

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

DRAFT

May 2, 2018

**5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
517-853-4560, Town Hall Room, 7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Susan Masten, Ned Jackson, John Sarver, Kirk Lapham, Ben Holland, Bill McConnell
ABSENT: Marina Ionescu, Jim Kielbaso
STAFF: Environmental Programs Coordinator LeRoy Harvey,
OTHERS: Planning Commission representative David Premoe, Gary Marx, Wetland Consultant,

- 1. Call meeting to order:** Chair McConnell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- 2. Approval of Agenda:** Chair McConnell suggests moving 6a to 5. A. New Business
Supported by Commissioner Sarver. Motion approved unanimously.
- 3. Approval of Minutes:** April 4, 2018 Regular Meeting Minutes
Commissioner _____ moved to approve the minutes with minor modifications.
Supported by Commissioner _____. Motion approved unanimously.
- 4. Public Remarks – NONE**

5. New Business

A. Township Wetland Ordinance Review:

Comments from the Wetlands Consultant, Elise Tripp and Chair McConnell were included in the April Packet, along with the current Wetland Ordinance. Commissioner Lapham provided a summary of comments (Attachment A).

Wetland Consultant, Gary Marx was invited to share his perspective. Marx worked for DEQ on wetland issues for 20+ years and has been a Wetland Consultant for the past 16 years. Marx described some ways that the Township might better accomplish its goals of wetland preservation and restoration. These might be discussed further at the next Commission meeting:

- Because most wetlands are considered “essential” – there may be cases where we can avoid the cost of determining this by an expensive consultant.
- A study to determine Meridian’s “unique wildlife habitats” and unique ecosystems might also help evaluate borderline cases.
- Better ways to (such as signage) alert neighbors, future property owners/managers/applicants of wetlands, monitoring, and mitigation plans.
- Mitigation methods/requirements might also be reviewed.

Commissioner Lapham asked about wetland banking. MDOT is one of the largest builders of wetland banks. DEQ has a Wetland Bank division that might be helpful – possibly speaking at a Green Theme Presentation. Commissioner Lapham offered to explore potential speaker for Green Theme topic. Chair McConnell asked about examples in the area that might serve as good examples. Commissioner Sarver asked about the possibility that credits might be sold and used to expand/restore wetlands in land preservation efforts.

Michigan Nature Association is another good resource that might help with monitoring efforts. Commissioner Masten mentioned a presentation on the topic <https://www.mnwa.org/docs/Pennington%20-%20Wetlands%20Mitigation%20Banking%20in%20Michigan.pdf>

- B. **Ember Oaks Tour:** Commissioners Holland, Jackson, Lapham, Kielbaso, and McConnell toured the site with Lead Planner Menser.



Chair McConnell asked about additional information about the prior permit and asked staff to gather that information. Commissioner Holland mentioned that drain areas that could be raised and potentially leading to more water retention.

- C. **PAH Model Ordinance Review:** Commissioner Lapham shared detailed comments about a potential ordinance. (provided in May Packet). There is unanimous support to explore this further. Commissioners Lapham and Jackson provided an overview of the issue. Lapham also mentioned interest in the industry perspective and minimizing Township burden for enforcing. Commissioner Jackson is surprised by the relatively recent awareness of the issue, given the long term awareness of the chemical dangers. Commissioner Sarver mentioned that this issue is ripe for change, given that there are alternatives that are affordable. He suggests that one-time contractor registration may suffice. Permits and even annual registration seem like too much burden on Township. Township might offer list of approved contractors. Sarver also suggested inviting the contractors and Home Depot to come and speak. Sarver also mentioned a smaller fee structure and penalties that make it more reasonable for contractors. Jackson suggests looking for contractors that offer alternatives. Harvey will ask Rebecca Esslemann for more info about the other 15 Michigan communities' experiences with ordinances.

6. Old Business

- A. **Environmental Commission Rules of Procedure** – The updated Rules of Procedure (2/29/16) does not currently match the ordinance (2- 226-231) Before proceeding with a memo to the Board, it will be helpful for Commissioners to determine if there are

other changes they'd recommend. This was tabled until a future meeting.

B. Future Green Themes

Wetland Banking – Masten will explore
Water issues – McConnell will explore
Sealants – Contractors that use alternatives

Related Social Media – discussion and topic at a future meeting – how we might expand presence on social media. LeRoy will check with HOMTV. We also discussed identifying snippets of Green Theme presentations for use in social media.

- C. Environmental Stewardship Awards:** There's an interest in revitalizing this activity possibly in collaboration with MidMEAC. LeRoy will uncover award nomination form.

7. CHAIR'S REPORT

8. STAFF REPORT (distributed in packet)

9. COMMISSION/LIASON/WORKGROUP REPORTS

- A. **Planning:** Bill has been following up with Planning Commission a little more.
- B. **Land Preservation:** no report
- C. **Energy:** Solarize Meridian Workshops- 3 have been held reaching 100 residents. There are plans to survey suppliers. The 20 KW project is being considered for ground mount. The Board considered it and suggested moving closer to the corner.
- D. **Parks and Recreation:** none
- E. **Transportation:** Ionescu has schedule conflicts and would like to find a volunteer from the Environmental or Transpo. Commission to fill this role
- F. **Student Report:** Holland mentions that he has found a student that is potentially interested in joining the Commission.
- G. **Brownfield Redevelopment Authority Report:** no report
- H. **Green Team:** Next meeting on May 7 at 4pm to discuss recent event and apartment recycling.
- I. **Township Board:** LeRoy mentioned the potential to invite the Township Board members.

10. Public Remarks : Dave Premoe – from a public safety concern and would recommend moving PAH ordinance forward. The timing may be good with the weather as well – especially for education.

11. Special Recognition: Commissioner Masten read a resolution in appreciation for Commissioner Holland's involvement in the Environmental Commission, supported by Jackson and unanimously approved by Commissioners.

12. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned the regular meeting at 8:50. Offered by Masten and supported by Jackson. Unanimously supported.