



**Environmental Commission
Meeting Packet
December 12, 2018**

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Environmental Commission Work Session

AGENDA: December 12 2018

Town Hall Meeting Room – 5151 Marsh Rd. Okemos

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER AT 7:00 PM
2. REVIEW MERIDIAN'S WETLAND ORDINANCE

See supplemental materials

3. OTHER RELATED UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS
 - A. Chair
 - B. Planning
 - C. Land Preservation
 - D. Energy
 - E. Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
 - F. Green Team (Citizens' Recycling Advisory Committee)
 - G. Staff
 - H. Others
4. OTHER
 - A. Goals for 2019 (see [2018 Goals](#))
 - B. Meeting Dates (draft)

Jan 9
Feb 6
Mar 6
Apr 3
May 1
Jun 5
Jul 3 or 10
Aug 7
Sep 4
Oct 2
Nov 6
Dec 4

5. PUBLIC REMARKS
6. ADJOURN

Environmental Commission Minutes: November 7, 2018 (draft)

1. ATTENDING: John Sarver, Bill McConnell, Kirk Lapham, LeRoy Harvey (staff), David Premoe (Planning Commission), Aparna Krishnamurthy (Okemos Action, Interested Commissioner), Jim Kielbaso,
ABSENT/EXCUSED: Susan Masten, Ned Jackson
2. MEETING Called to order at 7 PM by Chair McConnell
3. GREEN THEME: **E.L. Commission on the Environment: Resilience Dialogues, Climate Sustainability Plan, Subcommittee Projects**, Cathy Deshambo, East Lansing Environmental Services Administrator. See the presentation at <http://meridianmi.swagit.com/play/11072018-1180> Resilience Dialogue reports (including E.L. can be found [here](#). Ms. Deshambo also spoke about recycling, green building/development incentives, green infrastructure, climate sustainability, FEMA, resilience, and other topics.
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: August, September, and October Minutes were approved with minor edits.
5. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. Aparna Krishnamurthy introduced herself. Her application for participation on the Commission was received. LeRoy will contact the Board to request her appointment. Welcome Aparna!
 - B. Upcoming Wetland Use Permits: Newton Park will be coming to the road possibly in December.
6. OLD BUSINESS
 - A. We have two openings on the Environmental Commission (1 for a student) <http://bit.ly/commission-app> Residents are encouraged to apply. LeRoy reached out to Haslett High School.
 - B. **Wetland Ordinance Work Session:** Dec. mtg. will be a work session unless have a permit to review.
 - C. **PAH Update:** Derek Perry suggests that hold on a ban an begin to specify low-PAH sealants in our own projects, test out the alternative products, and conduct outreach to the public and contractors. The Commission would like to be kept updated on spec revisions.
8. REPORTS & UPDATES
 - A. CHAIR: McConnell is exploring possibilities for wetland restoration on land preserves. He will elaborate as this evolves.
 - B. COMMISSION/LIASON/WORKGROUP REPORTS
 - A. **Planning:** None
 - B. **Land Preservation:** Jim Kielbaso reports that the Deer management program is underway. So far, there have been 31 deer harvested. Jim also reported the electric poles are being replaced in the Rysberg property, a wetland area off of Okemos Rd.
 - C. **Energy:** Sarver reports that the Solar Array is up and producing power. He also mentions help from the Assessing Department in an inventory of solar systems in the Township. Sarver mentions that the Energy Team is working on an Annual Report related to the Climate Sustainability Plan. McConnell mentions that we might devote a future work session to assist with this in January or February. Sarver and the Energy Team are also surveying businesses.
 - D. **Green Team:** Harvey and Krishnamurthy mentioned that the Green Team is planning a spring recycling event and also doing a survey in a multi-family apartment complex to assist with expansion of their recycling opportunities.
 - C. STAFF: Elizabeth Hossink, Social Media Intern, is interested in receiving ideas for environmental stories and helping promote Green Themes. Harvey shared an update about the Green Community presentation to the Board last month and distributed a list of "green projects" featured on www.migreencommunities.com McConnel and Tom Frazier (Michigan Townships Association) attended the Board presentation. Harvey also shared info about a Green Infrastructure project with MSU, and info about the latest Green Gazette.
9. PUBLIC REMARKS: No additional public remarks.
10. ADJOURN: Sarver and Kielbaso motioned to Adjourn. Motion approved unanimously.

Wetland Ordinance Review Discussion Points

Meridian's Environmental Commission will be reviewing our Wetland Ordinance in a work session on December 5 and at future meetings. This document is intended to help us prepare for a productive conversation. There are several topics that have come up so far. What's missing? Other thoughts?

State Compliance

Our Wetland Consultant, Elise Tripp, has provided us with some language updates. See the latest ordinance, along with her suggestions [here](#).

Wetland Banking

There is some interest in developing a localized Wetland Bank. For example, a developer proposing changes to a low-priority wetland, could potentially help fund wetland restoration in nature preserves or other priority areas.

Minor Wetland Disruptions

There is some discussion that we may want to soften requirements for very minor infringements (with little impact). It will be helpful to research and/or develop some language related to this.

Essentiality Determination

Because the vast majority of wetlands are considered essential, there is concern that current practices to determine essentiality are cumbersome and costly.

Related Plans and Priorities for "More Green"

There is an existing and "growing" interest among developers, citizens, local government, and others to enhance green and blue infrastructure on new and existing landscapes as evidenced in...

- Meridian's [Master Plan](#) and [Meridian's Climate Sustainability Plan](#) (section E. is water related)
- Meridian's recent [Green Community Award](#) (and desire to "go for the Gold")
- [Low Impact Development](#) - Suggested by Pat Lindemann (Ingham Co. Drain Commission), Brent Forsberg (Developer), and Cathy DeShambo (EL Enviro Services Administrator)
- Meridian's Land Preservation successes and priorities and [Green Space Plan](#)
- A "[Green Infrastructure](#)" project with MSU students this term.
- **Redevelopment Ready:** Meridian recently became the first Township to achieve "Redevelopment-Ready" certification. In addition to opening the door to grant possibilities and more development, this program encourages "green development" <https://www.miplace.org/globalassets/media-documents/rrc/rrc-best-practices.pdf> (see 2.1.7 on p. 9) mentions Rain gardens, bioswales and other low impact development techniques, green roofs, Pervious pavement, Landscaping that requires the use of native, non-invasive species, Tree preservation and protection standards, Street tree planting standards, Blue roofs, cisterns, stormwater vaults and other rainwater collection techniques, Parking lot landscaping standards, Renewable energy, etc.

House Bill 5854: Kirk writes that "One item we may want to be aware of during the work session is House Bill 5854, which as a pretty good chance of passing during the lame duck session. It may have some impact on the Township's wetland ordinance if it does pass. It may be helpful to have the consultant provide input in the event it does pass. See more [here](#). In other developments, there is concern that this lame duck legislation could open up 500,000 acres of wetlands to development. [Senate Bill 1211](#)

2019 Goals

2018 Goals

1. Collaborate with the Park Commission and Transportation Commission on wayfinding
2. Review progress on the Greenspace Plan
3. Actualize the Climate Sustainability Plan and review ordinances related to the Climate Sustainability Plan
4. Work with the Economic Development Director to discuss how greening the Township might attract green businesses
5. Collaborate with the Land Preservation Advisory Board

The above goals will not preclude the Environmental Commission from working on other projects; they simply provide a guide for activities for the year. The following motion is included to formally adopt the 2018 Environmental Commission Strategic Plan.

Environmental Commission Strategic Plan Review (from 2017)

The strategic plan will serve as a map for activities and responsibilities assigned to the Environmental Commission. The plan identifies 10 responsibilities assigned to the Commission. The goals and objectives will be reviewed and modified annually to prioritize, evaluate, modify, and review achievement and implementation. Benchmarks are established to review and assess the objectives as well as assist in prioritization.

Responsibilities: *Identify, Develop, Advise, Encourage, Utilize, and Review*

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Policy | 6. Economic |
| 2. Collaboration | 7. Stewardship |
| 3. Protection | 8. General Public Welfare |
| 4. Conservation/ Preservation | 9. Administration |
| 5. Management | 10. Planning |

Plan outline

RESPONSIBILITIES: Goal, Objective , Measure; Benchmark

**Goals and Objectives are reviewed yearly for prioritization, measures and benchmark assessment.

Topics to consider:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economic: Place-making• Public Welfare: Wayfinding• Water conservation practices• Collaboration: Climate Sustainability Plan• Stewardship: Green Themes Presentation• Administration: College student involvement• Planning: environmental amenities• Planning: environmental incentives• Native plant recommendations• Solar incentives• Greenspace plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Green buildings• Pathway connections• Educational outreach• Recycling outreach and incentive partnerships• Transportation partnerships• Street Tree ordinance• Irrigation practices• Landscape requirements• Pervious and Impervious requirements• Lighting/ Dark Sky requirements |
|---|---|

STAFF UPDATE

	Summary
Green Infrastructure Project	<p>Students from MSU Community Sustainability Class are working on a green infrastructure project this term. Their final presentation is Dec. 11. Contact LeRoy for more info. They also helped with the Hidden River Rain Garden. View a draft Poster here</p> <p>Also see a recent related letter about “green” development</p>
Recycling	<p>LeRoy’s working with a committee at Grange Acres to improve recycling options for residents.</p> <p>Planning has begun for the Spring Recycling Event: Apr 27</p>
Rain Garden & Native Plantings	<p>LeRoy solicited bids for a small rain garden in front of the solar array.</p> <p>LeRoy is also exploring native plants/pollinators to replace mowed areas. Potential suppliers of native genotype seeds/plants and consultation include WildType, Design by Nature, and Conservation Connections.</p>
Green Gazette	<p>Current issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 2018: https://conta.cc/2RBeB4y • <u>Lame Duck Legislation Alert</u> • <u>Winter Market Kicks Off</u> • <u>MSU Students Explore Green Infrastructure</u> • <u>Meridian Community Gardens Blossom</u> • <u>Fish Like A Girl</u> • Climate Report <p>Subscribe here. Story ideas to Harvey@meridian.mi.us</p>
Energy	<p>A 1-yr report on the climate action plan is underway.</p> <p>The Energy Team meets to discuss pathways to 100% renewables.</p> <p>There is a lot of interest in the new solar array http://bit.ly/meridiansolar</p>
PAH Memo	<p>Derek attended a presentation with Rebecca Essleman this week.</p>
Outreach	<p>A rain barrel and compost bin sale will be held in the spring. LeRoy has been working with the Regional Recycling Coordinating Committee on a promotional booth at the Greater Lansing Landscape Expo.</p>

GREEN THEME SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

Jan 9 Nelson Room	Garry Rowe to be confirmed	"An Update on the Ingham County Groundwater Survey and Important Issues for Well Head Protection Management."
Feb 6	Karim Chatti	Pavement Preservation
	Ideas	
Mar 6		• Green Infrastructure
Apr 3		• Low Impact Development – Green Building
May 1		• Wetland Person – model ordinances – Elise Tripp?
Jun 5		• Blue Trails -- (large county grant)
Jul 3 or 10		• Green Burial Plots (Williamstown Twp – Wanda B.)
Aug 7		• Salt: Suggested by Rebecca Essleman
Sep 4		• Radon (Susan)
Oct 2		• EL’s Sustainable Building Ordinance – Green Building
Nov 6		• 100% Renewable Goal of Traverse City – Kate Madigan (John)
Dec 4		• Ecological Landscaping – Bill Schneider - WildType
		• Wayfinding: (related to our 2018 goals)
		• Greenspace Plan
		• Climate Sustainability - review ordinances
		• Relation between Greening and Economic Development/ attracting green businesses
		• Collaboration with the Land Preservation Advisory Board
		• Green chemistry (Ned)
		• Green Businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (Hopcat has a landfill/waste diversion is 90%) ○ Buddies’ composting food waste https://livegreenlansing.org/scraps-to-soil/ ○ Others? Possibly a “Green Panel” of business people

View Past Green Themes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6qFiWiZQA9A&list=PLYCL9BFEG5RX5LMXKoAde3LCmdRhwrCF>

Letter to Colleagues about “Greening” Dealership Development

A review of “green infrastructure” options may be timely in discussions about the LaFontaine/Nissan project that received a lot of [attention this week](#). Here are a few examples from a “draft” [poster](#) some MSU students are helping with this term (see illustration)

I’d love to hear (and share) your ideas about how we can do more green/[low impact development](#) and enhance/preserve the green infrastructure we are currently blessed with in our region. The timing for this discussion might be good for several reasons:

- 1) The increasing public and media attention.
- 2) The opportunities for win-win-win (achieving economic development, protecting/enhancing our environment, maintaining our quality of life, climate impacts, etc.).
- 3) Interest among developers & neighboring communities.
- 4) Last month, East Lansing’s Environmental Services Director, Cathy DeShambo mentioned that E.L. is updating their Green Building Policy. She also hinted that it’s far better to have environmental amenities built in the design in the first place, rather than slow down the process at the end, trying to get them included as an afterthought.
- 5) Three months ago, Brent Forsberg, a local developer shared a presentation on Green Building <http://meridianmi.swagit.com/play/09052018-830>
- 6) Meridian’s Master Plan, Climate Sustainability Plan, “Redevelopment Readiness,” interest in “Gold Level” Green Community recognition next year.
- 7) Meridian Environmental Commission’s upcoming review of our Wetland Ordinance.
- 8) Some helpful tools are available to guide communities in green infrastructure improvements: , [Sample 1](#), [Sample 2](#), [Sample 3](#)



Rain Gardens and Rainwater Collection

A rain garden can be beautiful as well as functional. Rain gardens are versatile features that can be installed in almost any unpaved space. Also known as bioretention, or bioinfiltration, cells, they are shallow, vegetated basins that collect and absorb runoff.



Planter Boxes

Planter boxes filter stormwater and reduce runoff from sidewalks, parking lots, and streets.



Bioswales

Bioswales are essentially rain gardens placed in long narrow spaces such as the space between the sidewalk and the curb. Bioswales are vegetated, mulched, or xeriscaped channels that provide treatment and retention as they move stormwater from one place to another.



Green Streets, Parking and Permeable Pavement

Green streets and parking lots combine more than one feature (permeable pavement, bioswales, planter boxes, and trees) to capture and treat stormwater. Benefits include mitigating the urban heat island and a more walkable built environment.



Green Roofs

A green roof system atop a building helps manage stormwater and reduce energy costs for cooling.



Urban Tree Canopy

City trees, or tree canopy, soak up stormwater, provide cooling shade and help to slow traffic.



Land Conservation

Land conservation helps reduce runoff, flooding, greenhouse gases and sewer overflows. Water quality and recreational opportunities improve. This can include planting native species and removing invasives.

Buffer Strips

A buffer strip is an area of permanent vegetation, often adjacent to a pond, lake, or stream, that helps control air, soil, and water quality.

“Green” is a big part of our “brand recognition” - Let’s build on our reputation!

Please respond with your thoughts and I will be delighted to share them in a follow up email.

Thanks for considering this,

LeRoy