



AGENDA
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION –
REGULAR MEETING
April 2, 2025 7:00 PM

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. PRESENTATION
 - A. MI Solar for All
4. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS
5. COMMUNICATIONS
 - A. 2024 Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Report
6. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
7. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – MARCH 5, 2025 REGULAR MEETING
8. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. 2025 Green Grant Award Recommendation
 - B. 2024 Climate Sustainability Funds
9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
10. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
 - A. Staff (Update on Climate Sustainability Fund expenditures)
 - B. Liaisons:
 - Planning Commission
 - Land Preservation Advisory Board
 - Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
 - Parks Commission
 - C. Teams:
 - Energy Team
 - Green Team
 - Food & Composting Team
 - Green Burial Team
 - D. Haslett/Okemos High School
11. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC
12. OTHER MATTERS AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS
13. ADJOURNMENT

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Meridian Township Board by contacting: Township Manager Tim Dempsey, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 or 517.853.4258 - Ten Day Notice is Required.

Meeting Location: 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 Township Hall

Providing a safe and welcoming, sustainable, prime community.

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3.A

To: Environmental Commission

From: Jack Hughes, Project Engineer

Date: March 28, 2025

Re: MI Solar for All Presentation

A staff member from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) will be coming to present to the Commission about the MI Solar for All program.

Should you wish to learn more about the program, [please visit their website by clicking here](#).



**GREATER LANSING
REGIONAL COMMITTEE**
FOR STORMWATER MANAGEMENT
www.mywatersheds.org

www.mywatersheds.org

ANNUAL REPORT

2024

Grand River Photo Courtesy Pure Michigan

Guiding the implementation of stormwater programs for 17 communities within the Grand River, the Red Cedar River, and the Looking Glass River watersheds since 1999.

LETTER FROM OUR CHAIR

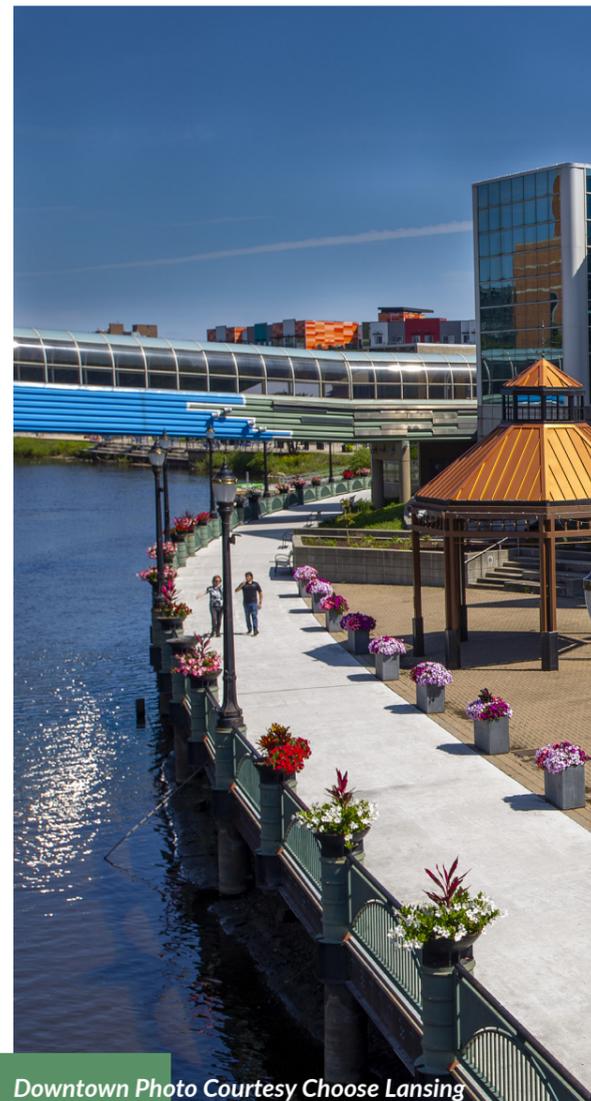
GLRC communities assessed the effectiveness of their efforts to engage citizens in actions to improve watershed health in 2024. To truly gauge the success of our collaborative efforts to improve local water quality, the GLRC conducted its fourth regional water survey of residents throughout Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties. The Greater Lansing Regional Water Quality Education Survey provided valuable feedback on residents' understanding of and involvement in watershed protection efforts in the tri-county region.

The scientifically valid survey results allowed the GLRC to update their Public Education Plan and Public Participation Plan with future goals. These guiding documents are part of the six minimum control measures each GLRC community must implement to obtain their stormwater permits and control polluted runoff.

In addition to public education and involvement measures, members also worked to improve pollution prevention and good housekeeping at their municipal operations. Communities participated in the 2024 National Salt Symposium, discovering the impacts of chloride and the latest research in salt reduction methods. Many members were also able to participate in "Smart Salting" certification trainings for roads, parking lots, and sidewalks. Staff from member communities were also trained in illicit discharge detection and elimination in 2024, another requirement of the stormwater permit. Combined with the educational campaigns conducted and new educational brochures GLRC produced this past year, members moved the needle

forward to improve the quality of our lakes, rivers, and streams. Read on to learn more and use our website and social media tools to discover simple steps you can take to reduce the discharge of pollutants in our waterways.

Paul C. Pratt
Ingham County Deputy Drain Commissioner
GLRC Chair



Downtown Photo Courtesy Choose Lansing

ROLE OF THE GLRC

The Greater Lansing Regional Committee for Stormwater Management (GLRC) is a guiding body comprised of regulated Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) communities within the Greater Lansing region of Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties.

ABOUT US

The GLRC was established in 1999 to guide the implementation of the stormwater program for participating communities within the Red Cedar River, Grand River, and Looking Glass River watersheds. The GLRC is administered by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission.

WHAT IS AN MS4?

MS4 communities capture runoff water in catch basins and pipes that lead directly to rivers, streams, and lakes without being processed at a treatment plant. Oil, pet waste, and other pollutants "hitch a ride" with runoff water, enter the storm system, and accumulate in waterbodies.

To limit pollution, the Environmental Protection Agency requires operators of MS4s in urbanized areas to implement programs and practices to control polluted stormwater runoff through the use of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, or NPDES permits. Members work collaboratively on regional issues to meet permit requirements.

GLRC MEMBERS

Clinton County
Clinton County Road Commission
Delhi Charter Township
Delta Charter Township
DeWitt Charter Township
City of DeWitt
City of East Lansing
Eaton County
City of Grand Ledge
Ingham County
Lansing Charter Township
Lansing School District
City of Lansing
City of Mason
Meridian Township
Michigan State University
Waverly Community Schools



Looking Glass River

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To prevent stormwater pollution and improve the health of watersheds in Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties, GLRC members work to meet the six “minimum control measures” as part of their NPDES permit, with a special focus on regional outreach and education. The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (Tri-County) offers program staff, administrative, and financial support, with GLRC members contributing annual dues. The following committees coordinate and do the work necessary to ensure GLRC maintains compliance with permit requirements.

SIX MINIMUM MEASURES

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/INVOLVEMENT

Providing opportunities for citizen participation in program development and implementation, including effectively publicizing public hearings and/or encouraging citizen representatives on a stormwater management panel.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Distributing educational materials and performing outreach to inform citizens about the impacts polluting stormwater runoff discharges can have on water quality.

ILLICIT DISCHARGE DETECTION & ELIMINATION

Developing and implementing a plan to detect and eliminate illicit discharges to the storm sewer system. Activities include developing a system map and informing communities about hazards associated with illegal discharges and improper disposal of waste.

CONSTRUCTION SITE RUNOFF CONTROL

Developing, implementing, and enforcing an erosion and sediment control program for construction activities that disturb one or more acres of land. Controls could include silt fences and temporary stormwater detention ponds.

POST-CONSTRUCTION RUNOFF CONTROL

Developing, implementing, and enforcing a program to address discharges of post-construction stormwater runoff from new development and redevelopment areas. Applicable controls could include preventative actions such as protecting sensitive areas or the use of structural BMPs such as grassed swales or porous pavement.

POLLUTION PREVENTION/GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

Developing and implementing a program with the goal of preventing or reducing pollutant runoff from municipal operations. The program must include municipal staff training on pollution prevention measures and techniques, such as regular street sweeping, reduction in the use of pesticides or street salt, or frequent catch basin cleaning.

Public Education Plan (PEP) Committee

Guides the overall public education, participation, outreach, and involvement process for the stormwater program. This effort includes evaluation and assessment of public knowledge and activities.

Illicit Discharge Elimination Program (IDEP) Committee

Guides implementation of the program, mapping guidelines, field-sampling protocols, and how the watershed will be monitored for progress. The IDEP Committee has reviewed pet waste management, septic tank maintenance issues, IDEP ordinances, and provided staff training.

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Committee

Makes recommendations regarding the Grand River and Red Cedar River E. coli TMDL requirements. The Committee provides education and updates to GLRC members to assist in the development and implementation of TMDL programs.

2024 REPORT BY THE NUMBERS

Fiscal Year 2024 Category	FY 2024 Expenses
Tri-County Administrative Cost and Support Staff	\$119,510
Illicit Discharge Elimination Plan (IDEP) Committee	\$107
Public Education Plan (PEP) Committee	\$9,865
Association Memberships	\$595
Printing and Travel	\$3,640
Water Quality Education Survey	\$26,600
Total	\$160,317



GLRC ADMINISTRATION 2024

17 Community Members	13 Committee Meetings	21 Outreach Events
IMPACT		
1,592 Engagements with the Public	1,361 Augmented Reality Sandbox Interactions	2,305 Educational Materials Distributed

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



The GLRC's Augmented Reality Sandbox reached nearly 1,400 students through presentations while being hosted at the East Lansing Public Library, MSU Science Festival, and Leslie Middle School.

Through its Public Education Plan, the GLRC helps encourage changes in behavior to protect our surface waters by engaging with tri-county residents.



01. Organic Social Media

In 2024, the GLRC reached over 22,496 people organically through its Facebook page and an additional 4,611 through Instagram and X. GLRC has 1,423 followers on Facebook, 382 on X, and 77 on Instagram, which debuted in 2023.

02. Paid Social Media

Paid social media campaigns via Meta with educational videos were conducted on where to recycle household hazardous waste, keeping fertilizer and yard waste away from storm drains, and how to protect your septic system. Impressions on these three campaigns totaled over 100,400.

03. Quarterly Newsletter

New this year, GLRC created a digital version of its quarterly newsletter. The first two issues had open rates of 42% and 44%, and included resources, tips on how to be Stormwater Smart, and community watershed events that engage citizens.

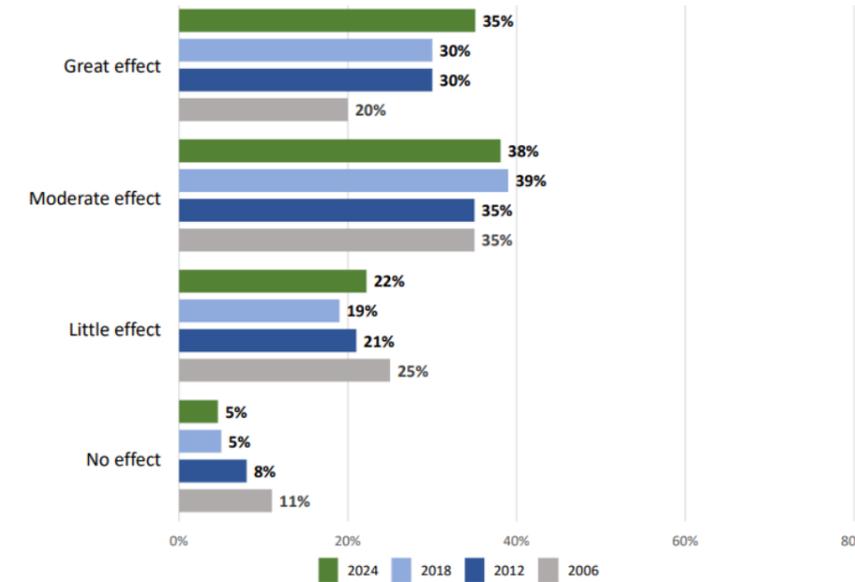
04. Outreach Events

Over 2,300 educational materials on reducing stormwater pollution were distributed at 21 outreach events like the Quiet Adventures Symposium, MSU Science Festival, Green Fairs, Arbor Days, Conservation Carnival, Party for the Planet, Clinton County Youth Day, and Red Cedar River Days.

REGIONAL WATER QUALITY SURVEY

PERSONAL ACTIONS AFFECT WATER QUALITY

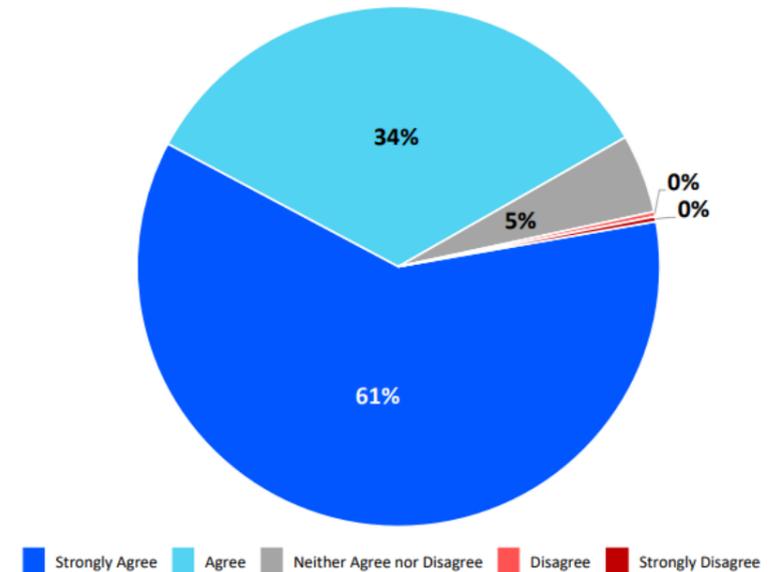
To maintain MS4 permit compliance, communities must assess their Public Education Plan and evaluate the effectiveness of their outreach efforts. The GLRC hired professionals to conduct its fourth scientifically valid survey of 603 residents within the Looking Glass, Grand, and Red Cedar River watersheds. View the results at mywatersheds.org/water-quality-surveys.



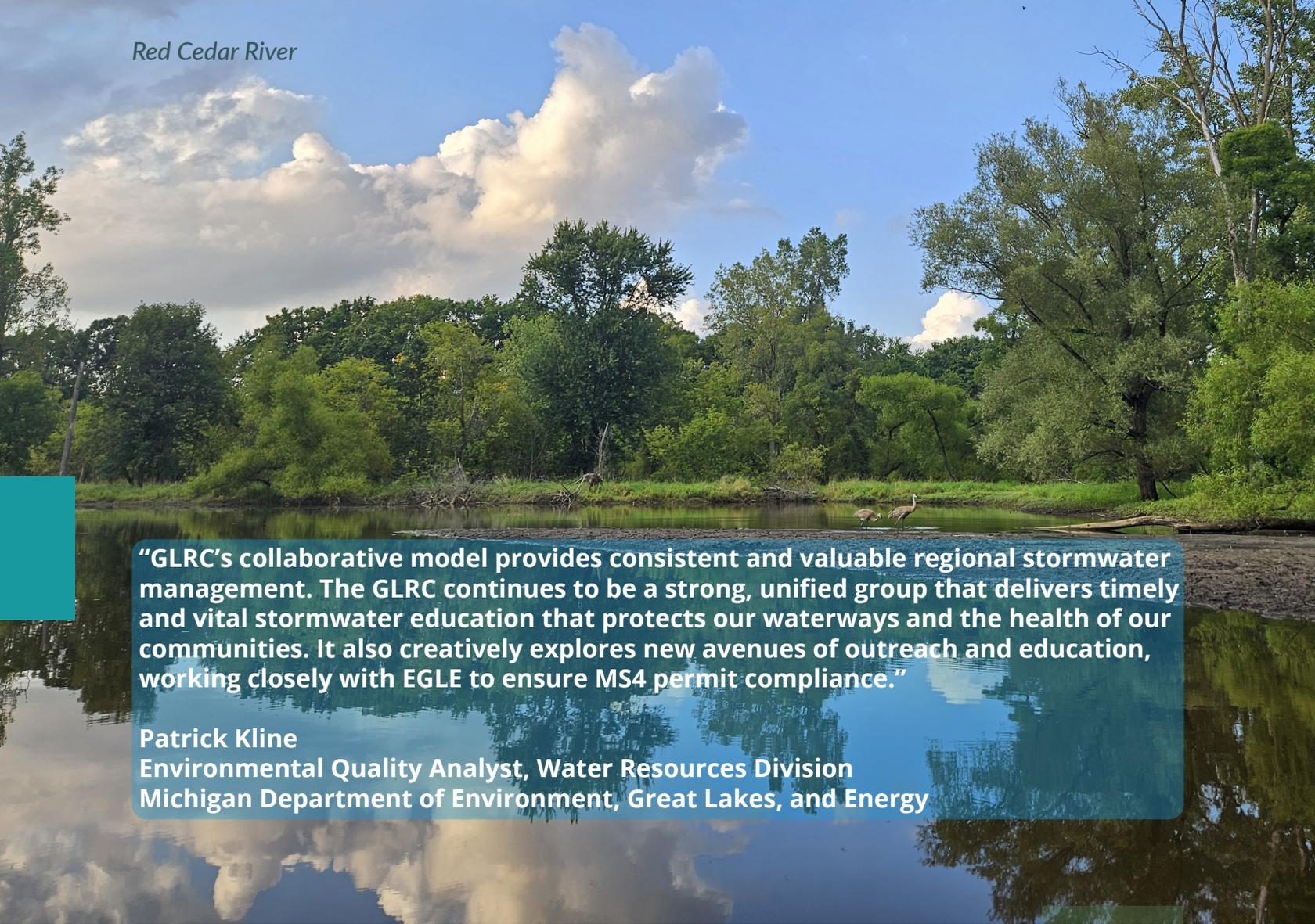
Q. 3 How much do you think the way you maintain your home (e.g., lawn care, trash disposal, pet care) affects the quality of water in lakes in streams in the community where you live?

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

- 95% of residents are concerned about the pollution in waterways.
- 45% of residents or someone in their households have acted to protect water resources in the past five years.
- 69% of residents think stormwater goes directly to lakes and streams without treatment.
- 45% of residents say they live in a watershed.
- 29% of residents felt stormwater runoff contributed most to water pollution, while 32% indicated factories and 16% agricultural operations.



Q. 6 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: "The quality of local streams and rivers where I live affects the Great Lakes."



“GLRC’s collaborative model provides consistent and valuable regional stormwater management. The GLRC continues to be a strong, unified group that delivers timely and vital stormwater education that protects our waterways and the health of our communities. It also creatively explores new avenues of outreach and education, working closely with EGLE to ensure MS4 permit compliance.”

**Patrick Kline
Environmental Quality Analyst, Water Resources Division
Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy**

CONNECT WITH US

This report was produced by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. Follow the GLRC and Tri-County online for updates on regional planning and stormwater management!



GLRC4Stormwater
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MyWatersheds



MyWatersheds
Tri-County Regional Planning Commission



mywatersheds.org
mitcrpc.org

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION -**DRAFT**-
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
517.853.4000, Township Hall Room
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2025, 7:00PM

PRESENT: Harrison Batten, Laura Belisle, Tom Frazier, Yu Man Lee, Nickolas Lentz, Bill McConnell, Richard Miksicek, Cynthia Peterson, and John Sarver

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Dan Opsommer, Deputy Township Manager
Jack Hughes, Project Engineer

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair McConnell called the February 5, 2025, Township Environmental Commission meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Deputy Manager Opsommer called the roll of the Commission.

Commissioner Batten, Commissioner Belisle, Commissioner Frazier, Commissioner Lee, Trustee Lentz, Chair McConnell, Commissioner Miksicek, Commissioner Peterson, and Commissioner Sarver present at 7:01 p.m.

3. PRESENTATION

None

4. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No public comment.

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair McConnell proposed to amend the agenda by adding agenda item 6.D Discussion of Future Presentations ideas.

Without objection, the agenda, as amended, was approved unanimously.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Financial Overview of the Green Grants, 2021-2024

Deputy Manger Opsommer presented a spreadsheet that provided a historical overview of all Green Grant awards from 2021-2024, including:

- Recipient
- Year of Award

- Award Amount
- Amount Paid
- Remaining Funds
- Project Status

The spreadsheet also provided the Commission with a cumulative table by year.

Trustee Lentz asked what timelines the award recipients are under with the grant. Deputy Manager Opsommer shared that the grant agreement requires recipients to complete their project by December 30 of the award year and that grant recipients have the ability to request extensions when necessary.

Commissioner Miksicek asked if there would be preference given to school districts applying if the total amount of funds requested from all applicants exceeds the total annual funding.

Chair McConnell suggested that the Commission transition to agenda item 6.B given that the discussion is more germane to this agenda item.

B. 2025 Green Grants

Deputy Manager Opsommer referenced that the 2024 Green Grant materials were in the Commissions packet and suggests that the Commission weigh in on the following subjects:

- What organizations should be eligible? Are there any types of organizations that the Commission believes should not be eligible?
- What types of projects should be eligible?
- Should we score projects using specific criteria? Should we weight certain criteria higher than others, such as weight environmental or sustainability criteria higher than community place making criteria?

Chair McConnell offered a fourth subject for the Commission's consideration: Do we want to provide funding guidance to applicants?

Commissioner Sarver stated the first year the major priority was to fund projects associated with school districts and that this opportunity was expanded in the second and future years. Commissioner Sarver asked if there has been any burden on staff to administer the Green Grant program and if there are any legal issue in terms of what types of organizations can receive funding.

Deputy Manager Opsommer stated that the Township's only legal constraint in terms of awarding grants is that the grant recipient must expend those funds to serve a public purpose. For example, a grant to install a welcome to Haslett sign in the Haslett Road right-of-way, does serve a public purpose.

Commissioner Sarver stated that he had heard that the Township Board would like to have more interaction with homeowners associations (HOA) and inquired what the intent was behind that?

Trustee Lentz stated that the Township Board heard from many residents that they didn't feel like the Township Board was reaching them where they are at. HOAs are neighborhood

focused and serve as a conduit for the Township to engage residents at a neighborhood focus.

Deputy Manager Opsommer stated that the administration of the Green Grants is not a burden on Township staff.

Deputy Manager Opsommer also shared that many HOAs in the Township have open space parcels due to the Township's zoning ordinance, specifically the PUD portion of the zoning ordinance. These open space parcels can be negatively impacted by the spread of invasive species, just as the Township's land preserve can be. Therefore, allowing HOAs to apply for Green Grants does make sense from the vantage point that HOAs have to steward open space acreage.

Chair McConnell asked Commissioner Sarver how he believes the evaluation of the grant applications has evolved over time and that his understanding is that the Green Grant Committee meets to review all applications, develops scoring, and then makes a recommendation to the Environmental Commission.

Commissioner Sarver stated that three scoring criteria have historically been used: environmental impact, outreach to the community, and is there a viable plan for the project. Outreach to the community is important because these grants are often funding small projects that can be used as a demonstration to the larger community. Overall, Commissioner Sarver has used broad criteria when scoring applications. There haven't been that many applications in prior years, which has allowed the Environmental Commission from having to not fund projects due to a lack of available funds.

Commissioner Belisle asked how many projects have not been awarded funding in prior years.

Commissioner Sarver stated he is not aware of any applicants who have not been awarded funding in prior years. Commissioner Sarver stated that Township staff have helped applicants submit reasonable proposals to avoid situations such as this.

Commissioner Sarver speculated that demand for these grants could increase over time as the community becomes more aware of this opportunity.

Chair McConnell asked how much volunteer labor and in-kind donations, such as plants, have been factored into the Green Grant Committee's decision-making.

Commissioner Sarver stated that nearly all of these projects have had volunteer labor and/or donated materials involved.

Commissioner Frazier noted that the materials do state that match funding, volunteer labor, and in-kind donations are encouraged.

Commissioner Lee suggested that we consider encourage applicants to bring forward projects that align with Meridian Township's 2023 Climate Sustainability Plan.

Chair McConnell stated that he is skeptical of ranked scoring criteria.

Chair McConnell asked who would be willing to serve on a small subcommittee to bring forward a proposal for changes to the Green Grant materials.

Chair McConnell asked Township staff for a recommendation on timelines.

Deputy Manager Opsommer suggested a timeline of getting the grant materials released to the public in about 2 weeks so that applications could be due by the end of March. Township staff and the Green Grant Committee could then meet to review and score the applications, and bring a full recommendation to the Environmental Commission at their April meeting.

Commissioner Sarver and Commissioner Miksicek offered to serve on the subcommittee to update the grant application, instructions and agreement.

Chair McConnell thanked Commissioner Sarver and Commissioner Miksicek for serving on the 2025 Green Grant Committee.

Deputy Manager Opsommer stated that Township staff would try to maximize the number of days that the public is able to apply.

Commissioner Lee asked if we want to list the average size of previous awards.

Deputy Manager Opsommer stated the Committee could look at listing suggested amounts for applicants to apply for based on the historical data.

Deputy Manager Opsommer also suggested that the Committee could look at asking applicants to share more information regarding in-kind donations and volunteer labor hours so that could be quantified a little more in the future.

C. Resolution in Support of Meridian Township's FY26 CDS Grant Application

Project Engineer Hughes gave the Commission an overview of the FY26 CDS Grant opportunity through Senator Gary Peters' Office, the nine projects that the Township evaluated, and an overview of the solar concept plan the Township has developed for the Public Safety Building, which is being recommended as the project that the Township applies to receive grant funding for.

The proposed project for which the Township is seeking funding is the addition of solar arrays to the roof of the Public Safety Building and the parking lot to the north of this building. This project would include a 204.22 kilowatt system, producing 244,677 kilowatt-hours annually. Upon completion of this project, we estimate that we would be able to produce just over 100% of the annual energy consumption of the Public Safety Building.

This project would tie into the existing Public Safety Building solar infrastructure, which is connected to the electrical grid, so we can supply the grid when we produce more energy than we consume.

Commissioner Sarver shared that the Energy Team is aware of this grant opportunity and is thrilled. Commissioner Sarver stated that the fact that Township has adopted a Climate Sustainability Plan that sets a goal of obtaining 50% of electricity used for Township operations from renewable energy sources by 2025 and 100% by 2035 may help us with our grant application.

Trustee Lentz shared the Township Board did support a similar resolution on March 4. Trustee Lentz also stated that Township staff had presented the Township Board with an update on where we currently stand as it relates to those goals. Trustee Lentz stated that the

data shows that we are currently at 28 percent of our energy coming from renewable resources. This, if approved, would put us at about 53%, only about 1 years behind our goal for obtaining 50% of electricity used for Township operations from renewable energy sources by 2025.

Commissioner Miksicek as if the Township has identified funds for the 50 percent match that is required for this grant.

Deputy Manager Opsommer shared that he had spoken to the Township Manager and the Township is prepared to provide the matching funds through the Township's General Fund.

Deputy Manager Opsommer asked that the Commission amend the third whereas clause so that it conforms to the version of the resolution that the Township Board adopted on March 4.

Chair McConnell adopted the amendment without objection.

The Resolution in Support of Meridian Township's FY26 CDS Grant Application was approved unanimously.

D. Discussion of Future Presentations

Chair McConnell stated that he has some future presentations he would like to propose:

1. Food Rescue, a local nonprofit that has expressed a desire in presenting in the past
2. Presentation that overviews Township wetland data
3. A presentation from the Ingham County Drain Commissioner's Office regarding the Okemos Consolidated Drain Project, past projects, and future projects
4. 2025 Green Grant recipients for project updates

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

8. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Staff

Deputy Manager Opsommer updated the Commission on the staffing transition the Township is currently working on for the Commission.

Due to an upcoming retirement, the Commission will be staffed by Project Engineer Jack Hughes moving forward. Deputy Manager Opsommer stated that he would be assisting as the Township makes the transition.

The Commission and staff also discussed future agenda items to discuss the current status and future uses of the remaining Climate Sustainability funding.

B. Liaisons

Chair McConnell shared that the Planning Commission was working on modernizing our Township's parking schedule in the Zoning Ordinance.

Commissioner Lee stated that the Land Preservation Advisory Board has not met since her most recent report.

Commissioner Sarver shared that there are currently no updates for the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority.

Chair McConnell noted that he is working to establish liaisons with the Park Commission. Commissioner Miksicek stated he is available to serve as the liaison.

The Commissioners discussed the benefits of the Joint Meeting of the Township's Boards and Commissions and how wonderful it is to see the engagement we have across the community.

C. Teams

Commissioner Sarver stated that he has sent on the Energy Team items from the Climate Sustainability Plan to the appropriate Township staff.

Commissioner Sarver shared that there would be an upcoming Solarize Meridian meeting held on April 9 from 6:30-8 p.m. at Henry's Place in Okemos. This event was added to the Township's website.

Commissioner Frazier stated that the upcoming Farmer's Market would include a Green Team event that would include interactive components for children.

Commissioner Frazier shared that the Township's Spring Recycling event would be held on Saturday, April 26.

Commissioner Frazier stated that the Green Team meets on the second Thursday at 4 p.m. at Schuler's Book Store in the Meridian Mall.

No update from the Food & Composting Team.

Commissioner Frazier stated that the Green Burial Team was working to finalize a presentation for the Township Board.

D. Haslett/Okemos High School

Commissioner Batten stated that they are working to schedule a field trip to the East Lansing Recycling Center.

Commissioner Batten also shared that they are pursuing a grant rechargeable batteries for classroom supplies and working to help find volunteers for the upcoming Green Team event.

Commissioner Batten stated that Haslett Key Club is working to obtain a grant to renovate the courtyard at Haslett High School.

E. Other

No reports.

9. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No public comment.

10. OTHER MATTERS AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Trustee Lentz shared that the Township Board approved a resolution in support of another grant that the Township is pursuing. The grant application is to secure funding to prospectively construct a trailhead for the MSU to Lake Lansing Trail at 5280 Okemos Road, a Township-owned property adjacent to the entrance to Nancy Moore Park.

Commissioner Batten shared that he would be presenting at the Michigan Science Teacher Association's event on Friday.

Chair McConnell shared an excerpt of an email he sent to the Township Supervisor as he reflected on all of the positive from the Joint Meeting of the Township's Board and Commissions.

11. Approval of the Minutes

Commissioner Frazier noted two corrections to the February 5, 2025 meeting minutes.

Without objection, the minutes of the February 5, 2025 meeting, as amended, were approved unanimously.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:26 pm.



To: Environmental Commission

**From: Dan Opsommer, Deputy Township Manager
Director of Public Works and Engineering**

Date: March 28, 2025

Re: 2025 Green Grant Award Recommendation

As we discussed at the Commission’s March meeting, the 2025 Green Grant Committee will convene on March 31 or April 1 to review the grants received by the March 30 5 p.m. deadline to put together an award recommendation for the Environmental Commission. Township staff will update the packet for the April 2, 2025 meeting once the Committee has met and formalized their recommendation.

As we also discussed at the Commission’s March meeting, we may not receive enough applications during the first application window to allocate the full \$20,000 in funding for the 2025 Green Grant program. If this proves to be the case, we may wish to open a second application window in April. We can discuss this during the April meeting once we have more information.

We look forward to discussing this in greater detail with the Environmental Commission.

Future Attachments:

1. 2025 Green Grant Committee Recommendation
2. 2025 Green Grant Applications



To: Environmental Commission

**From: Dan Opsommer, Deputy Township Manager
Director of Public Works and Engineering**

Date: March 28, 2025

Re: 2024 Climate Sustainability Funds

In the 2024 Township Budget, the Township Board allocated \$30,000 in funding for climate sustainability purposes. This was the first such appropriation in a Township Budget. There was no specific project that this funding was appropriated for. Rather, it was essentially the Township Board expressing a desire for Township staff and the Environmental Commission to brainstorm projects that are focused on climate sustainability.

In 2024, the Township invested \$2,204.58 of the Climate Sustainability Funds to help support the Gleaning Project at the Farmer’s Market. This was to acquire a table, canopy and other resources for the Gleaning Project. The Township also invested \$2,873 for wetland education signage.

Having expended \$5,077.58 of the available \$30,000, we currently have \$24,922.42 remaining in Climate Sustainability funds.

The purpose of this agenda item is to begin discussions on how to invest the remaining 2024 Climate Sustainability funds. Commissioners should feel free to bring forward ideas that they may have in mind. We can also begin discussion on what process we would like to establish for selecting project/s.

Township staff have a project that we would like to offer up for your consideration. Even if this project is not something that the Environmental Commission wishes to pursue, we thought this would help get the Commissioners thinking about prospective projects:

Conceptual Marshall Park East Bioswale Project: I want to preface this conceptual project by stating that we have not formally approached the Township Park Commission to solicit their input yet. If the Environmental Commission has an interest in pursuing this project, we will make that our first step in the process. Deputy Manager Opsommer has had an initial preliminary discussion re: this conceptual project with Parks Director Courtney Wisinski.

The east end of Marshall Park and the surrounding area suffers from significant flooding during the spring thaw and major storm events. This stormwater floods Columbia St, Marshall Park, surrounding private property, etc.

The Township would like to help address these flooding issues as we have land (i.e. Marshall Park) that make it possible for us to contribute toward the solution. I want to be clear that the flooding extends beyond the park property, so we cannot address all of the flooding issues on the park property. However, we likely can help alleviate some of the flooding.

Memo to Environmental Commission
March 28, 2025
Re: 2024 Climate Sustainability Funds

Conceptually, Township staff believe it could possibly be viable to construct bioswales (or a similar alternative) along the east property line of Marshall Park and in the southeast corner of Marshall Park to properly manage stormwater, treat it, and outlet it through the existing storm drains at the Columbia St/Lake St intersection.

The bioswale would also serve to help beautify the east end and/or southeast corner of the park. There is high ground water in this area, so it is possible that a bioswale may not be viable. This will require additional investigation, which we would have our engineering firm assist us with.

This project would likely exceed the Climate Sustainability funding we have available. However, the Township could cover the remaining cost with the Local Road Program as we are looking to resurface the streets in this neighborhood in the future, but we would like to improve the existing drainage issues in this area before doing so. The Township would ordinarily simply perform ditch cleanout to create detention areas for a Local Road Program project. However, if the climate sustainability funds were also put forth to help support this project, we could pursue bioswales or a similar alternative to naturally filter/treat the stormwater.

Conceptually, the project area could be:

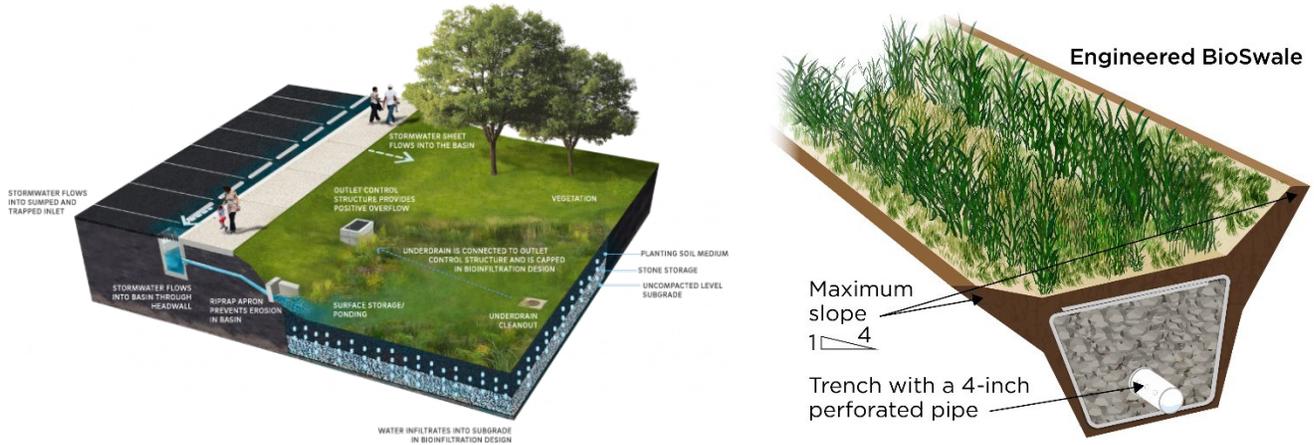


We would not necessarily use this entire area. That would be dependent upon Park Commission and Park Department input, community input, stormwater runoff calculations, and other factors.

Memo to Environmental Commission
March 28, 2025
Re: 2024 Climate Sustainability Funds

The Township has an existing perforated drain tile in the southeast corner of Marshall Park, but it is not sufficient to handle the spring thaw or severe storm events.

For those who may be unfamiliar with bioswales, here are two conceptual designs:



The benefits of a bioswale on water quality include:

- Protects local waterways from stormwater pollutants
- Creates habitat for wildlife, including birds and butterflies,
- Reduces non-point pollution by filtering stormwater
- Reduces standing water (puddles) that can attract mosquitoes
- Creates colorful gardens with a variety of flowers and plants year round
- Requires low maintenance after establishment

[Please click here for additional information regarding the benefits of bioswales from MSU Extension.](#)

We offer this up as a prospective project that the Environmental Commission might wish to pursue. If the Commission wishes to explore this project further, we would recommend the following next steps:

1. Obtaining initial input from the Township Park Commission and Park Department staff
2. An alternative analysis and rough cost estimates for how to help alleviate the flooding

Again, the purpose of this agenda item is to begin discussions on how to invest the remaining 2024 Climate Sustainability funds. Commissioners should feel free to bring forward ideas that they may have in mind. We can also begin discussion on what process we would like to establish for selecting project/s.