

Environmental Commission Meeting: April 5, 2023 (draft by LH)

Attending: John Sarver, Amelia Saffron, Graham Diedrich, Emma Andrechek, Anna Colby, Kendra Grasseschi, Tom Frazier, Ned Jackson, Courtney Wisinski, LeRoy Harvey

Absent: Bill McConnell, Luca Wisinski

Agenda: Unanimously approved

Minutes: Approved with spelling changes for McConnell and Frazier.

Green Grants: Trustee Wisinski provided an overview of Green Grant requests and recommendations from the Green Grant Review Team (Sarver, Wisinski, and Harvey). Andrechek mentioned a potential project with Bennett Woods/OHS Earth Club. Wisinski moved to support four proposals: Radmoor Meadows & Native Plantings (\$3000), Env. Law Institute (Mud Lake Book) (\$1500), Cornell Woods Tree Plantings in Common Areas (\$3000), Okemos Presbyterian Native Landscape Plan (\$2000) totaling \$9500. Unanimously approved. Sarver suggested that we close the solicitation for 2023. Wisinski suggested a presentation to the Board to accompany a proposal to expand funding for Green Grants in order to fully fund all proposals. May 2nd may be the next meeting of the Trustees. Wisinski and Harvey will explore a possible memo and agenda item for this meeting.

Environmental Stewardship Awards: Land Stewardship Coordinator, Emma Campbell, submitted an ESA for Steve Thomas. Jackson gave an overview of the ESA initiative. Grasseschi highlighted Mr. Thomas's accolades. Sarver suggested that we solicit nomination at the beginning of each year (in January). Commissioners. The EC unanimously approved an award for Mr. Thomas to be presented at our next meeting. Harvey will prepare the certificate. Grasseschi will invite him.

New Business: Trustee Wisinski mentioned that Luca's graduation and upcoming summer job are beginning soon and he is leaving the E.C. Harvey will explore the official process for this. (subsequently, a note to the Clerk's office – or copy of minutes -- is all that is necessary.)

Climate Sustainability Plan:

Commissioners gave updates on the various drafts.

- **Healthy Food Systems:** There is a draft of the food section available for comment. Colby suggests that comments would be welcome at the next.
- **Water Management:** Grasseschi offered to review and share the latest draft of the water section from Jackson. Jackson mentioned that this draft and other sections would benefit from a broad stylistic review.
- **Transportation:** Sarver asked if there have been comments from the Transportation Commission and Harvey offered to check with Shorkey.
- **Recycling and Waste Reduction:** Frazier mentioned that the Green Team may wish to include some statistics about current collection and possibly discussion of a single hauler.

Diedrich offered to share an evaluation of climate action plans that he is currently reviewing for the State of Michigan. This may be ready to present at the next meeting. Make comments and review latest versions here: <https://sites.google.com/view/climate-sustainability-plan/home>

Old Business: Colby asked if we might further explore more about the Summer Intern's availability and interests. Wisinski offered to follow up with Supervisor Jackson and Manager Walsh to explore.

Colby asked if we are sharing our minutes with Supervisor Jackson. Harvey responded affirmatively.

Commissioner Jackson asked about cultivating a relationship with the Nokomis Native American Center and other related groups in relation to our efforts. Wisinski suggested that we invite them to present at a future meeting. Grasseschi may reach out.

Updates:

Food Team: Colby highlighted several items mentioned in Valerie Lafferty's written update including the launching of the Gleaning Initiative and the next meeting. Frazier mentioned that there will be a tour of the MSU Digester on May 8th.

Wetland Education Team: Grasseschi mentioned an upcoming Wetland Walk, a Conservation Conversation (State of MI), Harris Native Plant Sale, Wildones Plant Sale, Wetland Guide availability now on the web (www.meridian.mi.us), a native seed collection with Steve Thomas, a seed distribution. Grasseschi also encouraged that we proceed with the spring wetland notice. She asked why the notice did not go out with the tax notice. There is a question about whether the tax notice is still required and desirable. Signs are also being considered. There will also be work on and clarification of the wetland education budget and timeline.

Land Preservation: Grasseschi reports that the Land Pres. Advisory Board is considering a new property for consideration. There have been controlled burns recently. There will be Vernal Pool Patrols in the next month. There is support of Green Burial, but not in the land preserves.

Earth Club: Andrechek mentions that there will be a pollinator garden developed this year. There are six new recycling bins at the high school. A plant sale and bake sale will help support the greenhouse.

Trustee Update: Wisinski reports that there will be the first Pride Celebration this year on Aug. 26 coordinated by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Another health event will be held called Meridian Cares About You on May 10 from 5-8pm.

Energy Team: Sarver reports that the Energy Team has been discussing community electric vehicle charging. There is a gap in apartment buildings that should be addressed. There are four Solarize meetings planned this year. There were 60+ people at the collaborative event with Williamstown Twp.

Green Team: Frazier reported that the first event was held on March 18 at the Mall. The Spring Recycling Day will be held on Earth Day (April 22). There are volunteers still needed. Recycle Rama is also happening on the same day.

Brownfield Redevelopment Authority: Jackson reported that the Authority will meet next month. The project at Haslett and Marsh is now complete.

Staff Update: Harvey mentioned the remodeling project at the Municipal Building. He will move the Service Center. Recent green dialogues include Ruth Kline Robach, a discussion about "Sites" (sustainable certification of landscapes), an upcoming Green Gazette.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:45pm