



AGENDA
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
June 3 2020 7 pm

ZOOM MEETING: ID: **874 3474 0486** Password: **5151**

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. ZOOM TIPS/ORIENTATION (how to unmute, etc. if needed)
3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
4. GREEN THEME PRESENTATION: Solar Power Purchase Agreements with Bob Chapman, formerly with Michigan Interfaith Power and Light and Warm Training Center.
5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES
6. PUBLIC REMARKS
7. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. Commissioner Application
 - B. Other
8. OLD BUSINESS
 - A. Township Board Meeting Presentation
 - B. Other
9. CHAIR'S REPORT
10. STAFF REPORT
11. COMMISSION/LIASON/WORKGROUP REPORTS
 - A. Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
 - B. Energy
 - C. Green Team
 - D. Land Preservation
 - E. Planning
 - F. Sustainable Development Study Group
 - G. Transportation
 - H. Tree Team
12. PUBLIC REMARKS
13. ADJOURNMENT



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2020 7:00 PM

PRESENT: Bill McConnell, John Sarver, Jim Kielbaso, Ned Jackson, Courtney Wisinski (Trustee Liaison), Courtney Boersema, Rose Vadnais, Susan Masten
STAFF: LeRoy Harvey, Stephen Gebes, Ken Lane (Econ. Development), Phil Deschaine (Treasurer/Trustee),
GUESTS: "John"

Approval of Agenda: Approved Unanimously

Approval of Minutes: Correction: Under "Reports, Planning" the 2nd to last sentence should read: "It will be a while before it (form-based coded) is presented to the Board of Trustees."

New Business:

Chair & Vice Chair: Sarver was nominated and approved unanimously to serve as Chair. Vadnais was nominated and approved unanimously to serve as Vice-Chair.

Opening on Commission: Harvey contacted previous applicants and encourages interested residents to apply (application form available at www.meridian.mi.us under Boards & Commissions → public service application). Harvey will forward apps to Sarver prior to the next meeting.

COVID Conversation: A number of issues, challenges, and opportunities were discussed including:

- COVID responses offer both threats and opportunities related to the environment.
- move toward paperless transactions and telecommuting
- Township responses including on-line payment options, a potential kiosk at the Pavillion, budget challenges, increased remote meetings, etc.
- Jackson reports that Internet access is an issue for underserved or less-connected segments of the population. Gebes reports that traditionally, Meridian is less impacted by the "digital divide"
- Wisinski suggests that restrictions could continue well in to June.
- Other?

EV Ready Ordinance: Sarver shared a draft EV-ready ordinance from East Lansing which requires commercial developments to include 1 charging station per 50 parking spots, with exceptions. It is suggested that residential construction might also include a simple requirement such as a 240 V. outlet in the garage. Sarver cites that it's far cheaper to install a charging station during new construction than renovate later: \$925 vs \$3550 from some estimates. It was suggested that a draft be forwarded to the Planning Commission for discussion, possibly along with other "green amenities" or green building recommendations.

Sustainable Building Committee: A “Sustainable Building Committee” was created to review opportunities (like EV-ready ordinance, incentives for green building, amenities) and offer guidance to the Planning Commission, staff, and builders/developers. Vadnais, Sarver, McConnell, and Boersema volunteered to participate.

Old Business:

Update/Report/ to the Board: The Environmental-focused meeting with the Board of Trustees was postponed. Deshaine and Wisinski expect that we might have the opportunity to present on the Climate Action, Climate Emergency Resolution, and PAH Ordinance in June.

Wetland Bank: Kielbaso reports that this will be discussed at the next Land Preservation Board meeting.

Staff Report: Harvey reported Earth Week activities included daily postings on social media (Green Meridian, Green Meridian Group, Harris Nature Center, and Parks & Rec.) and an ongoing Green Conversation & Coffee (Wednesday mornings at 9am) Note: Commissioner Krishnamurthy also created a Green Meridian Instagram page which needs co-hosts. Please share on these pages. The Green Team continues to meet over the summer to plan recycling event and discuss other recycling related topics. The Solar Pre-Bid meeting was put on hold for at least 45 days. There were a couple contractors who propose “no-cost” options (financed through energy savings). Harvey will discuss a new RFP to include this type of power purchase agreement option. Harvey welcomed Ken Lane, new Economic Development Director, who introduced himself.

Commission/Liaison/Workgroup Reports:

Tree Team: The Tree Team had a brief meeting before the E.C. meeting. We discussed the possibility of a smaller planting in the fall if we can firm up detail, leading to a larger event in the spring. Vadnais suggested applying for the Tree City USA designation and feels we have probably met most of the guidelines. McConnell also mentioned a potential collaboration with MSU Extension involving a demonstration/education project and possible support for maintenance of trees near Mt. Hope and Hagadorn (site of large PV solar array).

Planning: McConnell reports ongoing conversation about form-based codes and interest in possible inclusion of environmental considerations (including walkability, green infrastructure, etc.)

Land Preservation: No meetings have occurred but there will be a meeting this month.

Energy: Sarver reported on the MI Solar Series which continues for several weeks on Thursdays at 7pm. More at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MiSolarUsers/> The Energy Team is also discussing a Virtual Solar Home Tour in the Fall. Harvey will ask about uploading recordings to the Township Youtube channel. The Energy Team also supported forwarding the EV-ready ordinance to the E.C.

Brownfield: Deschaine reports that there may be an additional Brownfield redevelopment grants application for a site in Haslett.

Green Team: Harvey reports collaboration with an “Okemos Green Team” which is working

on green initiatives and curricula in local schools.

Transportation: McConnell reports discussion of crossing/walkability/bikability enhancements on M-43 near Park Lake and even under the railroad bridge.

Other: Deshaine added that the COVID-19 Pandemic adds momentum to the Climate Action Plan

Next Meeting: June 3rd at 7pm on Zoom

Adjournment

ENV COMMISSION APPLICATION: Tom FRAZIER

2. Occupation:

Legislative Liaison/lobbyist

3. Indicate areas not included above which may warrant special attention or study that are of interest to you:

Not answered

4. Describe education, experience or training which will assist you if appointed:

I have extensive experience in working on environmental legislation and issues (please see attached cover letter) at the federal, stat and local levels. In addition, I have a strong interest in this area and a desire to ensure environmental protection, pollution prevention, and the preservation of our natural areas and water bodies within the township and throughout the state.

5. Contact Information:

Name:	Tom Frazier	Occupation:	Legislative liaison/lobbyist
Place of Employment:	MI Townships Association	Home Address:	5861 Bois Ile, Haslett, MI 48840
Phone (days):	(517) 492-9239	Phone (evenings):	(517) 339-2731
Date:	01/07/2019		

6. Attach Resume and Cover Letter

Resume is attached [January 5.Meridiandocx.docx](#)

Thank you,
Meridian Township, MI

This is an automated message generated by the Vision Content Management System™. Please do not reply directly to this email.

January 5, 2019

Meridian Charter Township Board of Trustees
5151 Marsh Road
Okemos, MI 48864

Dear Meridian Township Board:

I am writing to seek appointment to the current vacancy on the Meridian Township Environmental Commission. This vacancy was recently brought to my attention by LeRoy Harvey, Environmental Programs Coordinator.

I would be interested in serving on the Environmental Commission due to a long history and interest in working on environmental issues. I currently serve as the legislative liaison with the Michigan Townships Association. In that capacity, one of my primary roles is to handle all environment related legislation impacting local units of government. This involves testifying before legislative committees on environmental issues, working with the Department of Environmental Quality on issues impacting local units of government, and serving on various workgroups dealing with environmental issues.

I also serve as MTA's representative on the Michigan Green Communities Network, which is a collaboration between the three local government organizations: MTA, the Michigan Municipal League and the Michigan Association of Counties along with several state departments. Part of this responsibility involves overseeing the Michigan Green Communities Challenge, a benchmarking program for environmental sustainability for which Meridian Township recently received a silver certificate for its efforts.

Previous experience related to environmental issues included handling issues dealing with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a staff person for former U.S. Senator Spencer Abraham. Additional involvement included serving as the deputy campaign manager for the 1998 Clean Michigan Initiative Proposal (Proposal C), which the voters passed to provide funding for brownfield redevelopment and other essential programs.

Further, I began my interest at a young age when I served on the board of directors for the Recyclers of Ingham, Eaton and Clinton Counties. One of the primary functions of this organization was to provide curbside recycling services for residents of East Lansing and drop off recycling services to other communities before many municipalities took on this role directly.

I feel that I have the background, experience, and most importantly the interest that would qualify me to serve on the Environmental Commission. I believe that I could provide valuable insight related to environmental protection, pollution protection, and the preservation of natural areas to the Commission and the Board.

Tom F,

January 5, 2019
Meridian Charter Township Board of Trustees
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I look forward to discussing my interest and experience in serving on the Environmental Commission at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Frazier
5861 Bois Ile Dr.
Haslett, MI 48840
(H) 517 339-2731
(O) 517 492-9239
(C) 517 927-4311
tom@michigantownships.org

Sustainable Development Study Group (draft summary 5/27/20)

Draft Summary: The Sustainable Development Study Group is exploring desirable changes to Meridian's Code of Ordinances that provide incentives, reduce barriers, and fill gaps in protecting our environment, while achieving economic and other social goals of the Township. These changes have been mentioned in the Township's Master Plan and Climate Sustainability Plan and some have also come up in other discussions related to green infrastructure, energy, form-based code, etc.

Two priorities areas include electric vehicle-readiness and solar readiness. East Lansing has made progress in this area in both an EV Charger Ordinance and a Green Building Policy.

The Study Group proposes further discussion at an Environmental Commission Meeting including a potential recommendation to seek input from the Township Board, Planning Commission, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Planning Staff, and others for potential modifications to policies, ordinances, etc..

LeRoy will contact Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council and TCRPC about their potential assistance with a Green Infrastructure Audit Tool. LeRoy will also check with East Lansing's Cathy DeShambo about current status of their Green Building Policy. Below are some addition references and resources.

Resources for Sustainable Development Study Group

Sustainable Development Code <https://sustainablecitycode.org/>

Best practices for development with concrete ways for communities to amend development codes and adapt to changes as they occur - for each of the 32 subchapters, the SDC makes 25-35 recommendations to amend development codes. The recommendations are categorized as “**removing obstacles**” (what in the existing code is harming your community), “**create incentives**” (where can we look to encourage developer, homeowner, and others’ actions), and **fill regulatory gaps** (what are the minimum standards your community will accept).

Meridian Climate Sustainability Plan <https://www.meridian.mi.us/home/showdocument?id=5286>

Green Infrastructure Audit A relatively simple self-assessment tool for communities looking to remove obstacles to

http://seagrant.wisc.edu/home/Portals/0/Files/Coastal%20Communities/Green_Infrastructure/DRAFT_GIworkbook_complete.pdf

Michigan Green Communities Network : <http://migreencommunities.com/technical-guide/>

A network of communities sharing information and success stories. Supported by MML, MTA, the State and others.

Example: http://migreencommunities.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/GrandRapids_Zoning_Case.pdf

"After developing a master plan that focused on the tenets of smart growth, Grand Rapids updated its zoning ordinance in 2008 to make implementing these principles easier and the new norm for development in the city. Using the LEED-ND checklist as a starting point, the new zoning ordinance addresses sustainability by emphasizing neighborhood design and connectivity. The ordinance takes a unique approach especially in regard to parking, renewable energy, landscaping, and natural buffers."

Meridian Master Plan: <https://www.meridian.mi.us/Home/ShowDocument?id=11699>

- Goal 1: Preserve and strengthen residential neighborhoods.
- Goal 2: Preserve open space and natural areas.
- Goal 3: Enhance the viability of Township businesses.
- Goal 4: Maintain and expand a diverse park system.
- Goal 5: Maintain essential public services.
- Goal 6: Provide and support an efficient, safe, and environmentally sensitive multi-modal transportation network.
- Goal 7: Promote efficient and sustainable growth practices.

Meridian Code of Ordinances: <https://www.ecode360.com/ME3541>

LEED 4.0 & 4.1

4.0 https://www.usgbc.org/sites/default/files/LEED%20v4%20BDC_07.25.19_current.pdf

4.1 <https://www.usgbc.org/leed/v41>

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission - <https://www.mitrpc.org/programs>

Other Individuals & Groups: Shanna Draheim, Cliff Walls, Harmony Gmazel, Mark Kieselbach/Peter Menser in Planning; Ken Lane in Economic Development; East Lansing Commission on the Environment;

Please Consider
Adopting a Tree
as part of
Meridian Township's
*Tree Planting
Initiative!*



Planting a tree is like planting a little bit of hope. The planting part is easy.....a tree uses carbon dioxide from the air plus water and light to make oxygen for the air and sugars to grow. So, simply plant it in a place that will get some water and light.

Location, location, location.....it takes some long term thinking, but consider the effect of the tree on its location when it's full grown. Pines and spruces provide year around shade. Trees with leaves provide summer shade and fall leaves. Leave some room between the tree and buildings.

Caring for a tree is also easy.....protect it from being eaten or mowed with a small cover of fencing while its young. After transplanting a tree, it spends its first year just growing roots and settling in. The following years you will see new growth and new hope.

Additional information can be found at: bit.ly/green-meridian

Good Luck with your Adopted Tree!



Tree Planting Initiative

Meridian Township is partnering with residents, its Environmental Commission, Ingham Conservation District, local schools, and others to plant trees. Planting a tree is a positive action each of us can take to support our community, our environment, our planet, and our future.

Consider all the benefits... (from releafmichigan.org)



Air

Trees improve air quality by producing oxygen and storing carbon.

- 100 trees remove 53 tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and 430 pounds of other pollutants every year



Water & Soil

Trees improve water quality by:

- Filtering pollutants
- Stabilizing soils
- Absorbing rainwater
- Reducing erosion



Energy

Trees reduce our energy usage by providing shade.

- The net cooling effect of a young, healthy tree is equivalent to 10 room size air conditioners operating 20 hours a day



Biodiversity

Trees support biodiversity by providing food, shelter and habitat for wildlife.

- A single tree can be home to hundreds of other forms of life, including mammals, birds, amphibians, insects and other plants



Economic Benefits

Trees improve the economic viability of communities. In tree-lined areas:

- Visitors spend 9 to 12% more in businesses
- Residential property values increase up to 37%



Trees Also:

- Reduce noise pollution
- Encourage neighborhood interactions
- Reduce graffiti and crime
- Reduce speeding in residential areas

Won't you join us by planting one or more trees in 2020? Spring and fall are the best times to plant. Learn more at bit.ly/green-meridian or call 517-853-4466.