



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, June 3, 2020 7:00 PM

PRESENT: Bill McConnell, John Sarver (Chair), Jim Kielbaso, Ned Jackson, Courtney Wisinski (Trustee Liaison), Courtney Boersema, Rose Vadnais (Vice Chair), Susan Masten
STAFF: LeRoy Harvey, Stephen Gebes, Samantha Diehl
GUESTS: Bob Chapman

Approval of Agenda: Approved

Green Theme: Solar Power Purchase Agreements were described in a presentation with Bob Chapman, formerly executive director of Michigan Interfaith Power and Light and Ecoworks of Detroit. Chapman is also the Board chair of Corner Shower & Laundry, serving homeless in Detroit.

Power Purchase Agreements are a way to achieve immediate cost reductions, energy savings, renewable energy goals, and greenhouse gas reduction. There are benefits to both building owners and investors. View the presentation at <http://meridianmi.swagit.com/play/06032020-828>. Slide show only at <https://www.meridian.mi.us/Home/ShowDocument?id=21082>

Approval of Minutes: Approved

New Business:

Environmental Commissioner Application: The Commission recommended the appointment of Tom Frazier (see application in tonight's packet). LeRoy will prepare a short memo from the EC/Chair Sarver to Supervisor Ron Styka.

Sustainability and Racial Equality: Vadnais suggested that it might be timely to address this issue. McConnell echoed this interest. Sarver suggests we put it on a future agenda. Wisinski knows the Governor's Environmental Justice Advocate and might be able to meet with us. Masten, Sarver, McConnell, and Vadnais would like to be part of that discussion. Masten also mentions connections between racial, economic, multi-family dwellings, and Covid-19. She will share data from [Ingham County Health Dept.](#)

Old Business

Presentation to the Board of Trustees: Wisinski expects that the E.C. may have the opportunity to present June 16th (Tuesday). We've discussed a presentation about PAH/Coal Tar Ban, a Climate Emergency Resolution, an update on our Climate Sustainability Plan, and other topics if they're "ready for prime time" such as the Tree Initiative, the Sustainable Building, and a commissioner appointment.

Staff Report: Harvey reported on his involvement with several groups including Green Network

Conversations (Wednesday mornings at 9am on [Zoom](#)), the Sustainable Building Study Group, the Green Team (recycling event coordination), the Energy Team, and the Tree Team. He's also working with (and looking for) neighborhood volunteers to help weed the Hidden River Rain Garden at Burcham. The fall recycling event will likely occur in the fall. The latest "[Green Gazette](#)" describes some additional updates. Subscribe [here](#).

Commission/Liaison/Workgroup Reports:

Brownfield Development Authority: Jackson reports progress on the Haslett Marathon Service Station/redevelopment (SE corner of Haslett and Marsh).

Energy: Sarver reported on the MI Solar Series which continues on Thursdays at 7pm. More at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MiSolarUsers/> Samantha Diehl has assisted in uploading to the HOMTV Youtube channel. Four of 5 stories feature Meridian residents and will hopefully be featured in a Virtual Solar Home Tour in the Fall.

Green Team: Krishnamurthy is involved with college entrance exams. (As a result, we may have another student opening on the Commission) Harvey reported the table at the Market staffed by Green Team members (Roger Eberhardt also helped with a handout). The Fall Recycling Event will be discussed and hopefully planned over the summer.

Land Preservation Advisory Board: Kielbaso reports meetings have been on hold. A meeting may occur next week. Park Naturalist, Emma Campbell will be working with the LPB on developing a Meridian Conservation Corp. There are openings on the LPAB. Apply at <https://www.meridian.mi.us/government/boards-and-commissions>

Planning: McConnell reports continuing discussion of form-based code (as applied to Grand River Corridor). There is interest in environmental considerations (including electric vehicle charging stations, green infrastructure, etc.) but it is not obvious how this can be integrated with FBC, except by providing waivers or incentives for certain environmental amenities. McConnell suggests the Sustainable Building Study Group may inform this discussion.

Sustainable Building Study Group: McConnell reports progress looking at state and national standards, tools, and models. [See report in June 3 E.C. Packet](#). Vadnais has also provided info on E. Lansing's Draft Sustainable Building Policy. (which currently mentions LEED-like standards for various types of development).

Cliff Walls (Tri-Co Regional Planning Commission/TCRPC) and Theresa Lark (Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council/MMEAC) have offered to assist with a [Green Infrastructure Audit](#) of Codes & Ordinances. Harvey will ask about staff time required. Harvey will draft a memo (from the EC), updating others and inviting the Board, the Planning Commission, and staff to comment on and assist with green building and green infrastructure code/ordinance review. McConnell suggests specificity and deadlines in the memo.

Transportation: McConnell expressed concern that the Transportation Commission is not meeting frequently enough. This is concerning in that MDOT is well underway in planning for M-43. This could significantly impact the connection between Phase I and Phase II of the InterUrban Pathway. He continues to voice this concern to the Board. Sarver suggests that anyone who has contact with the Transportation Commission to provide encouragement.

McConnell also reports a lot of information on www.meridian.mi.us about road projects.

Tree Team: Kielbaso reports the recent tree distribution at the Farmers Market. Harvey reports that the school planting plan at Haslett and Okemos is still in the works and remains a possibility at Chippewa, Haslett H.S., and Hiawatha.

Other: Masten asks about yard waste accumulation at Cornell and wonders what can be done.

Public Remarks: Stephen Gebes forwarded a couple calls. Connie Rahbany (HOMTV Intern) asks what inspired the tree planting project. Kielbaso reports the Board's decision to devote \$10,000 to the effort. Sarver mentioned the multiple health, economic, environmental benefits of tree planting. Harvey reports the "feel-good" nature of tree planting – a positive thing that engages citizens in a positive way. Wisinski agreed.

Timothy Hammond, 1801 N. Hagadorn, 48823 also called in asking about volunteering with the E.C. or other Boards. Stephen will forward contact info to the E.C.

Next Meeting: July 1st at 7pm on Zoom

Potential Agenda Items (in addition to regular agenda items)

- Environmental Justice Discussion
- Wetland Use Permit (Menards)
- Other

Adjournment at 8:30pm

Next Meetings for 2020

- *August 5 Community Room, Zoom
- September 2 Town Hall Room, Zoom or Municipal Building
- October 7 Town Hall Room, Zoom or Municipal Building
- *November 4 Community Room, Zoom or Main Fire Station
- December 2 Town Hall Room, Zoom or Municipal Building

*Note: Change of location