



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 5151 MARSH RD, OKEMOS
WEDNESDAY, JULY 10 2019 8:05 PM

PRESENT: Chair, Bill McConnell; Vice Chair, Ned Jackson; Commissioner, John Sarver;
Commissioner, Susan Masten; Commissioner, Jim Kielbaso; Commissioner Kirk Lapham;
Commissioner, Linda Burghardt; Commission; Dave Premoe, Planning Commission
ABSENT: Commissioner, Aparna Krishnamurthy
STAFF: LeRoy Harvey, Environmental Programs Coordinator; Jane Greenway, Parks and Land
Mgmt. Coordinator
CITIZENS: Lynne Page; Jesse Lewter, Wolverine Engineering.

Agenda Approved

Minutes Amended and Approved

Public Comments: Dave Premoe expressed a concern that the land preservation program has become a way for some people to get money for worthless parcels of land and that this is a waste of the land preservation funds.

New Business: Wetland Use Permit #19-02: Pedestrian/bicycle Pathway

Jane Greenway provided a background for the project, beginning with a Master Plan Update developed by the Park Commission in 2016. Part of this is enhancing the identity of the Central Park, connecting to the new Farmers Market, and improving the pathways. This WUP relates to the East-West pathway connecting the path off Central Park to the Historic Village.

Several options were considered that were less attractive including a bridge, alternative locations, and others. There is a boardwalk that is planned. Helical piers will be used to minimize impact. There's also a fishing pier which will also impact the wetlands.

This project includes replacing the bridge near the existing Farmers Market with a wider paved path/culvert. The drainage pond on Central Park would be excavated to expand the wetland in that area.

The topic of permeable pavement was discussed. The added cost (including ongoing maintenance) and the rougher surface ruled out this treatment.

Commissioner Burghardt read a draft motion prepared by Peter Menser. This was modified to:

Motion to recommend approval of Wetland Use Permit #19-02 to fill 1,830 square feet of regulated wetland to construct a pedestrian/bicycle pathway on the north side of Central Park Drive, west of Marsh Road subject to the conditions proposed by the Township's wetland consultant, approval of the project by EGLE, provision of appropriate educational signage, and provision further information discussing feasible and prudent alternatives.*

*Jesse Lewter of Wolverine Engineering clarified some of this at the meeting (he described the consideration of a bridge, additional fill, and retaining wall, and alternative pathway locations). Mr. Lewter has been asked to draft a response to the EC's concerns.

Old Business: None

Chair's Report: None

Staff Report: LeRoy Harvey shared a Green Infrastructure Inventory that Ben Holland is helping develop. He distribute and electronic copy for additional comment. Commissioner Masten mentioned that the permeable pavement at the Lodges is not a good example. It was not maintained has been replaced with additional storm drains. Chair McConnell also mentioned a concern that we should not be celebrating or giving credit for green infrastructure that is not working. Harvey mentioned that there seems to be interest (from the Drain Commissioner's office) and others in expanding green infrastructure in future developments (and existing ones). Amending the "Amenity List" for Commercial and Multi-family Planned Unit Developments is one recommendation – as well as how they are monitored. Commissioner Premoe also mentioned a distinction between amenities that benefit the public vs. the developer. Chair McConnell mentioned the possibility of a self-reporting of "amenities" or green infrastructure on a neighborhood or development scale. Commissioner Premoe mentioned that amenities get reviewed during the plan review process. Commissioner Masten also mentioned that we should include a definition of green infrastructure. For example, bird houses, parks, solar installations, etc. might not be included. Further discussion of green infrastructure and how we promote it is recommended. Do we provide credit, recognition, etc.? Do we consider a "Green Building Ordinance" as E. Lansing is doing.

The landscape plan for the solar installation is under development. There is a bioswale also being designed.

A utility bill insert is being developed to describe our "gray" infrastructure – pumps, pipes, meters, etc. – suggestions for consumers and businesses.

Land Preservation: Commissioner Kielbaso mentions that an offer has been made on a new property. This includes support from a federal grant.

Energy Team: Commissioner Sarver reports that 15 people attended Solar Open Houses last month

Brownfield Development Authority: Commissioner Jackson reports that "The Elevation" - the development at Jolly and Okemos is moving forward. Another development (Forsberg) at an old tire store contiguous to this project will be pursued. This includes asbestos removal. Next meeting 7/18

Green Team: Harvey reports that the Fall Recycling Event will be held on September 28. There is also ongoing discussion about the Recycling Center and apartment recycling.

Transportation: Chair McConnell is mostly concerned with the road millage. They are also discussing bridge replacement and the downtown Okemos development. Chair McConnell reports his interest in restoring the old mill race nearby. He feels that a micro hydro project might be worth exploring – especially with MSU's involvement as world leader in this field.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:20 pm.