

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION -**DRAFT**-
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
517.853.4000, Township Hall Room
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2025, 7:00PM

PRESENT: Bill McConnell, Cynthia Peterson, Tom Frazier, Yu Man Lee, Richard Miksicek,
Harrison Batten, and Nickolas Lentz

ABSENT: Laura Belisle, John Sarver

STAFF: LeRoy Harvey, Environmental Program Coordinator

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair McConnell called the February 5, 2025, Township Environmental Commission meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No public comment.

3. CHANGES TO/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Without objection, the agenda was approved unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

McConnell requested that the minutes be amended, under the Energy Team report, in order to clarify that the Aldi solar array and the movement in the city of East Lansing to consider banning gas combustion leaf blowers are two separate issues.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Without objection, the minutes of the January 8, 2025 meeting, as amended, were approved unanimously.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Presentation by Harrison Batten: Student Earth Club Report

Commissioner Batten gave a presentation regarding the Haslett Elementary Earth Clubs. The Ralya Elementary Earth Club started in 2022. The Murphy Elementary Earth Club started in 2023. Commissioner Batten has been attending their meetings. Both clubs are seeing increases in applicants each year. Membership is currently being capped at 25-30 students per club. There are activities that are planned to accompany each lesson plan, which helps the students better understand the subject matter being discussed. Some examples of lesson plans that have been used thus far include: recycling versus upcycling, layers of the earth, and types of soils. Student leaders are chosen through the Haslett High School Sustainability Club.

Trustee Lentz asked how many applications are typically received. Commissioner Batten stated that there are more applicants than there are available spaces in the clubs. Commissioner Batten reported that there were approximately 40 applicants this year for Murphy Elementary.

Commissioner Sarver asked about the age range of participating students. Commissioner Batten stated that Murphy Elementary is grades 2-5.

Commissioner Miksicek asked how many high school students are participating. Commissioner Batten reported that it was three students in prior years, but this year there are four high school students participating in total.

Chair McConnell asked what resources are used to develop the lesson plans. Commissioner Batten reported that the AP Environmental Science class and that some of the student leaders have taken lessons and ideas from that class and simplified the lesson plans for the Elementary Earth Clubs. The high school leaders have also used online resources for ideas and lesson plans.

Chair McConnell asked how the program is being funded. Commissioner Batten stated that the school district does provide funding for the Elementary Earth Clubs. Their annual budget is about \$200 per club. Chair McConnell stated that Green Grants might be able to help support the efforts of the Elementary Earth Clubs.

Chair McConnell asked if field trips have been planned for the Elementary Earth Clubs. Commissioner Batten stated that this has been discussed, but no field trips have been scheduled yet. Chair McConnell suggested that land preserves and the Harris Nature Center could be Township resources that are used to help support the Elementary Earth Clubs.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Greenspace Plan

Chair McConnell provided an update that the Commission is still waiting on information from Township staff to continue their review of the Greenspace Plan.

B. Climate Sustainability Planning

Commissioner Lee gave an overview of the spreadsheet that was developed to organize and assign various areas to track implementation of the Climate Sustainability Plan.

Chair McConnell expressed a desire to assign one Commissioner as the lead on each of the tasks. Chair McConnell stated he would speak to Commissioner Sarver about being responsible for the energy efficiency and renewable energy sections and invited Commissioner Frazier to take responsibility for the recycling and waste reduction sections.

Commissioner Lee stated she would be willing to take the water and green infrastructure sections.

Commissioner Peterson was assigned healthy food systems.

Trustee Lentz expressed a desire to take the transportation and electric vehicle sections.

Commissioner Miksicek expressed a desire to take the decreasing organic waste and organic waste conversion sections.

Commissioners discussed various approaches that could be utilized to track and monitor the various objectives and Commissioner Le stated she would work on making these changes in the spreadsheet.

C. Other

No discussion.

7. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Staff

LeRoy Harvey and Commissioner Frazier highlighted the 2025 Green Events Guide, which includes one event each month from February to September.

Harvey highlighted that he would be contacting prospective sponsors for 2025.

Commissioner Lentz was recently appointed to the Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council Board of Directors.

Harvey gave a recap of an earlier presentation of the 2024 Green Grant awardees.

Chair McConnell requested a list and accounting of the Green Grants from 2021-2024.

B. Liaisons

Chair McConnell gave an update on relevant issues that are currently coming before the Planning Commission, including a request to rezone a property on Dobie Road and a proposed day care in the Old English Estates neighborhood.

Trustee Lentz encouraged everyone to take some time to review the Township's 2024 Annual Report and noted that he was appointed as the Township Board's new liaison to the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission.

Chair McConnell encouraged all commissioners to attend the Joint Township Board & Commission meeting on February 11, 2025 at 6:00 pm.

Chair McConnell stated that he has had conversations with the chair of the Township Park Commission about establishing liaisons between the two bodies and asked any interested Commissioners to let him know if they would like to serve as a liaison to the Park Commission.

C. Teams

Harvey stated that Commissioner Sarver stated that 25 solar systems were installed in the Township in 2024. There are currently 182 solar systems in the Township.

Commissioner Lee asked about the possibility of graphing quantities at the Township's recycling events. Harvey responded that he believes we have data for the previous 10

years.

Commissioner Frazier stated that the Green Burial Team recently met with a sexton from a cemetery to obtain additional information and that the Green Burial Team is working to finalize a presentation to provide to the Township Board.

D. Haslett/Okemos High School

Commissioner Batten stated that there has been a lot of interest in the Haslett School District Sustainability Team, which includes representation from staff, the administration, and students. There was also a recent meeting with DeWitt's Sustainability Team to explore ways that the two districts could collaborate.

E. Other

No reports.

8. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No public comment.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm.