



**AGENDA**  
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 6, 2021 7 pm

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ZOOM MEETING: ID: **867 3903 8953** Password: **5151**

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES
4. PUBLIC REMARKS
5. NEW BUSINESS
  - A. Nomination and Election of Officers
  - B. Meeting Schedule for 2021
  - C. Goals for 2021
  - D. Other
6. OLD BUSINESS
  - A. Green Infrastructure Audit & related Environmental Review
  - B. Green Infrastructure Grants
  - C. Tree City Update
  - D. Green Neighbor Network
  - E. Other
7. CHAIR'S REPORT
8. STAFF REPORT
9. WORKGROUP REPORTS & DISCUSSIONS
  - A. Environmental Justice
  - B. Sustainable Development
10. Commission, Committee, and Trustee Reports
  - A. Board of Trustees
  - B. Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
  - C. Energy Team
  - D. Green Team
  - E. Land Preservation Advisory Board
  - F. MI Township Association (MTA) or MI Municipal League (MML)
  - G. Planning Commission
  - H. Transportation Commission
11. PUBLIC REMARKS
12. ADJOURNMENT



## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

WEDNESDAY, Dec 2, 2020 7:00 PM

**PRESENT:** Tom Frazier, Ned Jackson, Jim Kielbaso, Susan Masten Bill McConnell, John Sarver (Chair), Rose Vadnais (Vice Chair), Courtney Wisinski (Trustee Liaison), Luca Wisinski

**STAFF:** LeRoy Harvey, Stephen Gebes, Samantha Diehl, Amber Clark,

**GUESTS:** Ben Holland, John Esser, Kendra Grasseschi, Valerie Lafferty

**Approval of Agenda:** Commissioner Kielbaso moved to approve the Agenda. Supported by Commissioner Vadnais. Motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes:** Commissioner Kielbaso suggested a correction in the LPAB report which should read Lake Lansing Park South. Commission Masten participated. Commissioner Kielbaso moved to approve the Minutes. Supported by Commissioner Frazier. Motion carried unanimously.

**Green Theme:** Amber Clark, Meridian's new Neighborhood and Economic Development Director, shared a presentation about her work. Her slides are attached. She was formerly an Assistant to the City Manager of Jackson and worked on environmental topics. Her position has been designed to improve neighborhood communication, in particular related to new developments. Meridian's Master Plan also includes "Strengthening Neighborhoods." She discussed her involvement in Meridian neighborhoods as a resident for many years. She's concerned about preserving and enhancing neighborhood-friendly environments – including "placemaking" and greenspace. One model is the 15 minute neighborhood – where you have most amenities and needs within a 15 min. walk or bike ride. She is also updating a neighborhood directory and integrating maps Nextdoor and Neighborhood Watch.

Vadnais asked about traffic calming in the Haslett Four-Corners area. Sarver mentioned potential signage on the Inter-Urban Pathway directing people to the 4-corners in Haslett. Clark mentioned that there are many ways to integrate traffic calming including location of buildings, speed limit. Jackson also mentioned the Raby Rd. loop off the Inter-Urban connecting to behind the 4 corners. If this area could include the greenspace and other amenities, it might help improve popularity. Jackson also mentioned taking the Inter-Urban under the bridge parallel to the railway tracks to bring folks to the other side of the road. McConnell mentioned three potential intensity change areas (PICAs) including Haslett, Okemos Downtown, and Carriage Hills mentioned in the Master Plan. Zoning to create a walkable community will begin along Grand River with the form-based code. He also mentioned a quarterly code enforcement meeting which involves neighborhoods and the Green Liaison concept. Clark is updating neighborhood contact lists. She also mentioned LINC as a group to reach out to. Sarver mentioned joining neighborhood FB Groups.

## 6. NEW BUSINESS

### **Green Liaisons/Neighbors**

Harvey mentioned this idea which emerged at the Green Dialogues. A recurring theme has been neighborhood outreach. The Green Liaisons are envisioned as a network of people representing neighborhoods to get information to residents – and share neighborhood concerns with others. Harvey has created a link on Constant Contact where people can sign up. There can be more than one GL per neighborhood or apartment complex. Simultaneously, he’s developing a list of environmental topics and information that might fit in to a scheduled. Harvey also mentioned a desire for help developing the materials, visuals, or even a jingle – similar to the one that Esser has developed for pet waste. Here’s the link: <http://bit.ly/greenneighbor> Sarver mentioned that there can be more than one which might lead to more discussion and “Green Teams” in neighborhoods. Clark mentioned some similarity with a Senior Program where a person is assigned to look out for those that are needed. She suggested we explore ways to engage liaisons such as projects, classes, etc.

## 7. OLD BUSINESS

**A. Green Infrastructure Audit & Related Environmental Review** Harvey mentioned that McConnell has introduced to the Planning Commission but there has not been a strong “green light” to move this to staff for review.

### **B. Green Infrastructure Grants**

Harvey mentioned a draft that has been circulated. He mentioned the Green Schoolyard movement which provides some examples. Trustee Wisinski mentioned that the Board will not necessarily need to review proposals. The Commission’s recommendation will likely be approved... and it’s nice to invite Board members to offer comments. She suggested a presentation from the EC prior to discussion or voting on a plan. Ben Holland, former Student Commissioner, is doing research at Michigan Tech and is willing to be a support person for green infrastructure related questions from students. There was discussion about the criteria for evaluation and how many projects might be proposed. The review committee will meet to discuss further edits (including being open to more than one project per district). McConnell mentioned that the form is live and that we should consider that as we’re moving forward.

## 8. CHAIR’S REPORT

Sarver mentioned MI Solar Story on Thursday at 7pm. This week features Richard Lunt who’s researching transparent solar film. Harvey shared

## 9. STAFF REPORT

Harvey mentioned a potential community garden in Ottawa Hills and invited people to share contacts or potential locations that might be considered. He also mentioned that instead of moving the Recycling Center, we’re considering some improvements. C. Wisinski mentioned the potential for a field trip and invited suggestions. Harvey also mentioned the “green” media outreach topics and invited feedback and research on topics.

## **10. WORKGROUP REPORTS & DISCUSSIONS**

### **Environmental Justice**

Vadnais mentioned HB 4676 just introduced which gives neighborhoods the ability to remove restrictive and discriminatory language. There is still interest in discussing multi-family recycling.

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

### **A. Board of Trustees**

Wisinski mentioned interest in HB 4676. She also mentioned discussion on 2021 Goals. Three include environmental themes including expansion of solar, the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Task Force (and discussions with the M-Team-department directors and potential hiring a consultant). Also looking at Township Wide Broadband which may have equity implications. Wisinski also mentioned upcoming improvements to the Recycling Center and interest in a field trip and identifying a budget. She also mentioned the Market on the Green and encouraged people to buy local and visit. Finally, Wisinski also mentioned staying tuned to the improvements on Grand River and Okemos Rd which may involve wetland mitigation. She will be appointed to the Tri-County Groundwater Management Board and hopes to bring related water issues back to the Commission.

### **B. Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (has not met)**

### **C. Energy Team**

Sarver reported that there is continuing discussion about the solar plans for the future. There has also been discussion about an information session for Green Liaisons. Jackson asked about recent energy policies and opportunities related to renewables. Sarver reports that utilities have recently reached the cap of 1% of electricity from net metered systems which may effect the economics of solar and choices related to battery storage.

### **D. Green Team**

The Green Team has not met but Harvey reported that there will likely be interest in a tour and input on improvements at the Recycling Center. Commissioners expressed interest in an organized tour.

### **E. Land Preservation Advisory Board**

Kielbaso mentioned the Lake Lansing North burn and a burn on the Davis Foster Property. The deer herd management #s are up to 144 so far this year, up from 83 last year. This has resulted in 2000+ pounds of venison donated to the Greater Lansing Food Bank. Sarver asked about the total # of deer in the township. The goal is to harvest 150. C. Wisinski mentioned that capacity to store, transport, and donate is a limiting factor. Kielbaso mentioned training available through the Township. Gebes reports that the sharp shooters start Jan. 1

### **F. MI Township Association (MTA)**

Frazier reported that the legislature is in the lame duck session. One priority of MTA is to help communities continue to work virtually. He reported progress on a bill that will extend this through Mar 31. He also reported progress on a bill to support energy efficiency in water works projects and that the Governor is reaching out about a Clean Water Plan to help fund stormwater, waste water and drinking water projects.

### **G. Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission has met twice. Two rezoning requests have been reviewed. One was a request to rezone three parcels on the East side of Central Park, West of Howell and north of Grand River from single home to multi-family. This was denied because it was inconsistent with the Master Plan. Another was a request for a Commercial Planned Unit Development (2500 SF bank) east of the entrance to the mall on Gr. River Ave. The Commission voted to recommend this. It has not reached the Township Board yet.

### **H. Transportation Commission**

The Dept of Transportation has done a study of Dobie Central Park Intersection and is recommending a left hand turn lane which may be installed when Grand River/M-43 is resurfaced.

## **12. PUBLIC REMARKS**

Vadnais mentioned that she talked to Kevin Sayer with the State and continues working on the Tree City Designation. She will review budget and ordinance language with Harvey and others. Esser requests feedback on Pickin Up the Poop PSA / song for accuracy from Jackson and Walls. Jackson reported that Shawn Riley estimates roughly 3000-6000 deer in the Township. Harvey reported that Jackson and Sarver have agreed to renew their appointments on the Environmental Commission. Masten reported that she has used the Green Infrastructure map <https://bit.ly/greenmapMT> for a scavenger hunt activity and thanked Ben Holland for his help with that.

## **13. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn by McConnell. Second by Frazier. Motion approved.

**Note:** This and other commission meetings are available for viewing at [http://www.homtv.net/index\\_homtv.asp?view=programming&page=meetings&id=environmental-commission](http://www.homtv.net/index_homtv.asp?view=programming&page=meetings&id=environmental-commission) or directly here: <https://meridianmi.new.swagit.com/videos/107785>

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE**

**2021 Meeting Dates for the Environmental Commission**

**DRAFT RESOLUTION**

At its meeting on the 6th day of January, 2021, the Meridian Township Environmental Commission hereby approves meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month at 7pm.

PRESENT: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

ABSENT: \_\_\_\_\_

2021 Calendar:

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

## **Goals for 2021? (draft below)**

1. Assist with Green Grants for Schools
2. Expand the Green Neighbor Network
3. Achieve Tree City USA Designation
4. Implement Climate Action Plan
  - Help codify Green Infrastructure Audit recommendations
  - Continue Environmental Review and Changes to policies and procedures
  - Support continued progress on renewable and efficiency improvements
  - Collaborate other regional partners on climate action
5. Ongoing
  - Continue Study Groups on Environmental Justice and other topics
  - Host Green Theme Presentations
  - Review Wetland Permits
  - Continue Environmental Stewardship Awards
  - Communicate with other Commissions, Boards, Trustees, and the Public

Other?

### **2020**

1. Assist with Tree Planting Initiative
2. Implement Climate Action Plan
  - Green Infrastructure Review
  - Green Building Code
  - Waste Reduction (plastic bags, etc.)
3. Recommend Township Support of PAH Ordinance
4. Ongoing Tasks/Responsibilities
  - Organize and Host Green Theme Presentations
  - Review Wetland Permits
  - Continue Environmental Stewardship Awards
  - Communicate with other Commissions, Boards, Trustees (liaison)

### **2019**

1. Revise Wetland Ordinance
2. Continue Green Themes-Sustainable paving; Green Burial; Red Cedar Cleanup; etc.
3. Review Wetland Use Permits

### **2018**

1. Collaborate with Park and Transportation Commissions on wayfinding
2. Review progress on the Greenspace Plan
3. Actualize the Climate Sustainability Plan and review related ordinances
4. Discuss how greening the Township might attract green businesses
5. Collaborate with the Land Preservation Advisory Board

## 2020 Environmental Programs Annual Report

*This is an outline. Anything to add?/delete?*

### **Energy & Climate Initiatives**

- Solar Arrays
- Virtual Solar Home Tour
- MI Solar Story Promotion
- Solar Coach Program
- Regional Networking with Local Governments

### **Recycling**

- Recycling Center - amount collected
- Granger Report -
- Office Recycling
- Regional Electronics Collection Event
- Household Haz. Waste Collections (will check with County on # of Meridian residents)

### **Water/Green Infrastructure**

- Solar Garden
- Community Gardens
- PAH/Coal Tar
- Green Infrastructure Tour/Map
- GSI Audit
- Wetland Brochure
- Tree Planting Initiative

### **Other Environmental Programs/Activities**

- Green Dialogues
- Green Gazette
- Green Neighbor Network
- Information Requests (email, phone, social media, etc.)
- Environmental Commission administration
- Other?



# Service Above Self

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A PRIME APPROACH TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

## New Neighborhoods & Economic Development Director




- 1) Born in Saginaw
- 2) Raised in Midland
- 3) Moved Lansing to attend State (Go Green!)

Have always been a community person  
Studied Communications at MSU

- 4) Consumers Energy
- 5) City of Jackson





## Master Plan Goal #1:

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Preserve and strengthen residential neighborhoods:

- A) Maintain a community of desirable, attractive residential neighborhoods
- B) Ensure new residential developments met high standards of visual attractiveness, health and safety, and environmental sensitivity.



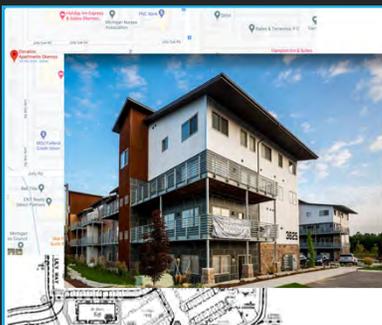
### Recognizing and maintaining neighborhood identity

- o Neighborhood Associations added to a local directory (if they choose) for new residents
- o Prevent inconsistent encroaching into residential areas - Public Hearings
- o Continue to support designation and preservation of historic neighborhoods and residences.




### Creation of "15- Minute Neighborhood" Concept

- Encourage cluster developments mixed use and other compact residential choices closer to shopping, public transit and other services.
- Ensure a range of residential densities that will result in a diversity of housing that meets the needs of various income levels and household types.

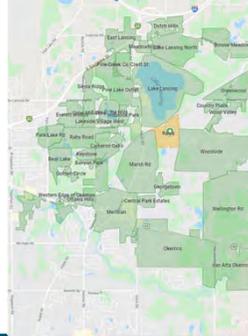



### 15 Minute Neighborhood characteristics

If you lived in this neighborhood you could access one of these within a 15-minute walk:

- Diverse housing options for a mixture of income and sizes
- Open green spaces for community parks, outdoor activities and recreation
- Local health and Shopping options
- Local Transport is a mixture of pedestrian, cycling, and motor vehicle options or an easy connection to Public Transportation
- Improves new development opportunities





- Future hopes Interactive map on website with map showing your neighborhood
- Residents new to the community receive a flyer with important community info and links
- Township hosts more informal community wide public meetings outside of regularly scheduled Township Board meetings

### Master Plan Goal #3:

Enhance the Viability of Township Businesses:

- Upgrade Commercial Areas
- Develop the Townships mixed core into a viable and vibrant district
- Improve the attractiveness of the Township's Entrances and Transportation Corridors
- Promote Economic Development



### Master Plan Goal #3:

#### Okemos Village PICA



- Commercial
- Housing



### Master Plan Goal #3:

Enhance the Viability of Township Businesses:

Support the redevelopment of the DDA and Village of Okemos

Mixed used dense development

Higher Residential Numbers bring about new shopping and dining options



### Master Plan Goal #3:

#### Haslett Village PICA



- Commercial
- Housing
- Greenspace
- PICA Boundary



### Master Plan Goal #3:

Enhance the Viability of Township Businesses:

Haslett Village Square 54 Acres of Land

Lack of Place Making in Location

Very large parking lot to reconfigure

Transportation option along routes



Master Plan Goal #3:  
Wayfinding

### Master Plan Goal #3: Enhance the Viability of Township Businesses

Wayfinding serves many purposes:

Send people to frequented destinations

Encourage those in a region/community to frequent a destination.

Shows pride in our community place making locations



What's new Around Town!

Township Officials, Park Commission and Donors to Celebrate



ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE PRESENTS:

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE  
ROCKS  
IN LANSING!!



DEWITT



JOIN US FOR AN ONLINE PRESENTATION ABOUT  
**BROWNFIELDS**

WITH PRESENTERS

JOAN NELSON

JOHN KINCH

ALLEN NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

MICHIGAN ENERGY OPTIONS

JANUARY 11, 2021 - ONLINE ZOOM - 7-8 PM  
EMAIL [sarahallen33@gmail.com](mailto:sarahallen33@gmail.com) FOR THE EVENT LINK