



**AGENDA**  
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
FEBRUARY 3, 2021 7 pm

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ZOOM MEETING: ID: **867 3903 8953** Password: **5151**

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. GREEN THEME: **Using Social Media for Environmental Change**  
Kelly Schalter, Michigan Recycling Coalition, Program Manager of Recycle, MI
3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES
5. PUBLIC REMARKS
6. NEW BUSINESS
7. OLD BUSINESS
  - A. Green Infrastructure Grants for Schools
  - B. Tree City Update
  - C. Other
8. CHAIR'S REPORT
9. STAFF REPORT
10. WORKGROUP REPORTS & DISCUSSIONS
  - A. Environmental Justice
  - B. Sustainable Development
11. Commission, Committee, and Trustee Reports
  - A. Board of Trustees
  - B. Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
  - C. Energy Team
  - D. Green Team
  - E. Land Preservation Advisory Board
  - F. MI Township Association (MTA) or MI Municipal League (MML)
  - G. Planning Commission
  - H. Transportation Commission
12. PUBLIC REMARKS
13. ADJOURNMENT



## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

WEDNESDAY, January 6, 2021 7:00 PM

**PRESENT:** Tom Frazier, Ned Jackson, Jim Kielbaso, Bill McConnell, John Sarver (Chair), Rose Vadnais (Vice Chair), Courtney Wisinski (Trustee Liaison), Luca Wisinski

**STAFF:** LeRoy Harvey, Stephen Gebes, Samantha Diehl

**GUESTS:** Vicki Morrone, John Esser, Cliff Walls (Tri-County Regional Planning Commission)

**Approval of Agenda:** Commissioner Jackson moved to approve the Agenda. Supported by Commissioner Vadnais. Motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes:** Commissioner Jackson moved to approve the Minutes. Supported by Commissioner Wisinski. Motion carried unanimously.

**Public Remarks:** Esser described a public service announcement (audio) which was played for the group, "Pick up the Poop" provides an entertaining and "palatable" way to present an important pollution prevention message. Esser thanked Commissioner Jackson and Cliff Walls for help crafting the lyrics. Listen on

[http://www.homtv.net/index\\_homtv.asp?view=programming&page=meetings&id=environmental-commission](http://www.homtv.net/index_homtv.asp?view=programming&page=meetings&id=environmental-commission)

## NEW BUSINESS

**Elections:** Chair Sarver invited nominations for Chair and Vice Chair. Commissioner Jackson nominated the existing officers for another year. Commissioner Kielbaso seconded. Approved unanimously.

**Meeting Schedule for 2021:** Approved unanimously. (1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month)

February 3  
March 3  
April 7  
May 5  
June 2  
July 7  
August 4  
September 1  
October 6  
November 3  
December 1

**Goals for 2021:** Harvey shared a draft and invited Commissioners to offer suggestions and will put on the agenda for the next meeting. Commissioner Kielbaso moved to adopt the list of goals. Commissioner Frazier seconded. Unanimously approved.

### Goals for 2021

1. Assist with Green Grants for Schools
2. Expand the Green Neighbor Network
3. Achieve Tree City USA Designation
4. Implement Climate Action Plan
  - Help codify Green Infrastructure Audit recommendations
  - Continue Environmental Review and Changes to policies and procedures
  - Support continued progress on renewable and efficiency improvements
  - Collaborate other regional partners on climate action
5. Ongoing
  - Continue Study Groups on Environmental Justice and other topics
  - Host Green Theme Presentations
  - Review Wetland Permits
  - Continue Environmental Stewardship Awards
  - Communicate with other Commissions, Boards, Trustees, and the Public

## **7. OLD BUSINESS**

**Green Infrastructure Audit & Related Environmental Review** Walls mentioned that the GLRC Ordinance Committee will likely assist in a regional Green Infrastructure guidance manual with boilerplate language which can replace outdated codes. Walls also mentioned that the Wisconsin Sea Grant project will also be coming out with some code samples. This will save the Township and many other local units of government a lot of time and money. Trustee Wisinski asked about the potential to include green infrastructure in the Form-based code revisions. Harvey suggests keeping the momentum going. Sarver hopes that staff or commissioners might help on the committee. Walls mentions that the Ordinance Committee may also take up the coal tar sealant ban as well. He doesn't feel that the Committee will not slow our effort. Frazier asked about a timeline for the manual. Walls mentioned that the Wisconsin Sea Grant project may affect the timeline. Walls will encourage the Committee to focus on the "low hanging fruit" such as landscaping standards. He hopes that there will be something in 4-6 months. Harvey mentioned keeping the momentum through a focus on green infrastructure. Jackson thanked Walls for rearranging his schedule to join us tonight.

### **Green Infrastructure Grants**

Harvey has received one inquiry from Montessori Radmor. HOMTV has distributed a press release. Some contact has been made with local schools. We are asking for letters of interest by Jan 15 with proposals by Mar 15. Harvey sent out the project description in an email. Trustee Wisinski mentioned an interest in giving people ideas and assistance because teachers and students are so overwhelmed with on-line classes. Commissioner Vadnais suggested reaching out to parents and posting on social media. Commissioner Wisinski offered to reach out to the Earth Club for ideas and possibly other including Ben Holland.

### **Tree City Update**

Vadnais mentioned that a big question is whether or not our existing ordinance will suffice. A requirement of the State is tree care, a designated department, etc. She's been discussing with

Treasurer Deschaine who feel that this is a good time to pursue this. Trustee Wisinski feels that the Board is always willing and eager to hear from the Environmental Commission. Vadnais will set up a meeting to discuss further.

### **Green Neighbor Network**

Harvey mentioned a kick-off at a future Wednesday Dialogue (Jan 27 at 9am). He reiterated a desire to share information directly to residents who are connected to Facebook and other neighborhood-level news and social media sites. There are 27 “Green Neighbors” signed up. Two email lists are envisioned – one for anyone to post and the other with less-frequent posts 1-4 email per month. Commissioner Jackson asked about the connection between this and NextDoor. Sarver responded that the Green Neighbors will use tools like this. There will also be future discussion about how to coordinate.

### **Staff Report**

Harvey mentioned development of a Code Compliance Brochure, inspired by Wanda Bloomquist shared during a Wednesday Green Dialogue. He requested input from the Commission about environmental regulations that might be included in a Meridian version. He will distribute.

## **10. WORKGROUP REPORTS & DISCUSSIONS**

### **Environmental Justice**

Vadnais mentioned Commissioner McConnel’s reflections on Environmental Justice. Sarver invited sharing thoughts at the next meeting. Jackson mentioned the Brownfield/Environmental Justice discussion on Monday the 11<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. McConnell shared a link:

## **11. Commission, Committee, and Trustee Reports**

### **A. Board of Trustees**

Wisinski mentioned her involvement in the Tri-County Groundwater Management Board and a fascinating geological survey database. A key issue, even in Michigan, is the need for water conservation, fertilizer reduction, etc. She mentions that there’s a “storm brewing.” She also mentioned putting in a plug for including green infrastructure in the form-based code. Harvey shared that people have made positive comments about Wisinski and other Trustee’s support for wetland preservation on a recent development discussed at last night’s Board Meeting.

### **Brownfield Redevelopment Authority**

Commissioner Jackson reported that he BRA met last month to sign off on a reimbursement for the Elevation Projects and move forward with EGLE to proceed on the Okemos 4 corners.

### **Energy Team**

Commissioner Sarver reported that the Energy Team met with Derek Perry. It looks like the Service Center is next in line for a solar system in 2021. The next projects may include the Public Safety Building and Municipal Building.

### **Land Preservation Advisory Board**

Commissioner Kielbaso mentioned potential renaming of Land Preserves and invited suggestions. There were 176 deer harvested this year – an all-time-high.

### **MI Township Association (MTA)**

Frazier reported that things have been quiet. The only thing that made it through the lame duck session was allowing governments to meet virtually through March. New bills will be coming forth next Wednesday. Commissioner McConnell asked about a bill the Rep. Brixie may have introduced.

### **Planning Commission**

Commissioner McConnell mentioned that the Planning Commission met on Dec 14. The focus has been on developing a Form-based code and an upcoming joint meeting with the Board of Trustees.

### **Transportation Commission**

Commissioner McConnell mentioned recent discussion of Redi-Ride.

## **12. PUBLIC REMARKS**

Gebes mentioned the availability of call-in comments at 517-349-1232. Esser mentioned the possibility of producing a video – even a cartoon. Harvey mentioned that perhaps students could do a video related to green infrastructure. Commissioner Kielbaso asked about Trustee Wisinski's ability to vote on the Commission. Trustee Wisinski will check with Clerk Guthrie

## **13. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn by Kielbaso. Second by Wisinski. Motion approved unanimously.

**Note:** This and other commission meetings are available for viewing at [http://www.homtv.net/index\\_homtv.asp?view=programming&page=meetings&id=environmental-commission](http://www.homtv.net/index_homtv.asp?view=programming&page=meetings&id=environmental-commission) or directly here: <https://meridianmi.new.swagit.com/videos/107785>

## **Environmental Commission Update**

Joint Board and Commission Meeting-January 26, 2021

### **Environmental Commission Accomplishments in 2020**

#### Tree Planting Initiative

- Hugely successful tree-planting initiative with help from dozens of volunteers.
- Approximately 500 saplings were distributed in partnership with the Ingham Conservation District.
- Volunteers helped plant 40 large trees at Chippewa Middle School.

#### Climate Action Plan

- Solar arrays at South Fire Station and Market on the Green
- Virtual Solar Home Tour of 11 Meridian homes
- Regional networking with local governments

Recommendation to adopt PAH Ordinance eliminating coal tar and PAH's from sealants

#### Green Infrastructure Review

- With assistance from Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, a Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) Audit was conducted
- Next step is regional effort to develop model code language

#### Water/Green Infrastructure

- Native pollinator garden in front of Municipal Building began to blossom
- Through partnership with Greater Lansing Food Bank Garden Project, Meridian community gardeners produced 47,534 lbs. of fresh fruit and vegetables serving 574 residents.
- Inventory and map of green infrastructure in the Township
- Wetland brochure was developed to educate residents about wetlands and proper maintenance and restoration of buffer strips.

#### Recycling

- Recent tour and discussion about renovations to Recycling Center.
- Center remained open during the entire pandemic
- Streetside participation remained at approximately 70%
- Over 1000 households recycled 90,000 pounds of electronics with help from 75 volunteers at recycling event at Chippewa Middle School
- 10,438 pounds of household hazardous waste were collected from Meridian households

#### Education

- Green Theme Presentations
- Weekly Green Dialogues
- Monthly Green Gazette reaches 1000+
- Green Neighbor Network started

## **Environmental Commission Goals for 2021**

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