



AGENDA
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
August 5, 2020 7 pm

ZOOM MEETING: ID: **847 7932 7255** Password: **5151**

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES
4. PUBLIC REMARKS
5. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. Regional Environmental Zoom Sharing: Aug 11
 - B. Status of Commissioner Appointment: Luca Winsinski
 - C. E.C. Rules of Procedure
 - D. Other
6. OLD BUSINESS
 - A. Next Steps for Environmental Review / Green Infrastructure Audit
 - B. Tree Initiative
 - C. Future Green Theme Presentations
 - D. Other
7. CHAIR'S REPORT
8. STAFF REPORT
9. WORKGROUP REPORTS & DISCUSSIONS
 - A. Environmental Justice Study Group
 - B. Sustainable Development Study Group
 - C. Tree Team
10. 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. Planning Commission
 - G. Transportation Commission
11. PUBLIC REMARKS
12. ADJOURNMENT



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, July 1, 2020 7:00 PM

PRESENT: Bill McConnell, John Sarver (Chair), Jim Kielbaso, Ned Jackson, Courtney Wisinski (Trustee Liaison), Rose Vadnais (Vice Chair), Susan Masten, Tom Frazier,
STAFF: LeRoy Harvey, Stephen Gebes, Samantha Diehl, Emma Campbell
GUESTS: John Esser, Phil Deschaine (Treasurer)

Welcome New Commissioner: Tom Frazier expressed his gratitude for being appointed to the Commission. Frazier works with the MI Township Association (MTA) as a Legislative Liaison. He works on environmental legislation and is MTA's representative to the Green Communities Network.

Approval of Agenda: Agenda approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes approved with two corrections.

Public Remarks: Resident John Esser, who is also running for a Township Trustee position expressed his interest in environmental issues and his desire for the Township to do more in this area and set an example for other communities. He shared his website johnesserformeridiantrustee.com

Treasurer Deschaine expressed his enthusiasm for the work of the Tree Community and the potential to plant hundreds of trees this fall. The Board is looking forward to a successful project and report.

New Business:

Environmental Commissioner Application: Luca Wisinski has applied to be a student representative on the Environmental Commission. Sarver will send an email to Supervisor Styka recommending the appointment.

Vegetation Amendment: Trustee Jackson asked for the E.C.'s comments on an amendment to prevent weeds, grasses, brush or other vegetation from growing to a height greater than 8". McConnell suggested a simple language addition exempting "vegetation planted for environmental or stormwater management" (bioswales, raingardens, butterfly gardens). Masten and Sarver expressed some concern that 75' seemed excessive. Vadnais asked if this is addressed in the Master Plan. Trustee Wisinski mentioned that the amendment was motivated more by conditions in some blighted commercial areas. Masten also mentioned issues of trash in blighted areas. LeRoy will put together a note to Trustee Jackson and Trustee Wisinski will help communicate our comments.

Sustainability and Racial Equality: Masten shared a draft of a resolution declaring racism as a public health crisis (prepared with assistance from Jackson). Trustee Wisinski mentioned that the Board recently joined Ingham County Health Department in declaring racism as a public health crisis in Meridian. She is working with Trustees Jackson and Opsommer to develop a

diversity, equity, and inclusion plan. She mentions formation on a committee to work on this and welcomes the environmental justice perspective. McConnell offered a friendly amendment. Resolution passed unanimously. A copy of the latest draft is attached below.

Regional Environmental Meeting: Sarver proposed a Zoom meeting to facilitate regional collaboration (mentioned in the Climate Sustainability Plan) with local governments (Lansing, East Lansing, local Townships, etc.). Harvey will arrange a date and time.

Old Business

Environmental Review of Ordinances: Harvey mentioned various levels of involvement in the Sustainable Building Study Group's initiative to review the Code of Ordinances and other environmental policies and procedures. Public Works Director Derek Perry suggests that we might start with the Green Infrastructure Audit with assistance from Tri-County Regional Planning Commission and Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council.

McConnell mentions recent challenges regulating development and stormwater management on projects regulated by multiple jurisdictions (County, State, Federal) using various interpretations of FEMA's 100 year Flood Map. Vadnais mentions that our Study Group could meet with representatives from the Planning Department.

Harvey will set up meetings with TCRPC to proceed with the Green Infrastructure Audit and another meeting between Planning Staff and the Sustainable Building Study Group.

Staff Report: Harvey shared [a report](#) by email. Click link or request from harvey@meridian.mi.us

Commission/Liaison/Workgroup Reports:

Energy: Sarver reported Solar Tour in October, RFPs for two solar projects on the Farmers Market and the South Fire Station with a deadline in early August.

Environmental Justice Study Group: Vadnais suggests one more meeting. Masten invited Cindy Roper from the Natural Resources Defense Council to speak at a future Green Theme to report on the NRDC report: <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/local-policies-environmental-justice-national-scan-tishman-201902.pdf> Harvey mentions related themes of community engagement and empowerment. Harvey will set up a meeting with the Study Group (Vadnais, Jackson, Masten, Wisinski, Sarver)

Green Team/Green Networking: Harvey mentioned the Green Networking meetings on Wednesday mornings and invited all to participate. He invited people to share environmental stories and news on the [Green Meridian Page](#) and [Group](#) on Facebook.

Land Preservation Advisory Board: Kielbaso reports that the LPAB will meet next week at the Pavilion to discuss another millage for Land Preservation. Campbell also mentions development of the Conservation Corp. She's been working on signage responding to invasive species calls. Parks and natural areas are getting a lot of traffic.

Planning: McConnell reports that two meetings have been held. Hearings included a business in Haslett and a provisioning center on Northwind Dr. The big item was a special use permit

which is the 3rd phase of the Hanna Farms development at the east end of Hannah Blvd. There are a number of wetlands on the site and a special use permit. This development inspired McConnell's earlier comments about multi-jurisdictional regulation of flood planes. Jackson mentions that we should require a pedestrian bridge or expansion of railroad bridge. There is ongoing concern about the amount of impervious services (from Hannah Farms and from the Mall) entering the river in this vicinity.

Transportation: The Transportation Commission met and got a nice update on Twp Road Projects. McConnell's issue about a crossing at Campus Hill Apartments may be addressed in the M-43 plan.

Tree Team: Michelle Beloskur has submitted a proposal to assist with a large tree distribution at the market and a school project. Kielbaso reports a very recent conversation with Kevin Thayer who provides guidance on our Tree City designation. He asks if there is a current ordinance related trees on City-owned property. Harvey will check with the Planning Department.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:23pm

Next Meeting: August 5th at 7pm on Zoom

Remaining Meetings

- 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

A resolution declaring racism a public health crisis in the Charter Township of Meridian

WHEREAS, the Environmental Commission advises Township boards and staff on issues related to environmental protection, pollution prevention and the preservation of natural areas, and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Commission of the Charter Township of Meridian, recognizes that the scourge of racism, operating on systemic, institutional, and interpersonal levels through time and generations, has led to a public health crisis calling for urgent attention and action; and

WHEREAS, across the United States, race is the most significant predictor (more than socio-economic status) of a person living near contaminated air, water, or soil. This environmental imbalance creates and amplifies racial and social disparities across key indicators of success, including health, education, criminal justice, and economic security; and

WHEREAS, the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) defines environmental justice as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies; and

WHEREAS, the race-specific prevalence rate of COVID-19 for Asian and Black residents of Ingham County is more than 3 times that for white residents¹; and

WHEREAS, despite the increasing racial diversity in the US, the percentage of people of color in environmental organizations, foundations, and government agencies is approximately half that in the technology sector; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Commission seeks proactive, transformational environmental solutions that connect to and create economic and education opportunities and redress past systemic injustice so that all communities can thrive; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN declares racism to be a public health crisis that demands attention and action from all levels of government and ranks of civil society.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Environmental Commission dedicates itself to honest and open debate, discussion, and analysis of racial inequities in considering the effects of our recommendations for actions in our community; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Environmental Commission recommends that the Township Board and all township departments work with residents, especially those of color, to

- (a) collect data on racial disparities in staffing, procurement, contracting, representation on Township Boards and Commissions, and in receipt of government intervention/benefits,
- (b) review and revise policies and procedures with the goal of eradicating bias and ensuring equity; and
- (c) identify and implement policies and practices that intentionally eliminate racial disparities and foster a more equitable community.

¹ Ingham County Health Department COVID-19 Update, June 26, 2020

Updates/Staff Report

Environmental Review & Green Infrastructure Audit: The Sustainable Development Study Group met with staff from Planning, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, and Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council to discuss the initiative and gather input. TCRPC, MMEAC, and staff have offered to assist with the [Green Infrastructure Audit](#).

Tree Initiative: The revised budget from Ingham Conservation District (Michelle Beloskur) reflects modifications discussed at our last meeting. Phil Deschaine has suggested an expanded tree distribution in local schools and neighborhoods. Details are still developing, as are school fall schedules.

Revised E.C. Procedures: See the attached E.C. Rules and Procedures draft which we had approved in early 2018/19. This never was officially approved by the Board. If there are no further changes, let's put on the Board Agenda. This came up at a July Board meeting during discussion about the appointment of Luca Wisinski, soon to be our newest Student Commissioner and whether a minor can have voting privileges. Our past intention was to make this official.

Outreach and Promotion: [Green Gazette](#): Please send story ideas for the Green Gazette, Social Media, and/or any infographics or ideas related Monthly Themes/Events (related to Climate Sustainability Plan)

- 🌐 July – Water
- 🌐 August – Green Infrastructure
- 🌐 September – Waste reduction/electronics recycling event
- 🌐 October- Renewable Energy – Virtual Solar Tour
- 🌐 November – Fats, oils, grease, Wipes
- 🌐 December – Energy Efficiency

Electronics Recycling Event: Planned for Sep 26 in collaboration with the State and other communities in our region. An additional drop off day is also being scheduled for during the week.

Green Networking: Join us for a “green” dialogue Monday mornings at 9am on Zoom. Here's the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84153396845>

Solar PV Walk-Through: Seven contractors attended the walk-through and drive-by at the S. Fire Station and Marketplace on the Green. Bids are due in August with up to 40 KW of additional solar installed by the end of the year.

Calendar: First Wed, 7pm **Sep 2, Oct 7, Nov 4, Dec 2** Meeting ID: 847 7932 7255 Passcode: 5151 <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84779327255?pwd=d0xrNStSb1ZEeFFDTWdCVHhKWfkrZz09> Download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZAqcOCrrDwoH9GPX6RAj29HOdKXjal6VKUt/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGsqTwiGdaSshyCRpwiB4_CXenzpmZBgvp6rCezMQFZMFrGeZpCrh-OY7m

Meridian Twp Tree Planting Initiative

Distribute free trees to residents at up to 4 market events

ICD can help man booth at Meridian Market and bring ICD promo materials including tree sale

Smaller trees (12"-18") distributed at market events

10-15 large trees for school project - could be a separate order and planted in late Sept/early Oct

There may be an opportunity to plant at neighborhoods too

Summer planting not recommended due to heat stress

Earliest time for distribution/planting would be mid Aug, latest mid-Oct

<https://www.mortonarb.org/trees-plants/tree-and-plant-advice/horticulture-care/fall-planting-trees-and-shr>

Trees that can be successfully planted in the fall include alder, ash, buckeye, catalpa, crabapple, hackberry, h honey locust, elm, Kentucky coffee tree, linden, maple, sycamore, pines, and spruces.

After cross-checking what is available and trees that would be the best fit for a donation project, suggest the American mountain ash, coffee tree, crabapple, sugar maple, hawthorn, sycamore, white pine and spruce, Ar Drop prickly ash, hawthorn due to thorns.

Michelle will consult with nurseries on other possible varieties. All trees will be native to Michigan

Ingham CD Support*	Hours	Hourly Rate
Staff @ 4 Farmers Markets	12	30
Budget Development	2	30
Tree Team Meetings	4	30
Coordinate w/Nurseries	4	30
Wrapping Trees	4	30
Planting Events	8	30
Assisting w/Ed Materials	6	30
SUBTOTAL	40	1200
Tree Supplies		
	Quantity	Average Cost per Tree
<i>Farmers Market Trees (4 events)</i>		
12-18" bare root seedlings		
fruit trees?	200	12
deciduous - fall friendly varieties	400	0.75
conifers (white pine and white spruce)	400	0.52
tree wrapping supplies	1 roll wax lined paper	100
SUBTOTAL		
<i>Neighborhood/School Trees</i>		
	12-15/project	
options for bare root, pots or burlapped		
4-8' bare root deciduous trees	36	9
5 gallon pots deciduous	36	35
3' pine trees	36	120
Tree Protection for deciduous	24	7.5
per Jim	24	250
SUBTOTAL		
PROJECT TOTAL		

*Additional hours can be billed at \$30/hr if new project tasks arise per approval of the Meridian Twp Tree Tei

[ubs](#)

awthorn,

following trees...

merican basswood, prickly ash

Total
360
60
120
120
120
240
180
1200
Total Cost
2400
300
208
100
3008
180
6000
6180
10388

am

MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

RULES OF PROCEDURE

RULE 1. AUTHORIZATION.

The Meridian Township Environmental Commission, hereinafter called the Commission, is established pursuant to Chapter 121 of the Code of Ordinances, Charter Township of Meridian.

RULE 2. RESPONSIBILITIES.

The Environmental Commission shall:

- a. Advise the Township Board, officials and staff on matters pertaining to environmental protection and water conservation, management of natural resources and preservation of open space.
- b. Identify ways to ensure and improve the quality of the Township's environment in the interest of the public health, safety and general welfare.
- c. Develop educational and outreach programs for local schools, businesses and individuals to encourage environmental stewardship, protect property values and avoid unnecessary financial costs for correcting environmental problems.
- d. Review and offer recommendations for Township ordinances, operating procedures and programs in order to achieve the stated purposes in Chapter 121 and ensure compliance with applicable state and federal environmental laws.
- e. Assume the duties of the Township Wetland Board as outlined in Section 105-16(c) of the Township Code of Ordinances.
- f. Offer recommendations for the Township budget as it pertains to the Commission.
- g. Assume such other duties as may be assigned by the Township Board.
- h. Encourage and utilize the involvement of residents and experts in achieving the environmental goals of the Township.

RULE 3. COMPOSITION, TERMS AND VACANCIES.

3.1 ***Composition and Appointment.*** The Commission shall consist of seven (7) members appointed by the Township Board. Members shall be Township residents and shall have an interest or expertise in natural resources, environmental protection or ecology. In addition, two student members shall be appointed. These two members shall be voting members.

3.2 ***Terms.*** Terms of appointment shall be for three (3) years or until a successor is appointed, the student members shall serve one (1) year terms.

3.3 ***Unexpired Terms.*** A member appointed to fill an unexpired term shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term or until a successor is appointed.

RULE 4. **REMOVAL FROM OFFICE.**

A member may be removed from office by the Township Board for nonperformance of duty or misconduct in office, following written charges and after a public hearing.

RULE 5. **OFFICERS.**

5.1 ***Selection.*** At its first meeting in January, the Commission shall select a chair and a vice chair from among its members.

5.2 ***Terms.*** Term of office shall be one (1) year, or until a successor is selected.

5.3 ***Duties.***

- a. The chair shall preside at all meetings, authorize calls for special meetings, and perform such other duties as may be specified by the Commission.
- b. The vice-chair shall act in the capacity of the chair in the chair's absence.
- c. In the event the office of the chair becomes vacant, the vice chair shall succeed to this office for the unexpired term and the Commission shall select a successor to the office of vice-chair for the unexpired term.

RULE 6. **COMMITTEES.**

6.1 ***Purpose.*** The Commission may establish committees necessary to assist it in fulfilling its responsibilities and shall define the purpose, functions, tenure, selection of chair, meeting and reporting requirements for each committee. The establishment of committees shall not preclude the use of individuals or study groups in the exploration or research of specific environmental issues.

6.2 ***Appointments.*** Committee members shall be appointed by the chair, with concurrence of the Commission. A committee may be discharged from its responsibilities by the Commission

6.3 **Public Participation.** Committees shall meet all requirements for public participation and access to records as provided in Rule 7 of these Rules.

RULE 7. MEETINGS.

7.1 **Regular Meetings.** The Commission may call one regular meeting each month, pending business.

7.2 **Special Meetings.** Special meetings may be called by the chair or shall be called at the written request of two (2) or more Commission members. The meeting notice shall include the purpose of the special meeting. At least forty-eight (48) hours notice of special meetings shall be given to Commission members.

7.3 **Meeting Schedule.** A schedule of regular meetings, including date, time and place, shall be established for each calendar year and shall be made available to the public in advance of said meetings. Changes in the schedule shall be posted for the public.

7.4 **Location.** Meetings shall be held at a Township facility unless otherwise indicated.

7.5 **Quorum.** Four (4) members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business unless otherwise indicated in these rules or required by Township ordinance, state or federal law. A member shall notify the chair or designated staff if the member will be absent from a meeting.

7.6 **Public Participation.**

- a. All regular and special meetings, work sessions or public hearings shall be open to the public, unless otherwise provided for in Township ordinance, state or federal law.
- b. Opportunity for public comment shall be provided in accordance with established Commission or Township rules and procedures (See attached Exhibit A).
- c. The chair may call to order any person who disrupts the orderly conduct of a meeting and prohibit said person from further participation or attendance at such meeting.

7.7 **Agenda.**

- a. An agenda shall be established for each meeting by the chair and designated Township staff and be made available to the Commission and public in advance of the meeting. The order of business shall be determined by the chair with concurrence of the Commission.

- b. Agenda items to be considered at a special meeting shall be limited to those included in the call-to-meeting notice unless all members are present and vote otherwise.

7.8 **Decisions**. Providing a quorum is present, a simple majority of those present and voting shall be required for Commission action, unless otherwise provided for in these rules, other Township or state statutes or parliamentary authority, as adopted.

7.9 **Records**. Designated Township staff shall be responsible for minutes and other official records of all Commission meetings and actions, including supporting documentation. Notice of meetings, minutes and other records shall be available to the public in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (P.A. 442, 1976, as amended) and Open Meetings Acts (P.A. 267, 1976, as amended).

RULE 8. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY.

Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern all questions of procedure not otherwise provided for in these rules or by Township, state or federal law.

RULE 9. SUSPENSION OF RULES AND AMENDMENT.

9.1 **Suspension**. A rule may be suspended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of Commission members present and voting at a meeting, provided said action is in accordance with established state or federal law, Township ordinance and parliamentary authority.

9.2 **Amendment**. Rules not required by state or federal law or Township ordinance may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Commission, provided thirty (30) days notice and an opportunity for comment is given to the public.

EXHIBIT A: PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS**RULE 7.6**

1. The number of persons admitted to a meeting room will be in keeping with public safety requirements and availability of space. Efforts will be made to provide adequate room to accommodate those in attendance.
2. Established protocols for public participation will be announced at the beginning of the meeting.
3. Opportunity to speak will be granted either under Public Remarks or during a public hearing, as most appropriate.
4. Reasonable time limits may be allotted for public comments, in keeping with other business which must be considered at a particular meeting.
5. A member of the public will be provided no less than three minutes to speak.
6. Those completing a request form in writing shall be called upon first to speak.
7. Members of the public will identify themselves by name and address prior to presenting their comments.
8. Written communications will be read into the record during a meeting when requested by the author. All written communications will become part of the Commission record.
9. The Chair, without objections from the Commission, may invite members of the public to participate in informal discussion on all or selected agenda items during Commission work sessions.