

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
AGENDA**

Wednesday, January 4, 2017

**Town Hall Room
Meridian Municipal Building
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864**

Work Session

1. Call to Order at 6:30 p.m.
2. Approval of the work session agenda
3. New Business
4. Work Items
 - a. Recommendations for draft Master Plan
5. Public remarks
6. Adjournment

Regular Meeting

1. Call to Order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Approval of agenda
3. Approval of minutes of the December 7, 2016 meeting
4. Public Remarks
5. New Business
 - a. Review of 2016 Goals, discuss 2017 Goals
6. Chair's Report
7. Staff Report
8. Resolution of Appreciation for Vice-Chair Lise Schools
9. Commission Liaison/Workgroup Reports (Land Preservation, Energy, Parks)
10. Public Remarks
11. Adjournment

Environmental Commission Recommendations Regarding

Future Land Use in the Township Master Plan

December 7, 2016

The August draft of the Meridian Township Master Plan includes a section entitled “Community Profile” (Chapter 4), which describes the current demographic conditions and land use in the Township, as well as its existing community facilities and natural features and open space. Inclusion of the latter, Natural Features and Open Space (§4.23), in this chapter – rather than in Chapter 2 (Future Land Use) – suggests that the Master Plan accepts the status quo – in other word, that it envisions no further land conservation or preservation. Rather, the current draft approaches the issue indirectly: first, by encouraging residential/commercial development in three Potential Intensity Change Areas (or PICAs, commonly referred to as “infill”), and through reference to an Urban Service Boundary, which is intended to discourage development in the eastern third of the Township by restricting provision of public utilities. While these two measures are laudable, we do not believe they are sufficient, and recommend more definite steps to envision the future of the Township’s natural features and open space.

Specific Recommendations

1. The Future Land Use Map should include a category that clearly refers to Open Space. Included in this category might be those parcels currently shown as:
 - a. “Parks/Land Preservation” (including township and county parks, as well as land preserves owned by the Township and those under conservation easements);
 - b. “Institutional” (which needn’t be subdivided into eight sub-categories);
 - c. “Agricultural/Educational” (which include a dozen parcels owned by Michigan State University); and
 - d. Parcels containing significant areas of high quality undeveloped land not currently benefiting from any other form of protection.
 - i. High quality undeveloped land is defined by the Priority Conservation Corridors specified in the Township’s Greenspace Plan
 - ii. Other forms of protection includes ownership as specified in (a) – (c) above, and protected wetlands, as defined in the Township’s Wetland Protection Ordinance
 - iii. Significant area could mean >0.25 acres or >2.0 acres, in keeping with definitions employed in the Township’s Wetland Protection Ordinance
2. The section on “Parks” in Chapter 2 (Future Land Use) should be renamed Parks and Open Space, and should explain the process outlined above to identify future open space. This section should also include the section that current precedes it, concerning “Institutional” land use.

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES
Meridian Municipal Building – Town Hall Room
December 7, 2016 - DRAFT**

WORK SESSION

PRESENT: Chair Bill McConnell, Vice-Chair Lise Schools, Ned Jackson, John Sarver, Susan Masten, Jim Kielbaso, Ben Holland

ABSENT: Donald Dickmann

STAFF: Senior Planner Peter Menser

OTHERS: Planning Commission Chair John Scott-Craig

1. CALL SPECIAL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair McConnell called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE WORK SESSION AGENDA

Approved by consent without objection.

3. WORK ITEMS

A. Recommendations on draft Master Plan

Chair McConnell presented a map showing Meridian Township showing vulnerable open space in Meridian Township and explained his memo regarding recommendations to the Master Plan. Planning Commission Chairperson John Scott-Craig updated the Environmental Commission on the status of the Master Plan update, stating that the Planning Commission intends to approve the draft plan and send it off to the Township Board for review for the end of 2016. Environmental Commission discussion included the following:

- Potential impacts to private property owners if parcel labeled as open space
- Definition and status of areas identified as PICA's on Master Plan
- Difficulty of changing land use categories in the Future Land Use Map

The Environmental Commission decided informally to add the discussion of the Master Plan recommendation drafted by Chair McConnell to the regular meeting agenda for a potential vote to transmit it to the Planning Commission for consideration.

4. PUBLIC REMARKS

None

5. ADJOURNMENT

Approved by consent without objection at approximately 6:57 p.m.

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES
Meridian Municipal Building – Town Hall Room
December 7, 2016 - DRAFT**

REGULAR MEETING

PRESENT: Chair Bill McConnell, Vice-Chair Lise Schools, Commissioners John Sarver, Ben Holland, Ned Jackson, Jim Kielbaso, Susan Masten

ABSENT: Donald Dickmann

STAFF: Senior Planner Peter Menser

OTHERS: Planning Commission Chair John Scott-Craig

1. CALL REGULAR MEETING TO ORDER

Chair McConnell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

- MOTION BY COMMISSIONER JACKSON TO APPROVE AGENDA. SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER MASTEN. MOTION APPROVED 7-0.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 3, 2016 MEETING

- MOTION BY VICE-CHAIR SCHOOLS TO APPROVE MINUTES. SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER JACKSON. MOTION APPROVED 7-0.

4. PUBLIC REMARKS

5. ACTION ITEM: Wetland Use Permit #16-06 (Stockwell)

Staff presented a brief overview of the wetland use permit request from Ken Stockwell. Applicants Amanda Hopper and Ken Stockwell summarized the project and described the reasons the request is being made. Environmental Commission discussion included the following:

- Concern over demonstrated public need for the proposed activity
 - Traffic crash data around project site
 - Access to stormwater basin for maintenance and to remove sediment
 - Difficulty of grading site due to significant changes in elevation
 - Concern over lack of information on proposed alternatives
 - Encouragement for applicant to showcase wetland features on site
 - Status of existing house on the property
 - Preference for stormwater basin to be landscaped
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- MOTION BY MEMBER JACKSON TO CONCUR WITH TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF WETLAND USE PERMIT #16-06 TO PLANNING COMMISSION CONDITIONED ON INGHAM COUNTY DRAIN COMMISSIONER APPROVAL. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER MASTEN. MOTION APPROVED 6-1 (MCCONNELL).

6. **GREEN THEMES PRESENTATION: SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ACTION PLAN, LEROY HARVEY, MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP RECYCLING COORDINATOR**

Mr. Harvey described the Meridian Township Energy Team and its early successes in saving money and energy for the Township by initiating projects that reduce energy consumption. Mr. Harvey also reviewed in detail elements of the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan document put together by the Meridian Energy Team, which includes information on energy efficiency, renewable energy, recycling, and transportation. Environmental Commission discussion included the following:

- Importance of reviewing development projects in context of CO2 loss/gain
- U.S. has regressed in terms of solid waste recycling
- Importance of educating residents about not watering lawn
- Concern over obstacles to residents in installing solar panels

7. **2017 MEETING SCHEDULE**

- MOTION BY COMMISSIONER JACKSON TO APPROVE 2017 MEETING SCHEDULE. SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER MASTEN.

8. **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Chair McConnell reported the following:

- Attendance at the work sessions of the Planning Commission to discuss the draft Master Plan
- Offered congratulations and appreciation to the new Township Board and Supervisor
- Suggested reviewing the progress of the 2016 Environmental Commission goals at the next meeting on January 4, 2017
- Expressed appreciation to Vice Chair Lise Schools for work on Environmental Commission

9. **STAFF REPORT**

- a. **Garry Rowe groundwater project/presentation** – Staff provided a brief update regarding the water testing efforts by former Ingham County Sanitarian Garry Rowe. Mr. Rowe will likely be attending an upcoming meeting to present his findings.

10. **COMMISSIONER SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

Land Preservation: Closed on purchase of Tank Trust property, will close on Serafine property soon. MI Natural Resources Trust Fund met regarding purchase of a 89 acre property near Ponderosa subdivision and south of Legg Park.

Energy Team: Encouragement to fellow Commissioners to share ideas for future Green Themes presentations related to climate change. Requested staff to contact Drain Commissioner or Engineering Department staff to present on stormwater management.

Student Engagement: None

Parks: None

11. MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATION

Chair McConnell summarized the elements in the draft Master Plan related to conservation of open space and suggested they could be enhanced. He shared concerns that the Priority Conservation Corridors are not depicted on the Future Land Use Map.

- MOTION BY CHAIR MCCONNELL TO FORWARD MEMORANDUM DATED DECEMBER 7, 2016 REGARDING THE MASTER PLAN TO PLANNING COMMISSION FOR CONSIDERATION. SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER SARVER.

12. PUBLIC REMARKS

Resident Judy Kimball requested input and Environmental Commission support to convince the Township Board to officially adopt the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan as policy.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m. without objection.

Environmental Commission

Strategic Plan 2016-17

In December of 2015 and January of 2016, the Environmental Commission participated in facilitated strategic planning sessions. The outcome of the sessions gave rise to new goals and objectives set to commence in 2016-17. The items in this document address administrative and collaborative activities that promote the purpose of the Environmental Commission.

The purpose of the Environmental Commission includes promoting the wise management of natural resources in the Township, a healthy environment, long term economic health of the Township, and ensuring compliance with applicable local, state and federal laws and policies (such as Wetland Use Permit Reviews).

Along with the Goals and Objectives below, the Environmental Commission will continue its routine public engagement activities that include the Environmental Stewardship Awards and "Green Theme" Presentations.

Each Objective will begin and/or end either in the "short term" (within 6 months), the "mid-term" (6-12 months), or the "long-term" (beyond 12 months).

Administrative Goal:

The Commission desires to fill its vacancies with persons and youth who are interested in environmental aspects of community planning. There are portions of the Commission By-Laws that need to be updated in order to better support this goal.

Administrative Objectives:

- 1) Fill adult vacancies and youth vacancies (short term)
- 2) Amend the Commission By-Laws to: (short term)

-Preserve one youth seat and create a seat for a person currently pursuing college-level environmental studies.

-Allow the youth and college commissioners to vote at regular Environmental Commission meetings.

- Alter the meeting requirement language to allow for more flexibility if a meeting is not warranted each month.

Collaborative Goal:

The Commission desires to more actively collaborate with the Land Preservation Board, Park Board and Planning Commission in promoting the wise management of natural resources in the township. This effort will be strengthened with increased mutual data-sharing, reporting and information gathering.

Collaborative Objectives:

- 1) Regularly engage the chairs of the Land Preservation Board, Park Board and Planning Commission to align data needs and other planning tools related to environmental protection, land acquisition and land improvement. (continual)
- 2) Engage residents, businesses, fellow appointed and elected officials in the discussion of environmental issues, and the sharing of ideas related to:
 - Zoning ordinance updates that address climate change, brownfield redevelopment, street tree replacement. (mid to long term)
 - Planning tools such as maps and data that aid environmental planning decision-making. (mid to long term)
 - Improved wayfinding throughout the Township for pathways, businesses, parks etc. (long-term)

Environmental Commission (1/4/17)

Resolution of Appreciation

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I, the undersigned, the duly qualified Chairperson of the Environmental Commission of the Charter Township of Meridian, Ingham County, Michigan, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted at a regular meeting of the Environmental Commission on the 4h day of January, 2017.

William McConnell, Chair