

August 2, 2023 Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes (draft)

Attending: John Sarver, Anna Colby, Ned Jackson, Courtney Wisinski, Tom Frazier, Graham Diedrich, Bill McConnell, and LeRoy Harvey

Approval of Agenda: Unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes: Jackson mentioned Grasseschi's concern that recent edits to the water section should reflect contributions from multiple authors. Frazier and Colby also had a couple typos and edits. [Colby suggested bracketing post-meeting additions from staff or others]. Minutes approved unanimously with changes.

Climate Sustainability Plan (CSP):

- **Water:** Ned will attempt to add in Kendra's additional suggestions. Land preservation members suggested we stress drought more prominently. McConnell asked if the iteration of the water section might be completed the next EC meeting.
- **Food:** Colby hopes to incorporate feedback from the EC in a future edit of the Food Section. She would also like to run parts for the food section by Meridian Cares and the Land Preservation Advisory Board.
- **Energy:** Wisinski mentioned that we might include the latest solar plan in the CSP. This plan provides a path toward our renewable energy goals and is included in the recent Board Packet. Sarver mentioned that if there are budget priorities, a tiered approach might make sense. There is also interest in efficiency gains and electrical vehicles which will affect the energy bills. McConnell mentioned that the solar study could also be included as an addendum. Sarver that the total \$1.8 million estimate would be offset by a 30% Direct Pay Program (credit) for [staff note: \$540,000 is 30% of \$1.8 million] renewable energy systems. It was suggested that the Energy Team could review the latest plan and report back to the EC.
- **General:** Sam Lovall, a writer and Green Grant recipient, has offered edits. The latest version can be found at <https://sites.google.com/view/climate-sustainability-plan/home> and is set to default to suggestion mode. Diedrich also offered to suggest some wording related to equity, measurement, and roles. McConnell suggested that the equity statement be offered in a preamble. Sarver mentioned that the monitoring and evaluation piece be explored and invited Diedrich to share his thoughts. He's seen examples of this in other communities (Detroit and Kalamazoo) that mention short, medium, and longer term goals and who (committee, department, commission, etc.) might be responsible. Jackson cautioned about getting too broad. For example, policies like DEI may be better articulated in other policy statements.

Reports and Announcements

- **Staff Report:** Harvey's updates can be found at <http://bit.ly/update-leroy>. August includes a link to the CSP, a letter from a resident complaining about requirement to mow during dry times, Opsommer's Solar memo to the Board, a report on the Graham Fellows program, Green Grants, and Green Burial.

- **Energy Team:** Sarver reports that there is discussion about EV charging. Consumers has a new Community EV pilot project. This is targeted toward renters. Another meeting included an overview of the Solar Plan developed by Absolute Solar.
- **Planning:** McConnell reports that the Planning Commission will review a draft of the Master Plan. [Staff adds a link: <https://www.flipsnack.com/homtv214life/2023-meridian-township-master-plan/full-view.html>]
- **Board:** Wisinski reports that the first Pride Celebration will be held Aug 26 at the Marketplace on the Green.
- **Wetland:** Grasseschi provided a report shared by McConnell which included success of the wetland mailing. Emma would like to include invasive species. A draft budget was prepared by Emma, LeRoy, and Grasseschi.
- **Green Team:** Frazier mentioned the recent Green Fair. Aug. 19th is the rain barrel and compost bin distribution. There is also an Electronics recycling event in September 23. Oct 7 is the Sustainable Home Tour and Winter Coat Drive.
- **Food Team:** Colby shared an update from Lafferty on the Good Food/Smart Composting Committee. There is growth in both the Gleaning Project and the food waste collection at the Market. The next meeting will be Aug 10 on Zoom which will include discussion about Holland's gleaning initiative. Val's also been discussing larger scale composting possibly at the Meridian Recycling Center with EGLE and Hammond Farms. John Biernbaum will do a compost demo at the sale in August. She's been looking at state and federal policy related to food issues. McConnell mentioned a regional report which was a bit discouraging from an economic perspective. McConnell also asked about County level planning on solid waste. Frazier mentioned that the planning process will take several years. [Staff note: There is a [planning meeting to discuss on Sep 21](#) with EGLE/MRC]
- **Brownfield Redevelopment Authority:** Jackson reports no new projects.

Meeting adjourned at 7:59.