

# **Environmental Commission Meeting: October 5, 2022 (corrected)**

(draft thanks to Lauren Falzarano)

## **SUMMARY**

The Environmental Commission discussed updates for the Climate Sustainability plan in regards to food and compost and the water sections along with individual staff updates.

## **AGENDA & MINUTES**

Agenda and minutes approved with some changes.

## **CLIMATE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN**

Lafferty began with an update on information gathered from EGLE on recycled goods. EGLE said that a three axle hauler would equal 18,000 pounds or 1000 car trips. Currently there are two or three haulers, but there is no control over where the goods go. The recommendation is to use a single company for a hauler. One aspect to consider is the wear and tear these haulers might have on the roads in the township. Frazier mentioned that a single hauler was considered in past plans, but it was removed due to questions on if the board would take action. It was suggested that including the steps to have a single hauler might add direction and make the goal more achievable. Another suggestion was that more research on practices of similar townships would help in understanding what the next steps could be. More information may be needed in regards to the township's current contract status with the major haulers and where they are operating in the township.

McConnell gave an update on the water section. There has been progress in having aspects of the section reviewed, and they will hopefully have another person's perspective by next meeting. Jackson mentioned there are many objectives in this section and Lake Lansing may be getting diluted as a focus. He also brought up that the document lacks information on invasive species. McConnell recognized that more attention should be given to standing waters in the township.

Harvey mentioned that other communities have been incorporating climate sustainability plans, and many of them have hired consultants to help create the document. He also suggested having a condensed format may be beneficial for public use. Colby agreed that a one or two page summary of the plan would be useful.

## **REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Sarver discussed that a checklist for electric vehicles and charging was suggested for use at an Energy Team meeting. This could be added to next meeting's agenda for further discussion and what the township could be doing. The Solarize Meridian project had what would most likely be its final meeting of the year. They discussed ideas for next year. Sarver also mentioned there has been progress in having energy assessments done on township buildings. Harvey mentioned the MSU Energy Assessment Center was looking to do assessments this winter with improvements being considered for the 2024 budget.

Lafferty expanded on the successes of the recent bike tour and discussed how it could be used for other groups in the future for education. Lafferty also summarized the success of the food collections at the farmers market. There were 26 collection days, 18 vendors, 21 volunteers, and 6 organizations benefited. There was a total of 4,740 pounds collected, Saturday's high was 519 pounds, and Wednesday's high was 140. The program had to end to have space in township coolers for deer, but if additional space could be found, the program could continue longer. The green burial program was also discussed. Partnering with communications would be necessary to spread information about the program and meetings related to it.

McConnell discussed the master plan and how adjustments to ordinances have been considered. Specifically, the Wetland Protection Ordinance has been discussed in regard to if it is needed due to lack of recent permits. The state currently manages most wetland permitting, and Sarver mentions that the township ordinance may be protecting the smaller wetlands by incentivizing developers to not disturb them.

Frazier provided updates on the Green Team. There was a rain barrel and compost bin distribution. Also, there will be an electronics recycling day that will accept a variety of items including small appliances in partnership with Consumers Energy.

Colby discussed the food and compost work. It was mentioned that the Eastside Lansing Food Co-op reopened in the Allen Neighborhood Center acting as a positive step toward prioritizing local foods.

Jackson updated on developments. The Pine Village Construction is underway for building retirement housing. More discussion is being had on what will happen with the remaining parking lot the development is being built on. The Okemos Village project has changed slightly from the original plan. Jackson also brought up confusion on what bars on the energy usage graphs are representing in the sustainability plan. Sarver explained that the categories on the graph are based on federal distinctions in building types, but they are not definitive.

Harvey and Andrechek discussed Earth Club and the possibility of starting a podcast. The podcast could talk about environmental actions from the high school or provide educational information. They are also exploring food and composting options at the high school. Frazier mentioned that Delhi schools use an anaerobic digester that could be a model for other school districts.

Harvey gave several project updates. The solar system on carports at the public safety building will be going up next week. The Lake Lansing Natural Shoreline Demonstration will be approved shortly and construction will begin next year. Updates at Haslett Middle School were also discussed including improvements to their courtyard along with the expansion of youth action teams in coordination with Bridget Booth.