



AGENDA
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
November 6, 2024 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

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Greenspace Plan

7. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

8. PUBLIC REMARKS

9. ADJOURNMENT

Environmental Commission (EC) Minutes

October 2 2024 (draft)

Present: Andrea Paul, John Sarver, Yu Man Lee, Bill McConnell, Cynthia Peterson, Tom Frazier, Peter Trezise (Township Board liaison), and LeRoy Harvey (staff)

Approval of Minutes: Minutes were approved with corrections (ribbon cutting for the new sign at Davis Foster).

Greenspace Plan: Commissioner Paul introduced the Greenspace Plan Review committee which also includes Lee and Peterson. The original plan was developed 20 years ago and there is interest in an update. Areas of review include wildlife corridors, citizen science, wetland quality, flooding areas, natural communities, climate change and connected greenspaces. There is talk of reviewing priority conservation corridors, unregulated areas, potential mitigation areas, scenic road corridors, and other special areas of concern. McConnell asked how we might learn about conservation corridors and changes in the past 20 years. Sarver asked for clarification about flood plains and their regulation. Trezise added some clarification about flood plains vs. floodways. Lee suggested that we add in new conservation areas. McConnell mentioned new acquisitions of land preserves, easements, voluntary stewardship programs, etc. Paul mentioned possibly addressing climate change and new bus routes. There was general enthusiasm about moving forward. Harvey mentioned the Green Infrastructure Audit as another resource. McConnell suggested sharing the recommendations with Opsommer's staff.

Resolution of Appreciation

McConnell offered a Resolution of Appreciation for Graham Diedrich's service on the Environmental Commission including his help with the Climate Sustainability Plan, local education efforts, and outreach with the Energy Team, MSU, Solarize Meridian, and others. The motion was seconded by Frazier and unanimously approved.

Staff Report

A summary of the Green Grants was distributed in the staff update. Harvey completed his update later in the evening, reporting on the recent Green Dialogue Pat Lindemann, and progress on a Community Energy Management Grant that will help pay for additional charging stations, an electric vehicle, and energy efficiency improvements. The full staff update can be found at <http://bit.ly/update-leroy>

Planning Commission

McConnell shared that the Planning Commission recommended a marijuana facility for approval

Township Board

Trezise reported that a budget was passed. A subcommittee of the Board is working on posting a job description for a new Township Manager. The goal is to have a new manager on the team by the first of the year

Land Preservation Advisory Board

Lee reported that a new Trustee (Curtis) will join the LPAB. There has also been a volunteer banquet, a seed collection, and implementation of the deer management program. 300 deer were culled last year.

Energy Team

Sarver reported that the team met and discussed an EV show and tell, green fairs, a future Solarize initiative, and LeRoy's potential assistance.

Brownfield Authority

Sarver reported that the affordable housing option is on hold. Trezise reported that development near the center of Okemos is on hold. There is hope for an eventual City Center in the future.

Green Team

Frazier reported that 700 vehicles came through the Fall Recycling Event. 35,000 lbs of electronics were collected. Consumers Energy had the largest turnout ever. Peterson's students from Haslett enjoyed helping with the event. Frazier echoed the Energy Teams' interest in continuing to work with Harvey in the coming year.

Food Team/Gleaning/Food Rescue

McConnell invited people to connect with the Food Rescue initiative which is staying active. Visit www.foodrescue.us.

Green Burial Committee

Frazier reports that the Green Burial Committee hopes to meet with the Township Trustees in the next few weeks.

High School Update

Peterson reported that Harrison Batten could not make the meeting this evening. She mentioned that the students have met with the Superintendent and have discussed pollinator gardens.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:46 pm. Recording available at <https://meridianmi.new.swagit.com/videos/314176>

NOTES SHARED FROM GREENSPACE COMMITTEE

(Paul, Lee, Peterson – 10-2-24)

Old Planning Process:

- Inventory and analysis
- Public input and visioning
- Analysis and alternatives
- Preliminary plan
- Final plan

Goals:

- Assess progress toward achieving Greenspace Plan goals
- Identify any potential gaps in the Plan that may want to address/investigate

Areas of Interest:

- Unregulated areas
- Wildlife corridors
- Citizen science
- Wetland quality
- Flooding areas
- Natural communities
- Address climate change
- Connecting greenspaces through public transportation

Priority Conservation Corridors (PCCs):

1. ~84% of PCCs are currently regulated lands - i.e., floodplains, wetlands, and wetland and lake buffers
2. Red areas - unregulated lands that should be added to maintain ecological integrity and interconnectedness (~600 acres)
 - How are the PCCs doing? Have these regulated lands been protected/adequately protected (e.g., adequately buffered? If not, what do we need to do to address this?
 - i. GIS analysis using current wetland maps, floodplain areas, and hydrology/lakes and ponds data layers, current land cover, and aerial imagery to see if these areas are protected/buffered and look at current land cover and land use changes within the PCCs
 - ii. Incorporate vernal pool data from potential vernal pool mapping effort and data from Vernal Pool Patrol in the Michigan Vernal Pool Database and see if vernal pools are adequately incorporated within the PCCs
 - iii. Assess and identify potential gaps
 - What is the status of the red areas? Did we add protection for these areas, and how much?
 - i. GIS analysis using current land cover data layers, current aerial imagery, current wetland including vernal pools, floodplain, and hydrology data layers, land ownership layer, and zoning layer
3. Even if wetlands, floodplains, lakes are regulated/protected, what is the quality of these areas? This information could help identify and prioritize areas for stewardship efforts. Research has shown that restoring degraded wetlands enhanced biodiversity and other ecosystem services such as filtering, retention, and storage of water

for human use, improving water quality, and regulating extreme events such as flooding/storm events that those wetlands can provide (i.e., restored wetlands provided greater supply of these services compared to degraded wetlands) (Meli et al. 2014).

4. Also could look at areas within the Twp that have experienced increased flooding to prioritize areas for wetland protection and restoration based on the premise that wetlands can help intercept and store water during storm events and help control or reduce flooding.
5. Recommend assessing and comparing more current wetland maps to the PCCs and identify any potential gaps and/or prioritize areas for protection, stewardship, restoration, and acquisition efforts.
6. Investigate potential opportunities for wetland mitigation efforts within the Twp
7. Are there other natural community types that could be incorporated into the PCCs?

Scenic Road Corridors (SRCs):

1. ~ 23 miles identified
2. The plan recommended 150 ft buffer on either side of SRCs where new development is restricted
 - a. Has this occurred? How are these SRCs doing - were the guidelines followed? Progress on implementation?
 - b. What is the quality of the SRCs (e.g., vegetation along the SRCs - native vegetation or dominated by invasive species, litter/pollution)?

Areas of Special Concern (ASCs):

1. Agricultural lands - 363 acres
2. Road crossings / wildlife crossings
3. Fragile linkages
 - a. Progress on implementing recommendations for these ASCs?
 - b. Could we get more/better data on wildlife crossings to identify priority places for road/wildlife crossing structures? Could this potentially be a citizen science effort?

Implementation Tools: are these being implemented? Can these be expanded?

1. Conservation Zoning
 - a. Plan recommended 30% of each parcel/parcels zoned for conservation (need to check this), and ideally should coincide with PCCs and SRCs
 - b. Recommended ecological assessment by develop integrated with Land Clearing Application
 - c. Are both these recommendations being implemented?
2. Conservation Easements (CEs)
 - a. Are these being used in the Twp? What is the process for using CEs (donating or acquiring)?
3. Trail Easements
4. Voluntary Stewardship Programs
 - a. Included award programs, adoption programs, federal/state programs (e.g., WHIP, WRP)
 - b. Some of these are being implemented - e.g., Meridian Conservation Corps
 - c. Can we incorporate and expand to help achieve goals of the PCCs or improve habitat quality and functions of areas within the PCCs (e.g., private lands)? How could we do this?
5. Land Acquisition
 - a. LPAB - millage
 - b. GIS analysis to look at land acquisitions since 2004 to see if and how well the new acquisitions line up with the Greenspace Plan and identify potential priorities for future acquisitions
6. Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)
 - a. Limited to farmland preservation or ecological critical areas

- b. Has the Twp used this tool? If so, where? Could the Twp use this tool more?
7. Linked Site Plan Approvals

General Questions/Considerations:

1. Climate Change - How can the Greenspace Plan help address climate change impacts within the Twp? Can we look at opportunities for Greenspace Plan to contribute to addressing goals within the Twp's Climate Sustainability Plan?
2. Public Transportation - Can public transportation to greenspaces be improved to give more people access (more bus routes/stops)?

Potential Resources/Data to Explore/Include in Greenspace Plan Analyses:

- 1) Current wetland map/data layer - EGLE - <https://www.michigan.gov/egle/maps-data/wetlands-map-viewer>
- 2) Hydrology data layer - EGLE
- 3) Vernal pool data - potential and verified - MNFI - <https://vernal-pool-patrol-mnfi.hub.arcgis.com/pages/mi-vernal-pool-database>
- 4) Natural features - Occurrences of rare species and high quality examples of natural communities - MNFI - <https://mnfi.anr.msu.edu/>
- 5) Current/up-to-date land cover and aerial imagery - Twp?, USGS - National Land Cover Database (NLCD) 2016 - <https://www.usgs.gov/node/279743>
- 6) Wildlife crossing data - iNaturalist (<https://www.inaturalist.org/>), SPARCnet (<https://sparcnet.org/>, MSU contact - Dr. Alexa Warwick), potential citizen science project/effort within the Twp - could involve schools/students?

Notes from meeting:

- Update hubs, pathways in the greenspace map
- Dan oppsomer staff meeting

* 1. I am interested in service on one or more of the following public bodies as checked below:
Environmental Commission

*** 2. Summarize your reasons for applying to do this type of service**

I am passionate about the environment, sustainability, and natural areas in Meridian Township. I am seeking ways to become more involved in environmental and sustainability initiatives in our community, utilize my background and skills, and make a positive difference.

*** 3. Describe education, experience or training which will assist you if appointed.**

I earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a Master of Public Administration. I have 15 years post-graduate work experience. I currently work in environmental public health, offering a valuable perspective on environmental initiatives while considering public health and public engagement. I have also earned a certificate in Project Management, offering tools to assist with planning and implementing successful projects.

(Attach resume if available)

[Laura Belisle Resume.pdf](#)

* Full Name
Laura Belisle

*** Occupation**

Lead Biomonitoring and Logistics Public Health Consultant/Project Manager

*** Place of Employment**

Michigan Public Health Institute/Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

* Home Address
1374 Silkwood Dr.
Okemos 48864

* Phone (Day)
419.603.8656

* Phone (Evening)
419.603.8656

* Email
Lseaman26@gmail.com

* Please type your name in the box below as a digital signature
Laura Belisle

* Date and Time
10/17/2024

Other than the Downtown Development Authority Board, the Corridor Improvement Authority, and the Economic Development Corporation, persons appointed to Meridian Township boards and commissions must be a resident and elector (if of voting age) of the Township during the term of office. Excessive absences may be cause for review of appointment. The policy for appointment of candidates to the various public service positions is based on the following criteria: desire to serve, experience, expertise, availability of time to serve, and maintenance of equitable geographic representation. In most instances it will be desirable to develop further information through a personal interview. This application will be retained in township files for two years.

Laura Bélisle

Key skills: project and grant management, research, communication, and partner collaboration.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Lead Biomonitoring and Logistics Public Health Consultant, 09/09/2024-present (title change).

Human Subject Protections and Study Regulation Manager, 04/02/2020-09/09/2024.

Michigan Public Health Institute, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Environmental Health, 333 S. Grand Ave., Lansing, Michigan 48933.

- Serves as North Kent County Exposure Assessment research study project manager. Implements the study plan, creates processes, monitors project goals, organizes study information, and carries out project management tasks. This translates into supporting project deliverable (reports, presentations, and publications) creation, review, and completion; facilitating all meetings; maintaining records, notes, and action items; creating, tracking, and communicating study timeline, metrics, and budget to management; and communicating with stakeholders for project deliverable dissemination.
- Serves as the division's contact for human research subjects and ethics for 11 PFAS projects; tracks the division's research and biomonitoring projects and requirements; serves as the division liaison to the Institutional Review Board; ensures protection of sensitive study data.
- Creates and conducts staff training; tracks and ensures all internal and external staff (500+) working on 11 PFAS project teams are trained to meet ethical and regulatory standards.
- Manages the public telephone line and staff; creates and manages staffing schedule and call volume; reports call metrics to management; implements call procedures and onboarding materials; establishes and enacts system improvements.

Biomonitoring Coordinator (Public Health Consultant), 09/24/2018-04/01/2020.

Michigan Public Health Institute, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Environmental Health, 333 S. Grand Ave., Lansing, Michigan 48933.

- Coordinated and implemented all areas of the North Kent County Exposure Assessment research study (the first PFAS exposure assessment research study conducted by the State of Michigan); collaborated with local health departments, stakeholders, and internal teams (epidemiology, lab, data, water sampling, financial, and clinic staff); prepared and managed all clinics (scheduling, staffing, transportation, meals); maintained data records; completed Institutional Review Board requirements; collaborated with budget staff to approve study budgets; updated protocols and created new procedures and tracking mechanisms; facilitated meetings and provided updates for the research team and management.
- Designed and implemented study training for all study staff.

Clinical Research Associate, 10/01/2016-09/07/2018.

NorthShore University HealthSystem, 2650 Ridge Ave., Evanston, Illinois 60201.

- Managed all aspects of breast cancer research; performed study visits with study participants; conducted data collection, tracking, and quality assurance; reported to the Institutional Review Board; and completed institutional requirements.
- Served as the primary study contact for the team, managers, and study participants.
- Created and deployed protocols, patient surveys, and tracking mechanisms.

Research Project Manager, 09/03/2014-09/30/2016 (promotion).

Research Project Coordinator, 09/02/2012-09/02/2014 (promotion).

Research Study Assistant, 05/07/2012-09/01/2012.

Northwestern University, 675 N. Saint Clair St., Chicago, Illinois 60611.

- Managed research on osteoarthritis; conducted study visits with participants; performed data collection and management; managed financial records; tracked multicenter and single recipient NIH grants and budgets (\$4M); reported to Institutional Review Board; completed institutional requirements; and managed research staff.
- Served as the primary study contact for the team, participants, and partners.
- Coordinated team meetings and advised on the development of manuscripts.
- Developed research protocols and procedures.
- Coordinated calls, letters, and website content, and published newsletter.

Program Associate, 09/28/2009-03/09/2012.

Council of Great Lakes Governors, 20 N. Wacker Dr., Ste 2700, Chicago, Illinois 60606.

- Managed a \$200,000 grant and all deliverables to measure water uses and their impacts.
- Coordinated Great Lakes Cumulative Impact Assessment in conjunction with NOAA, and USGS scientists to meet requirements of the Great Lakes Agreement and Compact.
- Wrote/coordinated a \$300,000 grant to support water data networks in the Great Lakes.

EDUCATION

Project Management Certificate Program, March 2024

Cornell University, online (eCornell)

Master of Public Administration, June 2009

Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio

- Concentration: Environmental Government Institutions
- Public Administration & Affairs Honors Society: Phi Alpha Alpha

Bachelor of Science in Biology, May 2005

Wittenberg University, Springfield, Ohio

- Concentration: Zoology/Ecology
- Biology Honors Society: Beta Beta Beta

RELEVANT SKILLS AND TRAINING

- Seasoned in partnership engagement including academics, researchers, professionals, and members of the public (all ages), 19 years.
- Specialized in project management, 15 years.
- Experienced in staff relations including hiring, management, and coordination, 9 years.
- Skilled in developing and conducting staff training sessions, 3 years.
- Experienced in budgeting and grants; budgeting course completed.
- Completed Preparing for Leadership training (MDHHS/Cameron Consulting), Spring 2023.
- Certified in Adult First Aid/CPR/AED with Opioid Overdose and Naloxone - Nasal Atomizer; Bloodborne Pathogens (6 hours of training, 5/28/2024); Mental Health First Aid for Adults (8 hours of training, 6/1/2023).
- Experienced in producing documents using Microsoft Office Suite (including Excel, OneNote, Outlook, PowerPoint, Publisher, SharePoint, and Word), Google Drive and Adobe Acrobat; logging data in REDCap and SPSS database systems; and holding meetings via GoToWebinar, Microsoft Teams and Zoom.