



**AGENDA**  
**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION –**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
October 7<sup>th</sup> 2026 6:30 PM

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1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. PRESENTATION
  - A. Shared Grounds Community Gardens - Green Grant
4. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC
5. COMMUNICATIONS
6. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
7. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026 Regular Meeting
8. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS
9. NEW BUSINESS
10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
11. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
  - A. Staff
    - a. Fall Community Recycling Event
  - B. Liaisons:
    - a. Township Board
    - b. Planning Commission
    - c. Land Preservation Advisory Board
    - d. Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
    - e. Parks Commission
  - C. Teams:
    - a. Energy Team
    - b. Green Team
    - c. Green Burial Team
  - D. Haslett/Okemos High School
12. OTHER MATTERS AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS
13. ADJOURNMENT

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Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Meridian Township Board by contacting: Township Manager Tim Dempsey, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 or 517.853.4258 - Ten Day Notice is Required.

Meeting Location: 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 Township Hall  
Providing a safe and welcoming, sustainable, prime community.



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
REGULAR MEETING ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION                    –DRAFT-  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198  
517.853.4000, Township Hall Room  
WEDNESDAY, September 2<sup>nd</sup> , 2026, 6:30PM

PRESENT:        Chair Lee, Vice Chair McConnell  
                    Commissioners Miksicek, Frazier, Belisle, Iyioke, Mortimer, Batten and Aluru  
ABSENT:        Trustee Lentz Commissioners  
STAFF:           Project Engineer Hughes

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Lee called the September 2<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Township Environmental Commission meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Staff Engineer Hughes called the roll of the Commission.

3. PRESENTATION

None at this time.

4. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None at this time.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

None at this time.

6. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner McConnell moved to approve the Agenda of the August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026 Environmental Commission Regular meeting, Commissioner Miksicek seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Miksicek moved to approve the Minutes of the June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026 Environmental Commission Regular Meeting, Commissioner McConnell seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

8. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None at this time.

## 9. NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

## 10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None at this time.

## 11. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### A. Staff

#### Township Energy Efficiency Upgrades

Project Engineer Hughes outlined the Township's ongoing energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives, centered on a grant-funded solar array project at the North Fire Station. Unlike previous solar installations that generated excess or partial amounts of necessary electricity, this system is being precisely sized to match the facility's energy demand, maximizing efficiency and minimizing unused production. The project supports the Township's broader sustainability goal of achieving 100% renewable energy by 2035. Originally, the grant included funding for electric vehicles and charging infrastructure, but because the Township is now pursuing EV charging through a separate regional grant program, officials received approval to reallocate much of the funding toward the solar project. Before doing so, however, the Township must first complete a series of energy efficiency improvements that were included in the original grant application.

To identify these improvements, the Township partnered with Michigan State University's Industrial Assessment Team, which evaluated municipal buildings and recommended ways to reduce energy consumption. Proposed lighting upgrades include replacing fluorescent and incandescent bulbs with LEDs, reducing the number of bulbs used in certain fixtures, reconfiguring lighting controls to better utilize natural daylight, and upgrading exit signs to energy-efficient LED models. Additional recommendations focus on HVAC efficiency, such as reducing heating and cooling on underused upper floors during off-hours, installing carbon dioxide sensors to activate ventilation only when rooms are occupied, and repurposing existing occupancy sensors to control HVAC systems instead of lighting.

The assessment also recommends installing occupancy-controlled lighting in restrooms and improving building insulation by insulating boiler room pipes and adding insulation in attic spaces. Some improvements can be completed with in-house labor and inexpensive materials, while others may require professional electrical work. These projects not only reduce energy use and operating costs but also satisfy grant requirements and provide matching contributions toward the Township's larger solar initiative. Overall, the proposed upgrades represent a practical combination of energy conservation measures and renewable energy investments designed to lower the Township's carbon footprint and support its long-term climate and sustainability objectives.

## B. Liaisons

Trustee Lentz was absent and not able to report on recent Meridian Township Board discussions.

Vice Chair McConnell reported on recent Planning Commission developments.

He started by discussing concerns related to the approval of a new gas station near a residential area. After requesting additional information, the Planning Commission reviewed detailed documentation on federal environmental regulations and vapor recovery systems designed to minimize fuel emissions. While some commissioners remained concerned about potential impacts and the reliance on proper operation of these systems, the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals ultimately approved the project, allowing construction to move forward.

The discussion also raised broader concerns about the increasing number of gas station proposals in the township. Some nearby communities are considering moratoriums or ordinance updates to better regulate gas station development, although the township currently has no limit on the number of stations allowed. Officials suggested that any future restrictions could focus on specific corridors, such as Grand River Avenue, where multiple proposals have recently emerged.

Commissioners also discussed environmental responsibilities associated with gas stations, noting that abandoned or outdated facilities can become contamination sites requiring remediation. Examples were provided of both successful environmental cleanups and recent upgrades to local gas stations that have installed modern tanks and vapor recovery systems. Overall, the conversation highlighted the need to balance commercial development with environmental protection and consideration of future land-use policies.

Chair Lee reported on recent Land Preservation Advisory Board developments.

The Land Preservation Advisory Board met on August 12<sup>th</sup> and reviewed a Township request related to upcoming sewer rehabilitation work. Following a recent sewer collapse near a railroad crossing, staff have been inspecting other utility crossings and identified a sewer line within a land preserve that requires maintenance. The Board considered and supported a request to clear some trees to provide access for maintenance vehicles, helping prevent future infrastructure failures.

The Board also received updates from stewardship staff, including ongoing efforts to fill staffing vacancies and preparations for the Township's annual deer management program. Members discussed continued encroachment issues at Pike Crossing and plans to conduct a site visit for a property being evaluated for potential acquisition. The Environmental Commission will be notified when the visit is scheduled so members can attend and provide input.

Additionally, stewardship efforts remain focused on managing invasive species. In addition to ongoing work to control phragmites on Township properties, staff are expanding efforts to address the spread of Tree-of-Heaven and encouraged residents to report known locations of the invasive tree. Overall, the meeting focused on land stewardship, infrastructure maintenance, conservation planning, and invasive species management.

Commissioner Frazier reported on recent Brownfield Redevelopment Authority developments. The Brownfield Redevelopment Authority reviewed and approved a brownfield plan for the northeast corner of Okemos Road and Hamilton Road in downtown Okemos. The project involves rehabilitating three existing buildings, preserving their exterior appearance while extensively renovating the interiors. Once completed, the redevelopment will provide seven residential apartments and 11 commercial spaces, creating a mixed-use development that supports ongoing downtown revitalization efforts.

The total project cost is approximately \$5.3 million, with about \$900,000 eligible for reimbursement through the Brownfield Redevelopment Program. As part of the housing component, three of the seven apartments will be made available at rates affordable to households earning up to 120% of the area median income. The Authority also approved its 2027 budget during the meeting.

Board members noted that because the buildings and supporting infrastructure already exist, no significant new utility or sewer infrastructure is expected to be required. The properties, which include the former Okemos Barber Shop and other largely vacant commercial buildings, have historically contained both commercial and residential uses. The redevelopment is expected to bring significant improvements to a prominent downtown intersection while maintaining the character of the existing structures and enhancing the surrounding area.

Commissioner Miksicek reported on recent Parks and Recreation Commission activity. The Parks Commission reviewed several priorities for the Parks and Recreation Division's 2027 Capital Improvement Plan. Proposed projects include electrical upgrades for the Marketplace on the Green, replacement of playground equipment at Nancy Moore Park, development of a bike trail hub on Okemos Road, expansion of parking at North Meridian Road Park to address growing demand, and installation of an accessible canoe launch at Wonch Park. The canoe launch project is being carried over from 2026 while staff evaluate a potential relocation to a more suitable site nearby. Commissioners also discussed the possibility of incorporating solar panels at the Farmers Market, although no decisions have been made.

The Commission also reviewed ballot language for the upcoming Parks Millage proposal on the November ballot. Members emphasized that the measure represents a renewal of an existing millage rather than a new tax and discussed outreach strategies to educate residents about the importance of continued funding for the township's park system. In addition, the Commission received an update on the Township's five-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Consultants continue to gather input from residents and stakeholders through community engagement efforts, including recent listening sessions. The collected feedback is being compiled and analyzed and will help guide future park planning and investment decisions as the master plan moves toward completion next year.

#### C. Teams

Commissioner Miksicek provided a report from the Energy Team.

The Energy Team met on August 13<sup>th</sup> and discussed a recent Solarize Ingham County outreach event that provided information on residential, commercial, and nonprofit solar energy opportunities. Members also reviewed township solar installation data showing continued growth in renewable energy adoption, with 212 solar installations in Meridian Township as of the end of 2025 and a cumulative generating capacity of nearly 2.2 million watts. The team noted that federal solar tax incentives have played a significant role in supporting this growth since their introduction in 2005. While some residential solar tax credits have recently been reduced earlier than expected, incentives for businesses and nonprofits remain available through 2027, continuing to support renewable energy investments. Overall, the discussion highlighted the strong expansion of solar energy in the township and the importance of leveraging remaining incentive programs to advance local sustainability goals.

Commissioner Frazier provided a report from the Green Team.

The Green Team reported that its annual Electronics Recycling Event will take place on September 26 at the Meridian Mall from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The popular community event will accept a wide variety of electronic items for recycling, collect new and gently used winter coats for distribution through Meridian Cares, and feature Consumers Energy's appliance recycling program, which offers rebates for older but still functioning, energy-inefficient appliances. The team is currently finalizing event preparations and is seeking additional volunteers. Members also highlighted a recent Farmers Market outreach event focused on green commuting and local waterways and pathways, which attracted more than 50 residents and provided education on sustainable living practices.

#### D. Haslett/Okemos High School

Commissioners Batten and Aluru provided a report from the High Schools.

Student representatives reported that environmental and sustainability activities are beginning to ramp up as the new school year gets underway. At Okemos, Earth Club activities have been delayed somewhat due to advisor and staffing changes, but organizers expect meetings and projects to resume soon, with growing student interest and the emergence of additional environmental clubs. At Haslett High School, the Sustainability Club recently held its first meeting to introduce new members and begin planning annual initiatives, including school recycling efforts and other sustainability projects. Students also shared that they met over the summer to discuss environmental goals and ways to expand successful green school programs to other schools. At the elementary level, Earth Club organizers have been actively planning for the upcoming year and are excited to launch several new environmental education and sustainability activities. Overall, representatives expressed enthusiasm about increasing student engagement and expanding environmental initiatives across local schools.

#### E. Other

No reports.

## 12. OTHER MATTERS AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

The Commission discussed two environmental initiatives of interest to the Township. First, members were invited to attend a demonstration and site tour at Wildwood Lakes on September 19<sup>th</sup>, a project that previously received a Township Green Grant. The event will showcase ecological improvements that have been completed, provide updates on remaining work, and give attendees an opportunity to see the restoration efforts firsthand.

The Commission also received confirmation that Meridian Township has been officially designated as a Bird City Michigan community through the Audubon program, joining a select group of communities across the state recognized for their bird conservation efforts. As part of the designation, the Township will be expected to host bird-related educational or community events, likely in partnership with organizations such as the Harris Nature Center, which already conducts bird walks and nature programs. Future plans include increasing public awareness of the designation through Township communications and the installation of Bird City signage or plaques at community welcome signs.

## 13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 PM.