



AGENDA
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
February 1, 2023 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. OLD BUSINESS
Food and Compost Section of Climate Sustainability Plan
Draft at <https://sites.google.com/view/climate-sustainability-plan/home>

Approve Student Alternate Amelia Saffron

Commission Opening/Applicants
7. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
(a staff update can be found here: <https://bit.ly/update-leroy>)
8. PUBLIC REMARKS
9. ADJOURNMENT

Environmental Commission Minutes (draft)

January 4, 2023

Changes to Agenda: Grasseschi suggested adding nominations added to agenda under new business.

Corrections to Minutes: Approved with minor typo changes.

2023 Meeting Schedule: Approved with removal of July meeting.

Officer Elections and Liaison Appointments:

- Sarver nominated McConnell. Seconded by Grasseschi. Unanimously approved.
- Colby offered to be Vice Chair. Unanimously approved.
- McConnell nominated Grasseschi to the Land Preservation Advisory Board. Unanimously Approved.
- Harvey will pass these changes on to the Clerk's Office.

Climate Sustainability Plan:

- Changes on the Transportation Commission may slow down their comments.
- McConnell suggests that staff add the Energy Sections to the Twp. Board.
- Grasseschi and Jackson have been making edits to the water section. Yu March was suggested as a possibility for reviewing the water section(s).
- Harvey asked about the divisions of the water section. Potential areas include wetlands, green infrastructure, groundwater, stormwater, lake/shoreline, etc. C. Wisinski mentioned that the Groundwater Management Board might provide input on that subsection.
- The Food/Composting section will be discussed in February.
- Sarver and McConnell mentioned that the pumping of fresh water and sewage potentially could be addressed in the energy section. The MSU Energy Study may also shed some light on possible energy/water goals. The Directors of the Water Treatment Plants could be helpful as well.

New Student Application: Amelia Saffron's application was included in the January packet. Saffron mentioned her interest in native plants and water issues. McConnell invited input from Saffron and others in to the Climate Sustainability Plan.

Reports and Announcements

Energy Team: Solarize Meridian and EV charging. Grant application to the Public Service Commission. Opsommer signed a letter of support. The focus is upon collaboration between Lansing, East Lansing, and Meridian Township

Green Team: Harvey shared the upcoming activities at the Marketplace (also in the Packet). The next meeting will be on Jan 12 at 4pm at Chapbook Café if interested.

Good Food to Smart Recycling: Lafferty shared a written update. Colby mentioned that the next meeting will be Friday. There will be presentation from 3 officials from Canton Twp and a representative Metro Food Rescue in Wayne County to discuss composting and food rescue/gleaning initiatives.

Wetlands: World Wetland Day is on February 2nd. Emma Campbell (Meridian Conservation Corps) will be doing an event at Nancy Moore Park on that day (more at www.worldwetlandsday.org), Emma and Rebecca are working on wetland signage. Over the past year a brochure, a letter, a notice to residents, and a notice to contractors have been distributed. Grasseschi asked if we might add a line or educational materials to the tax notice/assessment. At a minimum, the website (<http://www.meridian.mi.us/wetlands>) could be added to the bottom of the notice. C. Wisinski will ask. Grasseschi suggested that February would be a good time to send the contractor mailing.

McConnell discussed a project at the Commons Church on Marsh Rd. which includes an "infiltration/detention basin" as part of a parking lot expansion. It includes buried drain pipes to help channel extra water that has not infiltrated.

McConnell will continue to “dig in” to retention solutions and how they compare with other treatments he has proposed in the past such as native plantings, etc.

Planning Commission: McConnell reported that the Commission met on Dec. 12 and discussed the MSU-Lake Lansing trail and a facelift at Douglas J. and special use permit which included some fill in a floodplain.

Township Board: C. Wisinski mentioned that the budget went in to effect. She asked if we might discuss a spending plan at a future meeting. McConnell asked for a recap of spending from 2022 and discussion at our next meeting about a 2023’s budget.

Earth Club: Andrechek mentioned that a Sustainable Fashion Committee has been selling “upcycled” clothing on-line at <https://www.depop.com/ohssustainablefashion>. She expects some funds will be used to deal with pests in their student greenhouse at OHS.

Brownfield Redevelopment Authority: Jackson will continue to serve on the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority.

Staff Report: Harvey invited commissioners to review his report on-line and ask any questions they might have. <Http://bit.ly/update-leroy>

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm

Full recording available at <https://meridianmi.new.swagit.com/videos/196197>

2023 Environmental Commission (draft)

BILL MCCONNELL (12/31/25, 3 year term) CHAIR	517.763.7824 mconn64@msu.edu
ANNA FISCHER COLBY (12/31/23, 3 year term) VICE CHAIR	314.221.7829 anna.j.colby@gmail.com
EMMA ANDRACHEK (12/31/23, 1 year term) STUDENT	517.512.3146 emma.andrechek@gmail.com
TOM FRAZIER (12/31/2023, 3 year term)	517.974.5584 Fraziertom58@gmail.com
KENDRA GRASSESCHI (12/31/23, 3 year term) (LPAB LIAISON)	517.282.0679 kendrathelen@gmail.com
NED JACKSON (12/31/23, 3 year term) (BRA LIAISON)	517.285.4319 jackson@chemistry.msu.edu
JOHN SARVER (12/31/23, 3 year term)	517.290.8602 johnsarver3@gmail.com
LUCA WISINSKI (12/31/23, 1 year term) STUDENT	517.435.5985 lwisinski23@gmail.com
COURNEY WISINSKI (TRUSTEE LIAISON)	517.410.1527 wisinski@meridian.mi.us
OPEN (Student Alternate Commissioner)	
OPEN (one regular Commissioner position)	
STAFF: LEROY HARVEY	517.505.2809 harvey@meridian.mi.us

2023 Environmental Commission Meetings
(approved 1/5/23)

Jan 4

Feb 1

Mar 1

Apr 5

May 3

Jun 7

Aug 2

Sep 6

Oct 4

Nov 1

Dec 6

Draft of 2022 Expenditures

2022 Green Grants	Grant	Paid	Balance
Haslett Community Church Pollinator Garden	\$ 3,000	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500
Okemos Public Montessori Butterfly Garden	\$ 3,000	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500
Montessori Radmoor Barnyard Classroom	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ -
Okemos Public Library Three Sisters Native American Garden	\$ 1,000	\$ 500	\$ 500
Wetland Mailing			
Printing	\$ 2,044.17		
Postage	\$ 1,012.49		
Envelopes			
Total	\$ 3,056.66		
(does not include contractor mailing)			

Healthy Food Systems

Food waste contributes to more annual greenhouse gas emissions than 42 coal-fired plants. Experts estimate that up to ___% of food never gets consumed. Improving the health of our food system can reduce waste, save energy, save money, and reduce food insecurity (lack of access to healthy food).

Objective #1: Reduce Food Waste & Food Insecurity

The Township aspires to the U.S. EPA, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and U.S. Food and Drug Administration shared commitment to achieve a 50% reduction in food loss by 2030.

*"Food insecurity isn't driven by scarcity, it's a distribution issue."
EPA Report Highlights Climate Impacts of Wasted Food NRDC (2021)*

Strategies:

1. Support, promote, utilize and expand current gleaning/food rescue initiatives within the Twp.
 - a. Continue gleaning fresh produce at the Meridian Farmers Market for distribution to area food kitchens/pantries.
 - b. Measure and report annual donation metrics to create a baseline and growth over time.
2. Identify and help fill gaps to enable increasingly effective gleaning/food capture programs in the Township with novel ideas like, "Support a Pantry" program at the Market to encourage customers to purchase Market products for the purpose of donation to pantries and soup kitchens.



Image Credit: US EPA

3. Educate businesses about food donation opportunities and address liability concerns. (Example: Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, which protects businesses donating food products from liability and provides additional food donation liability protection for food donors who donate food in good faith and practice safe handling.)

Objective #2: Increase Production & Sourcing of Sustainably Grown Food Products by Township and Residents

Strategies:

1. Support-township residents and businesses and institutions within the township, such as public schools and childcare centers to increase the proportion of sustainable and locally grown foods.

- Incentivize, encourage, or educate on sustainable food practices, the environmental impact of food, and opportunities to increase sustainability of food purchases, such as by promoting
 - Consider incentivizing schools to use locally/Michigan sourced food.
 - Reduce Barriers to Use of the Farmers Market
 - Delivery/Shuttle Programs – Work with volunteers to explore transport to help shut ins and less able people get to the market or get foods from the market delivered to them
 - Organize Market awareness/education programs in Meridian Cares target communities such as “Meet a Farmer” and cooking demonstrations
 - Explore Food Box drop-offs in Meridian Cares target communities
 - Work to add a bus stop adjacent to the Farmers Market
2. Support the production of locally grown food and local food businesses within the township
- Encourage and where possible support the development of farm to school and school garden programs in Haslett, Okemos and other school districts in the Township
 - Reduce barriers to initiating and continuing farm businesses within the Township
 - Initiate/Revisit farmland conservation/preservation collaboration with County or locally to keep more farmland in farming locally to help support the market and local food needs. Township master plan should incorporate farmland preservation/protection and encourage viable use of farmland where possible
 - Identify and address barriers to the incubation and citing of local food-based businesses within the community

Objective #3: Minimize Waste Generation & Promote Waste Diversion Practices.

1. Reduce organic materials going to the landfill.
2. Collaborate Regionally/Encourage joint cooperation with neighboring municipalities wherever possible to address systemic organic waste challenges
3. Initiate Food Scrap/Organic drop off service at several convenient locations around the Township.
4. Explore the feasibility of an anerobic digester for Meridian Township which may include partnering with adjoining jurisdictions.
5. Increase recycling/organic waste management in commercial establishments like restaurants, independent living facilities, nursing homes, grocery stores and convenience markets.
 - Work with interested local schools to conduct one- or two-day cafeteria food audits with student volunteers to include periodic feedback and follow-up between school and Environmental Commission to improve/ensure sustainability of recycling efforts.
 - Work with schools and school groups to build community-wide interest in lunchroom recycling and food waste recovery that can be applied to other cafeterias in the Township.
 - Increase education/outreach to increase/improve organic recycling in our community, including home composting and vermiculture education
2. Revise Twp. Ordinances, policies and practices within Township departments to encourage organic waste management where possible.
6. Promote healthy soil/composting by requiring a percentage of fill in the permitting process to include a commercial grade of compost.
7. Revise Twp. Ordinances, policies and practices within Township departments to encourage organic waste management where possible.

FOOD RECOVERY HIERARCHY

