation at a future meeting.

## Staff Report:

Harvey provided an update on the Tree Planting and Tree Distribution which was a huge success. He also shared an updated on the Recycling Event as well. Harvey reported that the pavement sealant ordinance is beginning to be publicized.

## Workgroup Reports

**Environmental Justice:** Vadnais asked who would like to remain involved and kept in the loop? Sarver is interested. McConnell mentioned that Walls' involvement with and knowledge of Indigenous populations could be helpful. Trustee Wisinski offered to discuss with Vadnais for potential collaboration with and involvement on the Township's DEI initiative.

**Sustainable Building:** Harvey reported that the current focus is on the GSI audit. Walls will keep us updated on E. Lansing's progress. Sarver will attend a webinar on the Building Code conducted by EGLE.

**Tree Team:** Kielbaso felt that the project was a big success. He mentions that it will be nice to have trees at Haslett next year. He appreciated L. Wisinski's ability recruit students. McConnell felt the event was inspirational and appreciated the partnerships, especially with Ingham

Conservation District and the additional trees that ICD contributed. Harvey also mentioned support from Lansing Forestry. Vadnais also encouraged us to continue to explore Tree City USA.

## **Commission, Committee, and Trustee Reports**

**Township Board:** C. Wisinski provided an update on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Work Group (DEI). She is working with our new Human Resources Person and Trustee Jackson on a survey. There is a focus on working internally at first and then expanding in to a larger Task Force. There is funding to bring in experts. C. Wisinski also mentions the grand opening of the Market on the Green. There are some other environmental features such as rain gardens, solar panels, led lights, recycled plastic chairs, and others in the new market. She also mentions that she has some contacts at Michigan Energy Options and the Dept of Health on both green roofs and permeable pavement.

**Brownfield Development:** Pine Village agreement was postponed. Next meeting is on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Energy Team:** The Virtual Solar Home Tour occurred on Oct 3 and will continue through the month, focusing on different themes. He'll be keeping track of Youtube views. Harvey mentioned that the solar projects are moving forward.

**Green Team:** The Green Team will meet Thursday to discuss future recycling events. 1008 vehicles dropped off almost 85,000 lbs of electronics which will be recycled.

**Land Preservation Advisory Board:** LPAB did a walk-through of the Central Meridian Uplands (across from the Service Center off Okemos Rd.). This may also be the location of a potential wetland mitigation along Grand River near Hamilton. A meeting will be held next Wednesday. The deer management program is underway. 16 deer are at the processor and will be donated to the Food Bank. The Land Preservation millage is on the ballot in the fall and is down to .1 mil (a fraction of the original amount.)

**Michigan Township Association:** Frazier reported that there is a package of bills related to PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) to help finance energy improvements on residential properties. Bill # 6036-6039. This could be an opportunity for the Township and/or the County. Jackson asked about Electric Vehicle legislation. Sarver mentioned that this relates to Tesla auto sales circumventing dealerships.

**Planning Commission:** McConnell mentioned a rezoning of a foster care facility on Park Lake and a review of the multi-use planned unit development ordinance.

**Transportation Commission:** The Commission has not met since August. There is upcoming discussion about traffic lighting on Mt. Hope at the Township Board meeting.

**Public Comments:** Walls mentioned the Wild and Scenic Film Festival coming up on December 6 which will include national films and clips from local watershed groups. This is a fundraiser for the Middle Grand River Organization of Watersheds. (MGROW)

**Meeting Adjourned** at 8:44 PM