



**AGENDA**  
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
November 1, 2023 7 pm

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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

Environmental Commissioner List/Openings

Other?

6. OLD BUSINESS

Climate Sustainability Plan (<https://sites.google.com/view/climate-sustainability-plan/home>)

Other?

7. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Staff update: <https://sites.google.com/view/staff-update/home>

8. PUBLIC REMARKS
9. ADJOURNMENT

## Environmental Commission Minutes: October 4, 2023 (draft)

**Attending:** John Sarver, Ned Jackson, Tom Frazier, Bill McConnell, LeRoy Harvey, Amelia Saffron, Graham Diedrich. Excused: Kendra Grasseschi, Emma Andrecheck, Courtney Wisinski, and Anna Colby.

**Minutes:** Environmental Commission (EC) Minutes adopted without changes

### **New Business:**

**Energy Team Recommendations about next Solar Project:** Sarver mentioned that Dan Opsommer recommended the North Fire station as the next solar project. The Energy Team supports this recommendation for several reasons including visibility, the opportunity to demonstrate and gain experience with carport-mounted systems, etc. McConnell mentioned Wisinski's memo about the E.C. Budget indicating support for solar project in 2024 and other EC-related initiatives.

### **Old Business:**

**Climate Sustainability Plan:** Jackson incorporated some of Grasseschi's comments in the latest water section. Harvey also added comments from Sam Lovall. There was discussion about how we might measure progress for green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) improvements. McConnell suggests that GSI is now included more regularly in local and regional projects. Sarver suggested we might use the number of projects... For example, three-five green grants. Harvey mentioned the Green Infrastructure audit might facilitate the numbers. McConnell mentioned that low impact development is already called out in other Master Plan, Transportation Plan and other regional priorities. For example: road projects that require 5% of funds for non-motorized transportation. Jackson suggested that something similar could be suggested for GSI. Frazier suggested a correction about the number of people served by ELMWSA (includes Lansing and East Lansing) and to strike Township.

On a related note: McConnell attended a presentation on the Montgomery Drain which includes several features to reduce the amount of run-off and pollution from the Frandor area by 90%. McConnell suggests that we might invite the Drain Commissioners office to discuss ways we might collaborate. McConnell mentioned that the Okemos Consolidated Drain (serving the Mall) might include some creative green infrastructure. Sarver asked if there are green infrastructure planned for this. There is uncertainty, but McConnell mentioned the compensating cut related to Buddies Pizza behind the main fire station.

Sarver asked about next steps. Suggestions include adding pictures, preparing a "Flipsnack" (accessible format for the public, with more likelihood for public comment). Harvey will check with Communications about preparing a flipsnack – as well as how editing might occur. Sarver asked about timing for approval by the Township Board. McConnell suggested a future presentation to the Board and resolution. Harvey will check with Planning Department about the timing and the language for a resolution. We will check with Colby to see if the Food section is complete and if there is an update for our next meeting.

### **Staff Update:**

**Reappointments:** Sarver, Saffron, Frazier confirmed reappointment. Harvey reports that Emma Andrecheck has a conflicting commitment and needs to resign. Diedrich and McConnell expire 2025. Jackson, Grasseschi, Colby are to be confirmed. McConnell will check with Colby and Grasseschi about

reappointment. There are currently openings for two Student Alternates. Frazier asked about staggering terms so we don't have as many positions expiring at the same time.

Harvey mentioned the upcoming "green tours" on October 7 as well as a table at the Farmers Market.

**Energy Team:** Sarver mentioned the Solarize workshop planned for Oct 17 at 6pm. There have several successful Solarize workshops over the summer.

**Green Grants:** Sarver reported be asked by a reporter about the Green Grants program.

**Green Team:** Frazier provided an update on the electronics recycling event which included 400 visitors. Over 40 appliances were collected. 60+ volunteers helped including many Okemos High School students, Key Club members (Haslett) and several Township employees. Frazier also mentioned the eco-tours this coming weekend. There was also discussion about the grant proposal for a recycling center, which was not approved and the possibilities for next steps. Harvey mentioned interest from the Food Team about organics collection. McConnell asked about interest in decentralized collection.

**Brownfield:** Jackson reported that there has not been a meeting recently. He also reports activity at the old L & L Shopping Center.

**Earth Club:** Saffron reported that Stella Chen and Sarah Lee are the new co-chairs of the Earth Club. They had their first meeting on September 9. Projects are continuing such as the podcast and sustainable fashion.

**Planning Commission:** McConnell reported that there have been some concerns about a potential development near Park Lake and Grand River. There are similar concerns around Park Lake and Burcham. There are some potential to see a wetland use permit. There are nearby neighborhoods that are concerned about the development.

**Transportation:** The Transportation Commission has had some resignations. More members are needed. Harvey mentioned that Director Opsommer recently did a bike tour with Tim Potter and others. There has been some discussion about bike-friendly communities and Safe Routes to School. The County Road Department was not excited about a recommendation to put refuge islands on Bennett Rd by Chippewa School.

Meeting adjourned at 8:03 PM

[Recording at <https://meridianmi.new.swagit.com/videos/273272>]



## Green Grants

The Green Grant Program was launched in 2021. Heightened interest and awareness about the importance of wetland protection, flooding prevention, outdoor education, climate change, and two years of successful projects have inspired Meridian Township to continue this initiative in 2024. The Environmental Commission is prioritizing projects in schools but also encourages proposals from non-profits, congregations, neighborhood organizations, clubs, and others.

### Project Possibilities

- 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!

More information about green infrastructure and Green Grants:

- 10/23 article about Meridian Green Grants:  
<https://news.jrn.msu.edu/2023/10/meridian-townships-environmental-grants-impact-local-communities/>
- [www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/what-green-infrastructure](http://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/what-green-infrastructure)
- [www.mywatersheds.org/local-green-infrastructure-projects](http://www.mywatersheds.org/local-green-infrastructure-projects)
- [www.greenschoolyards.org](http://www.greenschoolyards.org)
- [bit.ly/meridiangreenmap](https://bit.ly/meridiangreenmap)

### Request for Proposals

Please include:

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.

Proposal 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

Any Time	Discuss ideas with your organization, business, association, school, and the Green Grant Team. Learn more about “green grants” and possibilities for your landscapes.
Mar 15	Submit proposal Green Grants Team (c/o <a href="mailto:harvey@meridian.mi.us">harvey@meridian.mi.us</a> ) Deadline can be extended if proposal requests are less than budgeted dollars.
March	Green Grant Committee begins review.
Apr 1	Grantee completes <a href="#">Agreement Form/Contract</a> and W-9, 50% payment processed, balance on completion.
Ongoing	Awardees share status reports. Grantees submit final invoice when complete.
Oct and Nov	Presentations invited to Environmental Commission, Green Dialogue, and/or Township Board
Dec 30	Project completion deadline (unless extension granted)

Meridian Township seeks to make this process as simple as possible. If you have questions or would like to discuss ideas, please contact LeRoy Harvey at 517.853.4466 or [Harvey@meridian.mi.us](mailto:Harvey@meridian.mi.us) or any member of the Green Grants Committee (John Sarver, LeRoy Harvey, Courtney Wisinski). The Environmental Commission may make changes to this project as needed.