



AGENDA
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION –
REGULAR MEETING
Aug 6th 2025 7:00 PM

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. PRESENTATION
 - A. Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association’s “Solarize Michigan” Program
4. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS
5. COMMUNICATIONS
6. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
7. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES –July 2, 2025 REGULAR MEETING
8. NEW BUSINESS
9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
10. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
 - A. Staff
 - B. Liaisons:
 - Township Board
 - Planning Commission
 - Land Preservation Advisory Board
 - Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
 - Parks Commission
 - C. Teams:
 - Energy Team
 - Green Team
 - Food & Composting Team
 - Green Burial Team
 - D. Haslett/Okemos High School
11. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC
12. OTHER MATTERS AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS
13. ADJOURNMENT

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Meridian Township Board by contacting: Township Manager Tim Dempsey, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 or 517.853.4258 - Ten Day Notice is Required.

Meeting Location: 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 Township Hall

Providing a safe and welcoming, sustainable, prime community.



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION –**DRAFT**-
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
517.853.4000, Township Hall Room
WEDNESDAY, JULY 2nd, 2025, 7:00PM

PRESENT: Chair Bill McConnell, Vice Chair Yu Man Lee
Commissioners Laura Belisle, John Sarver, Richard Miksicek, Harrison
Batten

ABSENT: Commissioners Cynthia Peterson, Tom Frazier and Trustee Nickolas Lentz

STAFF: Project Engineer Jack Hughes, Senior Project Engineer Caycee Hart

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair McConnell called the July 2nd, 2025, Township Environmental Commission meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Project Engineer Hughes called the roll of the Commission.

3. PRESENTATION

None this month.

4. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No public comment.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

None at this time.

6. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair McConnell entertained a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Miksicek moved, Commissioner Sarver seconded.

Without objection, the agenda was approved unanimously.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 4th 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes were approved as amended with a few minor corrections.

Without objection, the minutes for the June 4th meeting, as amended, were approved unanimously.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. Wetland Use Permit #25-02

Meridian Township Senior Project Engineer Caycee Hart gave an overview of the Wetland Use Permit for the Schultz Pathway project.

This project is located on the north side of Bennett Road, between the Schultz Veterinary Clinic driveway and Okemos Public Schools bus garage driveway, near Bennett Woods Elementary School. It will fill a pathway gap currently occupied by a wetland to ensure safe pedestrian access, especially for students walking to school from a nearby housing development.

The pathway will be completed with an 8-foot-wide boardwalk, spanning 325 linear feet, supported by 52 helical piles. It is designed to minimize disruption to the wetland ecosystem. When impacting a wetland, mitigation is required by township ordinance. This project will use a wetland bank created during the *MSU to Lake Lansing Phase II* pathway project, which previously expanded an existing wetland by 0.14 acres, providing ample space for mitigation.

Permitting Progress:

- EGLE Permit: Public notice period ended June 29
 - Only comment was from DNR requesting eco-friendly erosion controls.
- Planning Commission: Presentation scheduled for next meeting.
- Zoning Board: Meeting planned due to crossing of the Hoskins Drain.
- Drain Office Permit: Already obtained.

Lee, McConnell and Hart, along with other commission members, proceeded with a discussion on the proposed boardwalk.

Design: The boardwalk is being built as an alternative to a concrete path along the roadway. This decision was made primarily for safety reasons, as the boardwalk will be elevated, making it easier for drivers to see pedestrians. It was also noted that elevated boardwalks are beneficial for providing viewing opportunities for school children and others, making the boardwalk a potential asset to the community.

Wetland Impact: The boardwalk will be roughly 25 feet into the wetland from the edge of the road, but this varies depending on the location. Vice Chair Lee expressed concern about the potential impact of the project on the wetland, particularly during construction. Hart explained that the project will use timber matting, which are temporary, oversized wood planks that equipment will drive on. This method is intended to minimize disruption to the wetland.

Wildlife: Vice Chair Lee noted that a turtle species of "special concern" has been sighted nearby. While a survey of the wildlife and fauna isn't typically required for projects of this nature, Lee suggested it might be something the commission should consider for future projects. Hart confirmed that the project is scheduled to begin in August, which is a good time of year for this particular species of turtle as they would be in the water, not nesting on land.

Additional discussion included the possibility of a larger culvert to provide a safe underpass for wildlife, and the potential for educational signage on the boardwalk.

Commissioner Miksicek moved to recommend approval of Wetland Use Permit #25-02. The

motion was seconded by Commissioner Sarver.

A motion to recommend approval of Wetland Use Permit #25-02 to fill 28.36ft² / 0.00065 acres of regulated wetland to construct a pedestrian/bicycle boardwalk pathway located on the north side of Bennett Road between the Schulz Veterinary Clinic and Bennett Woods Elementary, was approved with five commissioners in favor and one opposed.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None at this time.

10. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Staff

Project Engineer Hughes provided an update on six Green Grants that were previously approved. Two of the six grants have completed the necessary agreements and are in the process of receiving their funds.

- Cornell Woods HOA: Awarded \$7,000 for native plantings.
- Girl Scouts Troop 30037: Awarded \$1,000 for an outdoor classroom restoration.

Three other grants have been sent their agreements and are awaiting signatures to proceed.

- Montessori Radmoor School: Awarded \$3,950 for native plantings and a solar-powered pond pump.
- YMCA Parkwood Branch: Awarded \$2,607 for a nature education space.
- Mid-Michigan Land Conservancy: Awarded \$2,500 for native plantings.

The final grant for the Pine Creek Condo Association, which was awarded \$1,000 for invasive species removal, is waiting for a W-9 form from the contractor, *Reclaimed by Design*, before it can move forward.

B. Liaisons

As Trustee Lentz was absent, the update from the Township Board was skipped.

Chair McConnell provided an update from the Planning Commission.

The commission is reviewing a special use permit for the Ace Hardware in Okemos and Jolly Road to allow for outdoor storage of landscaping materials. A new planned unit development for five homes on Hewlett Road is being discussed. The primary concern raised by residents is the potential for increased construction traffic. The commission is exploring ways to update the parking landscape ordinance to encourage more green spaces in parking lots. Discussions have begun regarding an amendment to the township's ordinance on keeping poultry, specifically to address roosters, which are currently permitted only in rural residential zones.

Commissioner Lee provided an update from the Land Preservation Advisory Board.

The Board is in the process of updating its site screening criteria, which is a form used to evaluate properties for potential acquisition. A draft of the revised criteria will be brought to the Environmental Commission for review and input, a practice that aligns with past collaboration where commission members would join site visits. Chair McConnell also reminded the commission that in the past, staff would arrange site visits for wetland use permit applications.

This gives commission members an opportunity to see the sites firsthand (such as with the Davis Foster Preserve).

Commissioner Sarver provided an update from the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority. The Haslett Village Project (located at the corner of Haslett and Marsh Roads) has an amendment to its existing brownfield plan to include an affordable housing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) component. This TIF is intended to support the project's finances and will result in the creation of 23 affordable housing units, which is 20% of the total 115 apartment units. The development will include five apartment buildings with a total of 115 units, 84 townhomes for sale, one new commercial building, a renovated community hub in the old video store building, and a trailhead area with restrooms, picnic tables, bike repair, pickleball courts and a dog park. Construction is expected to be completed in the winter of 2029.

Commissioner Miksicek was absent from the last Parks Commission meeting so no update was available.

C. Teams

Commissioner Sarver provided an update from the Energy Team.

Successful Energy Fair held at the Farmer's Market on June 21st.

Commissioner Batten provided an update from the Green Team.

No news from the Food Composting Team.

No news from the Green Burial Committee.

Chair McConnell noted that Williamston has an active program.

D. Haslett/Okemos High School

No News as the High Schools are out of session.

E. Other

No reports.

11. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No public comment.

12. OTHER MATTERS AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Chair McConnell lead a brief discussion focused on an upcoming review of the Wetland Protection Ordinance by the Planning Department.

He shared a response from Planning Director Tim Schmidt, who indicated that staff is seeking ways to streamline the ordinance and make it less difficult for applicants. A draft of these proposed changes will be presented to the commission at a future meeting for their feedback. The authority to approve a Wetland Use Permit currently depends on the project. If it involves a change in land use, it is decided by the Planning Commission or Township Board. If it does not, the

Planning Director has the authority. A specific inconsistency was noted between township ordinances: the floodplain ordinance allows for small, or "*de minimis*" impacts without a permit, but the wetland ordinance does not. This is one of the key issues staff is looking to address. The Planning Director's goal is to make the township's ordinances more consistent and rational. Vice Chair Lee suggested that members of the Land Preservation Advisory Board may also be interested in this discussion, and Bill agreed to request advance notice of that meeting.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:56pm.