



AGENDA
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
June 7, 2023 7 pm

Town Hall Meeting Room, 5151 Marsh Rd, Okemos

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. PUBLIC REMARKS
3. CHANGES TO/APPROVAL OF AGENDA
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
5. NEW BUSINESS
6. OLD BUSINESS

Climate Sustainability Plan

Draft at <https://sites.google.com/view/climate-sustainability-plan/home>)

Budget Discussion

Other

7. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Staff, Liaisons, committees/teams, Okemos Earth Club, invited to share updates.

8. PUBLIC REMARKS
9. ADJOURNMENT

Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes: May 3, 2023 (draft)

Attending: Bill McConnell, John Sarver, Emma Andrechek, Anna Colby, Tom Frazier, Ned Jackson, Courtney Wisinski, LeRoy Harvey

Absent: Kendra Grasseschi, Amelia Saffron, Graham Diedrich

Public Remarks: Resident Bruce Peffers shared an overview of Green Burial and an update about activities in the region. Normally green burial eliminates embalming and involves a biodegradable casket, wicker, or shroud (no liner or vault). There are three approaches including a natural area (no lawns), a nature preserve, or a section of more of a traditional cemetery. Peffers spoke with the Land Preservation Board and the Parks Board and now the Environmental Commission. He suggests that a section of Glenview - the Cemetery on Mt. Hope - is one possibility near the columbarium. The Green Burial Team may approach the Board to discuss changes that might allow non-cement caskets. He also mentioned [Gabriele Mayer's presentation](#) and the popularity of green burial in public comments about the Master Plan.

New Business: Chair McConnell asked for more clarity on procedures related to allocations such as the wetland budget and the green grants. Colby asked how budget items get to the Board. Wisinski mentioned that this comes at budget time typically from a Trustee or a Staff Director. Colby also suggested that we might discuss our funding priorities as part of our planning efforts. McConnell suggested that we might have a formal discussion at a future meeting or consider a working group discuss. Sarver offered to share the Green Grant process. McConnell will invite Grasseschi to share budget priorities from the Wetland Education Committee. Sarver asked about changes that might come during the middle of the year. Wisinski mentioned a difference between line item amendments vs. new line items. Grants were also mentioned as a possible way to support the EC initiatives..

Old Business: Colby offered to discuss the Food System at the next meeting and suggested that it be included in the June Packet. McConnell suggested that it be the main item on the agenda in June. Harvey mentioned that we have not heard from Manager Walsh's Intern. On that note, another Intern, Sam Fleckenstein (U of M Graham Sustainability Institute), will be starting later in the month to help work on promoting lake-healthy landscaping, green fairs, and environmental promotion. McConnell also mentioned connecting with the Student Organic Farm and Biernbaum Farm.

Updates:

Andracheck reported that the Earth Club held a Bake and Plant Sale to support the student greenhouse.

Wisinski stated that Meridian is putting together a Board/Commissioner training.

Sarver reports that 60 people attended the recent Solarize meeting. The next Solarize meeting will be held on June 13 at 7pm. An energy report from MSU will be completed soon.

Colby provided an update from the Good Food/Smart Compost (GFSC) committee, summarizing a report from Valerie Lafferty. John Krohn from the Land Bank explained their compost and garden initiatives. Mike Dombrowski described the Eastside Compost initiative. Lindsay Walker will present on Zoom about, There's an upcoming tour of MSU's anaerobic digester. May 10-11 is the Michigan Recycling Conference and June 1 is a tour of the Biernbaum Farm.

Frazier provided an update of the Spring Recycling Event. The next event will be a medicine collection at the Farmers Market on May 20.

Harvey shared a link to his staff report: <https://sites.google.com/view/staff-update/home>

Environmental Stewardship Award: Colby moved to adopt the resolution in the packet recognizing the stewardship efforts of Steve Thomas. Thomas spoke briefly, commending the Township on its Land Preservation Program and its investment in its Parks. As a naturalist he appreciates the opportunity to work in natural areas. McConnell asked Thomas if he'd offer a tip to the E.C. to include in the Climate Sustainability.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:53pm!

Healthy Food Systems

Food waste in the United States contributes to more annual greenhouse gas emissions than 42 coal-fired plants. Experts estimate that up to 30-40% of food never gets consumed. Improving the health of our food system can reduce waste, save energy and money, plus decrease hunger and food insecurity (lack of consistent access to enough food).

Objective #1: Reduce Food Waste & Food Insecurity

The Township adopts the EPA, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and U.S. Food and Drug Administration shared commitment to achieve a 50% reduction in food loss by 2030.

*"Food insecurity isn't driven by scarcity, it's a distribution issue."
EPA Report Highlights Climate Impacts of Wasted Food NRDC (2021)*

Strategies:

1. Support and expand food rescue, i.e., the gleaning of edible food, initiatives within the Twp.
 - a. Continue to glean fresh produce at the Meridian Farmers Market for distribution to area food banks, kitchens, and pantries.
 - b. Consider efforts to rescue food from grocery stores, restaurants, and caterers
 - c. Measure food rescue metrics across the Township to create a baseline to compare growth over time.
 - d. Work with interested local schools to conduct one- or two-day cafeteria food waste audits and build interest in lunchroom gleaning or food rescue and compost efforts (see objective 3 for more information on composting).
 - e. Promote food rescue programs in the Township including exploring ideas like, "Support a Pantry" program at the Market which would encourage customers to purchase Market products, that may otherwise go to waste, for donation to pantries and soup kitchens.

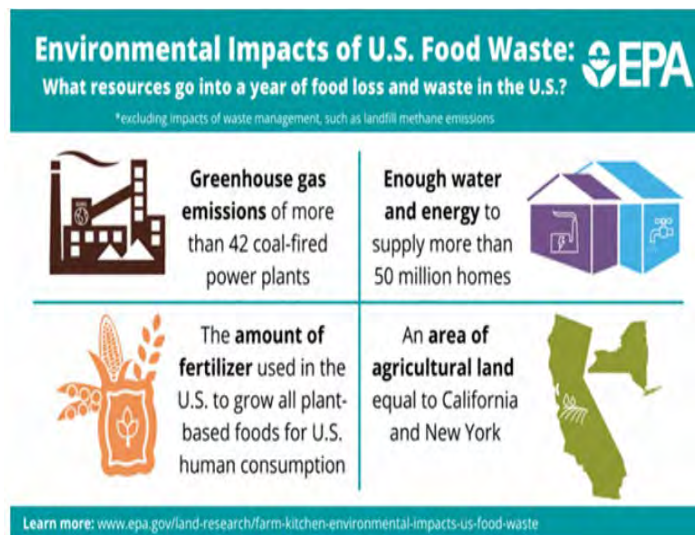


Image Credit: US EPA

2. Support community outreach and education on topics such as the environmental impacts of food waste, the opportunity to address food waste at different stages of the food system (e.g., farming, production, processing, distribution, consumers), and the connection between food waste and food insecurity.

Objective #2: Increase Production & Sourcing of Local and Sustainably Grown Food Products by Township and Residents

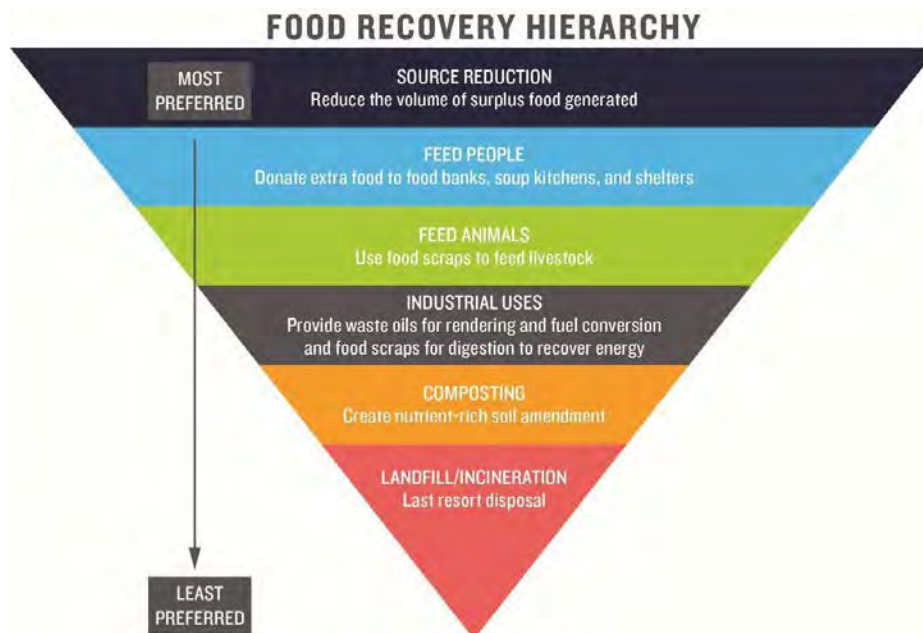
Strategies:

1. Encourage and support residents, businesses and institutions within the township, such as public schools and childcare centers, to increase the proportion of sustainable and locally grown foods on their menus.
2. Reduce Barriers to use of the Farmers Market to purchase more locally grown/prepared foods such as by offering shuttle services, market awareness through Meridian Cares target communities, delivering food boxes to homebound community members, and increasing bus service near the Farmers Market.
3. Encourage and support the development of farm to school and school garden programs in school districts in the Township.
4. Reduce barriers to initiating and continuing farm businesses within the Township.
5. Initiate/Revisit farmland conservation/preservation collaboration with County or locally to keep more farmland in farming locally to help support the market and local food needs. Work with the Township planning committee to incorporate farmland preservation/protection and encourage viable use of farmland in the Township master plan.

Objective #3: Decrease Organic Waste by Increasing Composting and Other Organic Waste Diversion Practices.

Strategies:

1. Collaborate Regionally to encourage joint cooperation with neighboring municipalities wherever possible to address systemic organic waste challenges.
2. Consider developing community composting (larger than backyard composting/smaller than industrial composting) site(s) to develop quality compost for community gardens and contribute toward development of self-reliant food system skills with residents.
3. Consider a pilot residential organic waste pick-up within a geography or drop-off service at several convenient locations around the Township
4. Explore the feasibility of an anaerobic digester.
5. Support efforts to increase organic waste management in commercial establishments like restaurants, independent living facilities, nursing homes, grocery stores and convenience markets.
6. Increase education and outreach to residents, commercial establishments, and schools to increase composting , including topics such as vermiculture education.
7. Consider policy change(s) such as requiring a percentage of top soil fill to include commercial grade compost in the permitting process for replacement or new construction. Nutrient rich compost builds soil vitality for healthier plants/produce, flourishing trees (to resist disease, provide shade and wildlife habitat), and increases soil absorbency to fight against flooding.



GOOD FOOD to SMART COMPOSTING



Meridian Good Food to Smart Composting Team and My Green Michigan are partnering with you and others to encourage food scrap collection and composting. Compost can improve the structure and health of soil, retain moisture and nutrients, attract beneficial organisms, reduce the need for pesticides and fertilizers, and help avoid flooding. Food scraps and spent yard material are a resource, not a waste!



GET INVOLVED:

- Compost at home or in your neighborhood. Check out the composter sale below, purchase a bin at your local hardware store, or build your own.
- Participate in the food scrap/yard waste drop off program.
- Donate food to the Gleaning Program. Purchase produce from vendors who display this logo at a box at their booth. Donations are provided to six non-profits in our area.
- Join us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/groups/goodfoodtosmartrecycling

GREEN MERIDIAN

517-853-4466

recycle@meridian.mi.us

www.meridian.mi.us/greenmeridian






Composter Sale

GOOD FOOD to SMART COMPOSTING



FOOD SCRAP DROP OFF LOCATIONS:

-  Meridian Farmers Market - 1995 Central Park Dr, Okemos
-  Hammond Farms - 2247 E. Saginaw, East Lansing
-  Meridian Recycling Center - 5976 E Lake Dr, Haslett

*All locations open for drop off during business hours.

ACCEPTABLE COMPOSTABLE MATERIALS



Fruits / Vegetables



Dairy Products



Bread / Grains



Coffee grounds/
filters, & tea
leaves



Meat, bones,
& grease



Compostable products,
unbleached paper
towels & napkins

Biodegradable
Products Institute



BPI Certified
Compostable Ware
i.e. bags, containers,
silverware, etc

NON-ACCEPTABLE MATERIALS



Plastic
including plastic
bags, bottles,
silverware, straws



Metal



Glass



Pet Waste



Bleached
Paper



877-304-5810

Office@mygreenmi.com

www.mygreenmi.com



Budgeting for Programs Related to Green Team/Recycling/Wetlands/Green Grants

Thanks to support from the Environmental Commission, Staff, and the Board, we have growing support for our efforts. Director Opsommer has stated that a potential contract amendment this year may fully support all Green Grant proposals received through April. He also feels that an extension and expansion of our Wetland and Green Grant budget is reasonable for 2024, from \$20,000 to \$25,000. This packet includes the latest descriptions of potential budget projections for the Wetlands Education Team and Recycling as well as a description of the Green Grant Process.

Wetland Education: The Wetland Education Team is making good progress. Details on signage are beginning to emerge. (thank you Emma, Kendra, and W.E.T.)

Green Team: I typically request sponsorships early in the year. Volunteers collect donations (and fees for monitors, a.c./dehumidifiers/fridges – items with coolant. Sponsorships and donations typically offset costs for things like electronic recycling, t-shirts, signage, etc. See the green items on the “Recycling Budget” in the packet. Thank you Bernie Blonde, Accountant.

Green Grants: See the process attached. Thank you John Sarver.

Other Grants and Grant Possibilities: As far as grants go, the Township received approximately \$2,225,000 in Federal and State Grants in 2022 (not including Parks). Without ARPA, this would be closer to \$725,000. Each grant has varying level of application and reporting requirement. Do to ARPA, road projects, and other factors, staff a pretty maxed out when it comes to taking on new projects so a new projects should have a good fit with board, staff, and volunteer priorities and abilities.

Meridian Township Green Grants Review Process

Eligibility: The Environmental Commission is prioritizing projects in schools but also encourages proposals from non-profits, congregations, neighborhood organizations, clubs, and others.

Eligible Projects: Project ideas can include: • Native Plants, Shrubs, and Trees • Buffer Zones/Natural Vegetative Buffers • Rain Gardens/Bioswales • Green Roofs/Living Walls • Outdoor Classrooms or Gathering Spaces • Natural Shorelines • Permeable Pavement • Energy-Related Projects • Ideas that involve birds, bats, bees, butterflies, trees, native plants, pollinators, arts, science, signage, stormwater management, alternative energy, food, composting, gardens, nature, and more! Examples can be found at: • www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/what-green-infrastructure • www.mywatersheds.org/local-green-infrastructure-projects • www.greenschoolyards.org • bit.ly/meridiangreenmap

Project Proposals: 1. A brief description of project 2. Team leader(s) and team members 3. Outreach plan to inform the community 4. Expected materials needed 5. Project schedule 6. Project budget (matching support and in-kind contributions are encouraged) 7. Other optional items: operation and/or maintenance plan, pictures, rough designs/concept drawings, etc.

Project Evaluation: Proposals are evaluated and scored by the Green Grants Committee based upon their educational value, ecological impacts, and clarity. The Green Grants Committee recommends projects to the Environmental Commission for the final approval.

Timetable

Mar 15 Submit proposals to Green Grants Team (c/o harvey@meridian.mi.us). Deadline can be extended if proposal requests are less than budgeted dollars.

March Green Grant Committee begins review. Committee makes recommendations to Environmental Commission.

Apr 1 Contracts awards begin, 50% payment processed, balance upon completion
Ongoing Awardees share status reports. Submit final invoice when complete.

Oct/ Nov Presentations invited to Environmental Commission, Green Dialogue, and/or Township Board

Dec 30 Project completion deadline (unless extension granted)

2023 WETLAND EDUCATIONAL TEAM GOALS

TIMELY EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

Wetland educational information with simple dos and don'ts to be sent to the public before spring and fall. This information is best to be sent in February before residents and contractors start yard work. Also again at the end of September/early October to avoid yard waste getting dumped into wetlands.

Modalities: Mailers, Green Gazette, Meridian Happenings, Meridian Conservation Corps, Nextdoor, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Farmer's Market, HOMTV and other media

Costs:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| • Spring Residential Mailer mailed to 2505 residents | \$ 898.61 |
| • Spring Residential Postage | \$ 684.95 |
| • Spring Contractor Notice mailed to 29 contractors | \$ |
| • Spring Contractor Postage | \$ 14.50 |

EDUCATIONAL SIGNAGE

Strategically located educational signage to inform the public regarding the critical functions of wetlands, ways to protect them, and the wetland ordinance.

Interpretive Signs: approximately \$985/sign

Proposed Locations:

- Hilbrook Park and Central Park (next to wetland buffer projects)
- Inter-Urban Pathway

Wetland Ordinance Signs: \$15-\$40/sign

Proposed Locations:

- Around Lake Lansing
- Inter-Urban Pathway
- Vernal pools

		<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2023 Budgeted</u>		
101-000.000-647.050	<u>SPONSOR REVENUE</u>				<u>Invoice Sent out but not yet paid</u>	
	<i>Clerical-Technical Union of MSU</i>	250.00	1,000.00		Friedland Ind	500.00
	<i>Delta Dental of Michigan</i>	2,500.00				
	<i>Absolute Environmental Solutions</i>	1,000.00				
	<i>My Green Michigan</i>	250.00				
	<i>Hammond Farms</i>	500.00	500.00			
	<i>Granger Waste Services</i>	1,000.00	1,000.00			
	<i>Absolute Solar</i>		500.00			
	<i>Consumers</i>		500.00			
		5,500.00	3,500.00			
101-000.000-647.040	<u>RECYCLING REVENUE (EVENTS)</u>					
	<i>Spring</i>	1,440.76	1,122.13			
	<i>Fall</i>	5,239.30				
		6,680.06	1,122.13			
	Total Revenue	12,180.06	4,622.13			
	<u>RECYCLING EXPENSES</u>		<u>as of 4/30/2023</u>	<u>2023 Budgeted</u>		<u>Current Purchase Orders</u>
101-170.272-701.000	<i>Salaries</i>	42,042.00	14,926.00	43,700.00		
101-170.272-710.000	<i>Longevity</i>	640.00	640.00	960.00		
101-170.272-714.000	<i>FICA</i>	3,235.00	1,179.00	3,500.00		
101-170.272-715.000	<i>Health Insurance</i>	10,505.00	2,190.00	8,000.00		
101-170.272-716.000	<i>Life/Disability Insurance</i>	174.00	77.00	250.00		
101-170.272-717.000	<i>Pension</i>	3,934.00	1,493.00	4,400.00		
101-170.272-717.500	<i>VantageCare</i>	787.00	299.00	900.00		
101-170.272-718.000	<i>Workers Compensation</i>	145.00	39.00	400.00		
101-170.272-728.000	<i>Operating Supplies</i>	18.00	-	100.00		
101-170.272-820.000	<i>Contractual Service</i>	24,000.00	6,000.00	24,000.00	Operation of Recycling Center (\$24,000)	
101-170.272-870.000	<i>Mileage</i>	144.00	-	-		
101-170.272-880.000	<i>Community Promotion</i>	1,656.00	187.00	2,000.00		
101-170.272-888.500	<i>Recycling - Special Projects</i>	15,717.00	321.00	10,000.00	Monthly Service Charge for PortaPotty @ Transfer Station (\$1,056.00)	
101-170.272-934.000	<i>Grounds Maintenance</i>	8,250.00	4,500.00	10,000.00	Recycling Center Service Drive Maintenance (\$10,000)	
		111,247.00	31,851.00	108,210.00		



Green Days!

<p>Jun 17 9am-1pm Marketplace on the Green 1995 Central Park Dr., Okemos</p>	<p>Summer Green Fair</p>
<p>Jul 15 9am-1pm Marketplace on the Green 1995 Central Park Dr., Okemos</p>	<p>Summer Green Fair & Electric Vehicle Demonstrations</p>
<p>Aug 19 8am-2pm Marketplace on the Green 1995 Central Park Dr., Okemos</p>	<p>Compost Bin & Rain Barrel Distribution</p>
<p>Sep 23 9am-1pm * location to be determined</p>	<p>Electronics Recycling (Electronics & Small Appliance Take Back for Consumers Energy Customers)</p>
<p>Oct 7 9am-1pm Starts at Marketplace 1995 Central Park Dr., Okemos</p>	<p>Sustainable Home & Landscape Tour & Coat Drive</p>

With support from

