



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, August 5, 2020 7:00 PM

PRESENT: Tom Frazier, Ned Jackson, Jim Kielbaso, Susan Masten, Bill McConnell, John Sarver (Chair), Rose Vadnais (Vice Chair), Courtney Wisinski (Trustee Liaison), Luca Wisinski (Student Member)
STAFF: LeRoy Harvey, Stephen Gebes, Samantha Diehl
GUEST: Michelle Beloskur, Ingham Conservation District

Approval of Agenda: Agenda approved with Letter from Mr. Armbruster added under New Business.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes approved.

Public Remarks: None. Gebes reminded listeners of the call in #: 517.349.1232

New Business:

Regional Government Sharing on Zoom: Harvey mentioned the Regional Networking session to be held on August 11. Currently there 8-10 people likely to share from area government and nonprofits. This will be followed by dialogue. Commissioners are encouraged to share the invite. This networking session is mentioned as an action step in our Climate Sustainability Plan. View the session at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QpTTMTA2UU0>

New Commissioner: Welcome Luca Wisinski, our newest Student Commissioner who will be a sophomore in Okemos. Luca has been involved with the Earth Club and is looking forward to getting involved with us.

Rules of Procedure: We have the opportunity to update our Rules of Procedure. Resident Neil Bowlby provided comments such as redefining a quorum (majority of members), definition of youth or student (15-24), etc. LeRoy will make revisions and share a draft with the E.C. **Motion by Masten to reserve two spots on the E.C. for youth (approved by a majority Sarver, Wisinski, Vadnais, Jackson, Masten, and Frazier)**

Nemoka Drain Project Letter from Armbruster: Kielbaso clarified that the project is not likely to add to or take from the Lake Lansing watershed. Masten, who studied a nearby project with her students, shared details. McConnell also shared a copy of our minutes from Oct 5, 2016 when we reviewed a Wetland Use Permit. Harvey will draft a response to resident Curtis Armbruster.

Old Business:

Environmental Review of Code of Ordinances: The Green Infrastructure Audit is progressing thanks to Cliff Walls with Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. Walls

mentions several simple next steps based upon his ongoing analysis:

- Ensure Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) and associated terms are defined in the code
- Utilize purpose statements to make your GSI priorities known to developers and homeowners
- Add language that offers design flexibility in exchange GSI where appropriate.

Walls will be preparing an email to staff (Planning and Engineering/Public Works) seeking input in areas related to their expertise. An update will be provided at our next meeting.

Beloskur mentioned a Green Infrastructure grant that she will pass on to us.

Tree Project: Beloskur with Ingham Conservation District mentioned our plans for distribution at farmers markets, distribution through neighborhoods and schools. She has been looking in to supplies for conifers and deciduous trees. Kielbaso would like to find some ways to increase success, encourage planting, maintenance, survival rates, etc. Ideas:

- Mail in postcard
- Educational interactions (at Farmers Market)
- Tree adoption papers
- Hashtags to post pictures and progress
- Gather Emails
- Charge a small fee for trees (\$.50 – 1.00)

Harvey is still exploring planting days at local schools. Perhaps Luca Wisinski can assist with engaging the Earth Club or other students/teachers for these planting days or tree distribution.

Green Theme Speaker and Topic Ideas: Masten mentions the possibility of Virtual Tours- as opportunities to bring folks from all over the world.

- Speakers/projects from the regional networking session on Aug 11
- environmental justice
- Cliff Walls
- Emma Campbell- Park Naturalist
- sustainable transportation (bike tour Netherlands)
- native gardens, butterfly gardens
- solar arrays
- water treatment plant
- wetlands
- things we wouldn't even *think of doing in normal times* (Masten mentions this opportunity to her students at MSU)

HOMTV and Okemos Library have a 360° camera which may be available. Please forward your ideas to Harvey or share with group.

Staff Report: Harvey invites ideas (and posting) of “green” news/projects/etc. on Township social media pages including the Green Meridian Page and Group. Luca Winsinski may have some classmates who can help. The Electronics Recycling event is moving forward. (Sep 26). Bids for the Solar Array (on the Market on the Green and S. Fire Station) are due on Aug. 6.

Environmental Justice: Vadnais mentions a shift to networking with existing initiatives including MI Environmental Council, Student Groups, Community Gardens, Islamic Center, and others. She also mentions a desire to connect with the Meridian Equity and Inclusion Task Force (Opsommer, Wisinski, Jackson). Trustee Wisinski mentions in getting help to assist. She looks forward to collaborating with us.

Sustainable Development Study Group: The first step and current main focus is the Green Infrastructure Audit, but there may be additional ongoing amendments (PAH, Wetland Ordinance Update, etc.)

Township Board: Wisinski was reelected (and received the most votes!). She looks forward to being our liaison for the next 4 years. She also mentions a neighbor that has a lot of interest in wetlands who might be a good presenter at our Green Theme Series.

Brownfield Development: Jackson reports that an amendment to the area at Jolly and Okemos. Gas leak at Haslett and Marsh was discussed. Manager Walsh also shared an update on the Downtown Okemos development delays.

Energy Team: Sarver reports 7 contractors showed up at the site visit and is optimistic for some quality bids. A virtual solar home tour will be held in October.

Green Team: Wednesday morning “green” networking sessions continue at 9pm on Zoom. McConnell also mention recent discussion about a neighborhood detention pond project that may become a model for best management processes.

MI Township Association: Frazier offered to provide a brief updates if there are any.

Land Preservation Advisory Board: Kielbaso mentioned their first face-to-face meeting in a while. They have another planned next Wednesday in the North Meridian Park at 6pm including a walk to the nearby [Foster-Crouse preserve](#). Emma Campbell held her first invasive species training and removal. Also talking about wetland banks in land preserves and and the related raising of Grand River near Okemos Rd. to reduce flooding.

Planning Commission: McConnell reports that rezoning is a key focus. There is ongoing discussion about stormwater issues at the senior development in Hannah Farms (by the MAC). A Planned Unit Development called Silver Leaf on Bennett Rd. may be discussed soon.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:23 PM