



AGENDA
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
October 2, 2024 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

Greenspace Plan

Resolution in support of retiring commissioner Graham Diedrich.

Other

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 🌐 Staff <http://bit.ly/update-leroy>
- 🌐 Liaisons
- 🌐 Teams (Energy, Green, Food, Green Burial, Green Grants, etc.)
- 🌐 Haslett/Okemos High School
- 🌐 Other

8. PUBLIC REMARKS

9. ADJOURNMENT

Environmental Commission (EC) Minutes September 4, 2024 (draft)

Present: Graham Diedrich, Andrea Paul, John Sarver, Yu Man Lee, Cynthia Peterson, Tom Frazier, Harrison Batten, Peter Trezise (Township Board liaison), and LeRoy Harvey (staff)

Approval of Agenda: McConnell suggested we begin with introductions.

Introductions:

- McConnell has been in the Township since 2005. He has been on both the Environmental and Planning Commission and serves as a liaison with these groups.
- Batten is a sophomore at Haslett High School. He became interested in the environment through his teachers and his involvement with several clubs and extracurricular activities.
- Paul is an MSU graduate in Fisheries and Wildlife. She is also a DLZ intern and will soon move to the Mannick Group. She joined the EC in January 2024.
- Sarver has been in the Township since 1977. He's been involved with the Energy Team and the EC for many years. He retired from the State Energy Office in 2010 and has continued doing energy-related projects since.
- Lee has been an Okemos resident since 2010. She's been on the Land Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB) for about 8 years and the EC since January. She is a Zoologist with Michigan Natural Features Inventory and works with Wetland Education Team.
- Diedrich joined the EC in 2023. He graduated from MSU with degrees in International Relations and Public Policy. He's doing research for the Smithsonian and NOAA and is interested in decarbonization and environmental justice.
- Peterson teaches chemistry at Haslett HS and advises the Student Sustainability Club. She's done research on coffee in Haiti and recently joined the EC to get more involved in environmental topics.
- Frazier has been a Meridian resident since 95. He's recently retired from the Michigan Township Association and has been an EC member for 4 years.
- Trezise has been a Trustee on the Township Board since January and has been in liaison to the EC since February. He's been a resident of the township since 1986.
- Harvey has worked for the Township since 2008. He hopes to scale back to part time in 2025. He has a Master degree in sustainability from MSU.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes were approved with a couple corrections.

Resolutions of Appreciation: Harvey distributed Resolutions of Appreciation for Amelia Saffron and Anna Colby. Draft resolutions were read by McConnell and unanimously supported by the Commission.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory: Diedrich mentioned his recent work on GHG inventories for Rockford and Grand Haven through the Catalyst Communities program. He suggests that a similar project for Meridian could help with future climate action plans next summer. This could be a "[Catalyst Community project](#)" if we continue to participate in this program. Sarver suggested possible collaboration with East Lansing and Lansing and asked whether Diedrich might offer guidance for a Catalyst Fellowship student. The scope could be internal (government) or community-wide. Harvey will share a list of projects from last term. (Staff adds the list of 2024 projects) https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gwYTI05iX1YWdeKvZV6kuzw5lh_LSogx/view?usp=sharing). These are paid fellowships with staff from Meridian and U of M. Lee asked if other projects could also be considered and Diedrich replied affirmatively. McConnell asked about the process for identifying projects. Harvey projects are discussed in the spring with communities, advisors, and students. *(Staff add: [*2024 CLC Projects are now viewable on-line](#))

Township Budget: Lee asked about the Climate Sustainability Budget. Trezise mentioned that unexpended funds will carry over from this year but additional \$ are not in the budget. There is \$20,000 is currently in the budget to continue the Green Grants program. There is always the opportunity to amend the budget. Harvey mentioned the most recent update on CSP in the last EC packet. He also provided a verbal update related to existing projects (gleaning, signage at the recycling center, etc.) Trezise suggests an update on the budget will be helpful (\$ spent, committed, etc.). McConnell suggested that this be a standing item on our EC agenda.

Wetland Ordinance Revision: Lee asked about the timeline for making changes to the Wetland Ordinance. She also mentioned that this is of interest to the LPAB as well. McConnell suggested that this might be a good discussion between the Planning Commission and the Environmental Commission. Trezise mentions that the process might take some time. There has been some discussion about setbacks which have been brought up at the Board level.

New Ideas: Harvey explained an email encouraging new new project ideas. Most successful project start as ideas and grow as they gain momentum.

Greenspace Plan Update: McConnell mentioned that it's been 20 years since we've updated our Greenspace Plan. There have been a lot of changes over these years (wetland delineations, land preserve/park expansions, etc.). He proposes a study group to explore possibilities and asked Paul and Lee if they might help provide guidance. Peterson and McConnell also offered to provide assistance. McConnell is hoping for suggestions at the next meeting.

Graham Gotta Job! Diedrich recently landed with the MSU Writing Center and a job teaching in the Bailey Scholars program at MSU. He will also be travelling quite a bit with his research projects at NOAA and Smithsonian Institute. He hopes to be back some day to assist as needed.

Staff Report: Harvey shared a couple items in this month's staff report and deferred updates to the various committees (Green Team, Energy Team, etc.). A tree planting project proposed by DPW Director Opsommer suggested for funding through the Climate Sustainability Fund. Harvey drafted an RFP for this. He also distributed an updated [Commissioner List](#).

Township Board: Trezise reported that Treasurer Deschaine was approved as a representative on the Material Management Committee for the County. The Board is also starting the process of hiring a new manager. Sarver asked about the budget for Harvey's position as. Trezise responded that a full time position for an Environmental Engineer is being proposed in the current budget. Trezise also mentioned a community survey is being conducted currently with about 300 responses.

Land Preservation: Lee reported that there was a burn at the Davis Foster Preserve.

Energy Team: Sarver reported that the last Solarize meeting will be held on 9/17. The Energy Team has helped with 4 Solarize workshops in partnership with Williamstown Twp, City of Lansing, City of East Lansing and Meridian Township. Harvey added that there has been discussion about purchasing some hands-on energy education kits for future events. Sarver added that a local teacher is helping with this.

Green Team: Frazier reported that the Green Team is preparing for the fall electronics recycling event on September 21 at the Meridian Mall. The Team is also collecting small appliances and coats.

Food Team: McConnell reports that the Gleaning Project is going great guns with food donations

Green Dialogue: Harvey reported that representatives of Takeout Takeout (reusable food/beverage containers), Eastside Compost, and Meridian Farmers Market will be at the next dialogue.

Green Burial: Frazier reported that he is now a liaison to the Green Burial Committee. Bruce Peffers with the GBC is preparing a summary. Trezise suggested that the GBC make a presentation to the Board and Frazier offered to relay a request and that purchasing policies may require additional proposals for a feasibility study.

Haslett High School: Batten reported that the school year is just beginning to plan activities for the year. Batten is working with SEAL – Students for Environmental Activism & Leadership. Teacher Bridget Booth is the Advisor.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:11pm. Recording available at <https://meridianmi.new.swagit.com/videos/314176>

RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION

At a meeting of the Meridian Environmental Commission on October 2, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.,

PRESENT: _____

ABSENT: _____

The following resolution was offered by Commissioner _____ and supported by Commissioner _____.

WHEREAS, Graham Diedrich has been an active member of the Meridian Township Environmental Commission for 3 years; and

WHEREAS, Graham has assisted with the development of Meridian Townships Climate Sustainability Plan; and

WHEREAS, Graham has engaged youth and adults at local events with hands-on energy activities and outreach in partnership with Solarize Meridian, Meridian Township Energy Team, and Michigan State University;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN, INGHAM COUNTY, MICHIGAN as follows:

The Environmental Commission of the Charter Township of Meridian, by means of resolution, extends to Graham Diedrich grateful thanks for his voluntary and exemplary efforts.

ADOPTED: YEAS: _____

NAYS: _____

I, the undersigned Chair of the Environmental Commission, hereby certify that the foregoing is a copy of a resolution adopted at a regular meeting of the Environmental Commission on the 2nd day of October, 2024.

William McConnell, Chair

The Ongoing Evolution of Environmental Programs at Meridian

Recent discussions about reducing my hours in 2025 has sparked a number of questions:

- What does LeRoy do and what's he going to do?*
- How might we shuffle roles and responsibilities?
- What's important? What do we continue and what can we let go of?
- Who decides?
- What can we learn from this?

A challenge we all face is finding time in our busy lives to reflect and envision possibilities. Taking time to listen, brainstorm, and imagine options can be a challenge when people already feel overwhelmed or overloaded. At the same time, positive changes happen if we're open to them, imaginative, and even willing to be surprised.

Imagining possibilities is something I've enjoyed here at Meridian. I'm currently envisioning continuing to work as an employee or contractor and eventually scaling back my hours once a mutually agreeable plan is in place.

This [link](#) includes my current job description, new potential descriptions and some recent research on staffing environmental initiatives [This research](#) is a reminder that there are many ways we might staff our sustainability goals and initiatives – volunteers, committees, part-time staff, existing staff, contractors, etc.

I love the idea of continuing to support the citizens, staff, and teams I've been working with – some for 3 months and others for over 30 years! I'm also open to taking on new projects and roles with the Township, perhaps working with other departments on topics of mutual interest. Thanks for listening.

I welcome your thoughts!

LeRoy

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