

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES  
Town Hall Room – Municipal Building  
OCTOBER 4, 2017 - APPROVED**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**PRESENT:** Chair Bill McConnell, Commissioners Ned Jackson, Susan Masten, John Sarver, Jim Kielbaso, Kirk Lapham, Marina Ionescu, and Ben Holland

**ABSENT:** NONE

**STAFF:** Assistant Planner Jennifer Quinlivan

**OTHERS:** Robert Binder, Michael Nurse, Carla Clos

**1. CALL REGULAR MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair Bill McConnell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. GREEN THEMES PRESENTATION – Robert Binder - “Connecting Meridian Township’s Built Environment – Engaging with Transportation and Sustainability”**

Mr. Binder presented on his experience studying bicycle friendly cultures in Europe during his study abroad program. He presented that many European cities including Copenhagen, Denmark focused the culture around creating bicycle friendly environments for children from an early age, making bicycle use a normal cultural phenomenon. Mr. Binder noted three main points to implement for the integration of improved and versatile modes of transportation: policies and long term cultural vision, coordination, and public engagement. He presented a variety of ideas Meridian Township may implement to foster a bicycle friendly culture including: traffic gardens, a bicycle culture, “super-cycle” highways, connecting modes, direct access corridors, and public messaging. Mr. Binder ended his presentation with an analysis of Meridian Township’s current bicycle and transportation culture. Rapid growth of the Township leading to more traffic congestion and a lack of coordination to improve the issue. He encouraged proceeding with short and long term goals to identify and improve congested traffic corridors, improve mass transit options, and bicycle paths.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER JACKSON TO APPROVE THE AGENDA. SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER KIELBASO. MOTION APPROVED 8-0.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM AUGUST 2, 2017 MEETING**

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER JACKSON TO APPROVE THE MINUTES WITH AN AMENDMENT TO ITEM 7B. SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER SARVER. MOTION APPROVED 8-0.

**5. PUBLIC REMARKS**

NONE

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. ACTION: Wetland Use Permit #17-01 (Coyote Creek). Staff read the staff report for the Commission. Carla Clos, Deputy Drain Commissioner from the Ingham County Drain Commissioner's Office (ICDC) presented on ICDC's request for a wetland use permit to impact Wetland #33-2 as part of the Smith Consolidated Drain located near the Coyote Creek Condominiums. The project request is to create a 40-foot long ditch, 0.1 to 0.5 feet deep, 1.5 feet wide at the bottom, and 2.0 feet wide at the top. The total wetland area impacted by the request is approximately 0.001 acres, with the removal of 1.4 cubic yards of soil.

Mike Nurse, Streamside Ecological Services, prepared the application for the ICDC and clarified the ditch was a trench with minimal wetland loss. The project would remove a high point within the Smith Consolidated Drain area that was causing seasonal flooding of the maintained lawn areas in the Coyote Creek Condominiums. He presented photos to the Commission and informed them the project would take approximately four (4) hours to complete. Mr. Nurse addressed the possibility of alternatives to impacting the wetland. However, he determined the impact of the proposed plan is small and would eventually allow for overall improvement of the wetland in the future.

Chair McConnell questioned revegetation plans for the area. Mr. Nurse explained existing perennial native plant material would regenerate within the impacted wetland area within a year, if not the area would be reseeded with native perennial plant seed. Ms. Clos offered the possibility of wetland monitoring for a year and the over seeding of perennial grasses if needed.

Commissioner Masten questioned if the movement of soil upland would spread invasive species to the wetland. Mr. Nurse answered based on his examination of the wetland very few invasive species existed or would be transported. Commissioner Masten also requested signage identifying the wetland as a Township wetland and restricting dumping in the wetland. Ms. Clos agreed to install a sign at the wetland border.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER MASTEN TO RECOMMEND THE APPROVAL OF WETLAND USE PERMIT #17-01 (COYOTE CREEK) WITH CONDITIONS, THAT SIGNAGE WOULD BE INSTALLED AT THE WETLAND BORDER TO THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT. SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER KIELBASO. MOTION APPROVED 8-0.

- B. Strategic Plan 2018 Review and Discussion. Staff presented the Commission with an overview of information from previous plans as well as potential goals and objectives to consider for the 2018 Strategic plan. Chair McConnell proposed to continue the discussion at a November work session.

**7. OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Climate Sustainability Plan. Chair McConnell reported on the status of the plan, noting the plan would be on a future Township Board Agenda for review and acceptance.

**8. CHAIR'S REPORT**

NONE

**9. STAFF REPORT**

NONE

**10. COMMISSIONER SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Planning:** NONE

**Land Preservation:** Commissioner Kielbaso reported the Land Preservation Advisory Board was in the process of reviewing a possible property for land preservation.

**Energy Team:** Commissioner Sarver presented on upcoming energy themed events for the month of October.

**Parks:** Commissioner Masten reported on the updated trail maps at Ted Black Park.

**Transportation:** Commissioner Ionescu reported on the discussion regarding Ready Ride.

**Student Report:** Student Commissioner Holland reported on the student website, Turning Green, and rain garden design at the Okemos High School.

**11. PUBLIC REMARKS**

NONE

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m. without objection.