



**AGENDA**  
**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
January 11, 2025 7 pm

Town Hall Meeting Room, 5151 Marsh Rd, Okemos

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. PUBLIC REMARKS
3. CHANGES TO/APPROVAL OF AGENDA
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
5. NEW BUSINESS

New Appointments

Other

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Greenspace Plan

7. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- o Staff <http://bit.ly/update-leroy>
- o Liaisons
- o Teams (Energy, Green, Food, Green Burial, Green Grants, etc.)
- o Haslett/Okemos High School
- o Other

8. PUBLIC REMARKS

9. ADJOURNMENT

# Environmental Commission Minutes: December 4 2024 (Draft)

## Present

John Sarver, Bill McConnell, Cynthia Peterson, Harrison Batten, Top Frazier, Peter Trezise, LeRoy Harvey, Dan Opsommer

Absent: Yu Man Lee (Andrea Paul Resigned due to job commitment)

Guests: Richard Miksicek, Laura Belisle, Dave Batten,

## Public Remarks

Laura Belisle has applied to the Environmental Commission (EC). She shared her experience and interest in the environment areas, natural areas, public administration, health (Division of Environmental Health), and public involvement.

Richard Miksicek also applied to the EC. He also shared some of his background and interest in biology, biochemistry, research, administration, the greenspace plan, green energy initiatives, green burial, sustainability, and land preservation.

## Approval of Agenda

McConnell offered to help guide the greenspace conversation.

## Approval of Minutes

Unanimously approved.

## Meeting Schedule for 2025

Members approved the following schedule for meetings in 2025:

January 8	May 7	September 3
February 5	June 4	October 1
March 5	July 2	November 5
April 2	August 6	December 3

## Appointments

Both Batten and Frazier were recommended for reappointment. Frazier was approved by the Township Board at their last meeting. Batten will be up for approval at the next Township Board meeting.

Harvey will draft a memo based on our conversation about new appointments and share with McConnell to share with the Township Supervisor.

[Nickola Lentz](#) was appointed to replace Trezise to represent the Board of Trustees on the EC.

## Environmental Engineer Position Opening

Opsommer shared a brief description of a new position which will replace Harvey upon his retirement. This is posted on the [Township website](#) and all are encouraged to promote. (Harvey adds that there is also an Engineering/GIS Intern, Building Official and other positions available)

## Greenspace Plan

McConnell provided a summary of the Greenspace Plan review process. A key question is how we continue to preserve land through our conservation efforts. Another is determining our past success. McConnell suggested that we might review wetlands, scenic road corridors, wildlife crossings, and other areas to determine what has worked. Peterson

agreed that we need to further determine our current status before moving forward. Harvey suggested that areas that overlap other Township goals and priorities (to be determined in the next month) could also help with prioritization. McConnell suggests that the Climate Sustainability Funding might be able to assist with the costs of the project. Peterson also suggested that we also consider working with students/staff with the Graham Sustainability Institute.

McConnell shared an overview of land development in the township since 1938. He emphasized how much the township changed in the 50s and 60s. Most of the township has been cultivated since the 50s. McConnell asked if similar mapping might be helpful as we explore a Greenspace Plan update. Opsommer shared images from the public [GIS viewer](#) to illustrate the diversity of information currently available to the public and staff.

## Reports and Announcements

**Staff:** Harvey expressed appreciation for the support and encouragement offered during a recent unexpected surgery. An [update](#) was shared in the packet. He invited questions and comments. He reports that he's now back on a part-time basis.

**Planning:** McConnell mentioned that the Parking Ordinance revisions are being developed including minimum parking requirements (many communities have done away with minimum requirements, which can include removing minimums and reduce creation of more impermeable surfaces, run-off, and probability of flooding). Sarver asked if this relates to new and/or existing developments. Trezise responded that the change would affect sites being revised where a permit will be required.

**Board:** Trezise reported that there are three top candidates (out of 60) for the Township Manager Position. A decision will hopefully be made on Dec. 17. Interviews are available on [www.meridian.mi.us](http://www.meridian.mi.us). Goals for 2025 will be developed and announced soon. Trezise also reported a creative solution to a recent drain project that helps reduce excessive tree cutting near the Land Preserve near the old L & L grocery store by Marsh & Haslett. Trezise also reported that he has been replaced as liaison by Lentz who will begin next month.

**Energy:** Sarver reported that a Consumers Energy person reported on EV Charging for the Community. A brainstorming session will be held in person at Schuler's Cafe on Sat. Dec 14 from 11:30 to 1pm. All are invited.

**Brownfield Redevelopment Authority:** Sarver also reported that the BRA did not meet this past month but has processed payments for some improvements.

**Green Team:** Frazier reported that the Green Team is planning events for 2025 in collaboration with the farmers market.

**Green Burial:** Frazier reported that the committee has had challenges getting together to discuss next steps. Trezise had recommended that this should occur before meeting with the Trustees to provide an update.

**High School:** Batten reports that the year has started to get underway. Sustainability Club has an offshoot called "the Earth Clubs" that consists of mostly student-led groups of students that visit elementary students (with a teacher) and teach lessons. They are also working on a grant for rechargeable batteries and expansion of a courtyard area. McConnell asked for pictures when they are available.

**Staff:** Opsommer shared the current economics of burial costs and staffing in the township. He mentioned that we currently have 2 individuals that care for 7 township buildings and facilities (3 fire stations, public works, public safety, the service center, both cemeteries, and grass cutting). We currently bring in about \$40,000 on the average. We currently spend about \$130,000 on cemeteries, not including additional capital expenses. He also mentioned that private cemeteries eventually become public as they fill up, becoming an additional expense to the township.

**Township Adjourned:** 8:03pm