



AGENDA
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION –
REGULAR MEETING
September 2nd 2026 6:30 PM

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. PRESENTATION
4. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC
5. COMMUNICATIONS
6. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
7. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – August 5th, 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. Township Energy Efficiency Upgrades
 - 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

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
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CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION –DRAFT-
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
517.853.4000, Township Hall Room
WEDNESDAY, August 5th , 2026, 6:30PM

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

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Lee called the August 5th, 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 5th, 2026 Environmental Commission Regular meeting, Commissioner Miksicek seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Frazier moved to approve the Minutes of the June 3rd, 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

Climate Sustainability Funding Update

The discussion focused on potential uses of Meridian Township's Climate Sustainability Fund, with a primary emphasis on wellhead protection and private well abandonment. Staff Engineer Jack Hughes summarized information presented by the Groundwater Management Board regarding the risks posed by private and especially abandoned wells, which can serve as pathways for contamination into the shared aquifer that supplies the community's drinking water. With approximately 1,500 private wells still located throughout the township, staff is considering a well abandonment incentive program modeled after successful efforts in neighboring communities such as Delta Township and East Lansing. The preliminary concept would provide up to \$1,000 in reimbursement to residents who properly abandon their wells through a licensed contractor, following submission of a notice of intent and certification that the well has been abandoned. A township-wide mailing would be used to gauge resident interest, and participation levels would help determine whether the initiative should become an ongoing annual program. Commissioners discussed potential costs, which can range from roughly \$2,000 to \$10,000 per well, strategies for targeting neighborhoods with many legacy wells, and the availability of mapping and address data needed to support outreach efforts.

Hughes also addressed funding considerations for the Climate Sustainability Fund. While much of the recent funding was directed toward the Marshall Park bioswale project, the Environmental Commission expressed interest in preserving flexibility for smaller sustainability projects throughout the year. Township leadership has committed approximately \$20,000 in Climate Sustainability funding for 2027, largely intended for wellhead protection efforts but still allowing room for additional Environmental Commission priorities. Hughes reassured commissioners that funding remains available and that no immediate funding decisions are required.

Additional updates were provided on several ongoing environmental initiatives. The township continues to support the Farmers Market composting program, including upgrades to collection bag dispensers and efforts to increase participation. Commissioners discussed the need for more information on program costs, participation levels, and opportunities for future growth, including a possible presentation from *My Green Michigan*, the organization involved in compost collection. Hughes also reported progress on improvements at the Reclaimed by Design recycling center,

including plans to pave the site and construct a permanent office before new directional signage is installed.

Continued discussion reviewed the Marshall Park stormwater project, which was previously supported through Climate Sustainability funding. The project aims to address chronic flooding issues near Lake Lansing by replacing traditional stormwater infrastructure solutions with constructed wetlands, naturalized drainage features, and enhanced green space. Hughes explained that the project is currently undergoing state permitting through EGLE and is expected to begin construction in 2027, with completion anticipated by 2028. Early feedback from nearby residents has been overwhelmingly positive, particularly from homeowners affected by flooding. Commissioners requested continued updates as permitting progresses and emphasized the importance of protecting existing native vegetation during construction.

Commissioner Miksicek also raised questions about water quality impacts associated with runoff into Lake Lansing. Concerns included potential fertilizer and herbicide runoff from Marshall Park and how contaminants would be managed within the proposed stormwater treatment system before reaching the lake. Hughes agreed these issues warranted further investigation, while Trustee Lentz noted that Lake Lansing is regularly monitored through an annual water quality report that tracks phosphorus levels and other indicators around the lake. Overall, the discussion highlighted strong support for proactive groundwater protection, sustainable stormwater management, and continued investment in environmental initiatives throughout the township.

B. Liaisons

Trustee Lentz reported on recent Meridian Township Board discussions.

A major highlight was the successful passage of all Ingham County directed millages, including the Parks Millage, which is important because many future Meridian Township park projects had been planned with funding contingent upon its approval. In addition, the Township Board voted to place the Meridian Township Parks Millage renewal on the November ballot. This long-standing millage has played a key role in supporting township parks and recreational amenities.

Environmental achievements and sustainability efforts were also emphasized. During a recent presentation from Granger Waste Services, Meridian Township was recognized as having the highest curbside recycling participation rate in the tri-county region, with approximately 78% of residents participating. Residents were reminded that recycling services are included with Granger waste collection and are available simply by requesting a yellow-top recycling bin. The Township Board also approved funding for the acquisition of a 1.9-acre property on Hamilton Road adjacent to Mandenberg Woods, expanding preserved natural areas and supporting future habitat restoration and natural vegetation growth.

The report also highlighted the township's deer management program, which continues to be viewed as an important environmental stewardship effort. Trustee Lentz encouraged residents to review presentations on the program, noting its positive impacts on ecological health and water quality. Looking ahead, the Board is scheduled to receive a presentation on a recently completed

water and sewer rate study. While no immediate action is planned, the study is notable because Meridian Township currently maintains the lowest water and sewer rates in the region, approximately 18% lower than East Lansing and 35% lower than Grand Ledge.

Finally, the township announced that it has secured an \$11.35 million federal BUILD grant to support infrastructure improvements in downtown Okemos. Planned for the 2028-2029 construction seasons, the project aims to address long-standing infrastructure challenges that have hindered desired redevelopment in the area. The improvements are expected to make the downtown district more attractive for future investment and redevelopment opportunities while advancing the township's broader vision for the Four Corners area. Early project work will include traffic studies and planning before construction activities begin.

Vice Chair McConnell reported on recent Planning Commission developments.

He started with several development-related matters, including a proposed amendment to the township ordinance that would recognize mass timber construction as a sustainable building amenity within Planned Unit Developments (PUDs). Similar to features such as rooftop solar panels or electric vehicle charging stations, the use of mass timber could qualify developers for exemptions from certain building restrictions. The proposal originated from the Corridor Improvement Authority, which focuses on commercial revitalization along the Grand River corridor. The Commission also reviewed three proposed gas station developments along Grand River Avenue, including projects associated with Tailgaters near Tom's Market, Sheetz near the former Old Chicago site, and a 7-Eleven near Whole Foods and the Clarion Suites property. While MDOT is primarily responsible for traffic approvals along M-43, commissioners raised concerns about potential air quality and health impacts from fuel vapors during vehicle refueling and underground tank replenishment, particularly at the site located near residential apartments. Applicants have been asked to provide additional information on emissions controls and regulatory safeguards. Commissioners noted that modern gas stations include double-walled, continuously monitored fuel tanks that significantly reduce leakage risks compared to older facilities. The Commission also discussed recent and proposed car wash developments, viewing some projects as opportunities to modernize aging commercial properties and revitalize underperforming areas, particularly around the former Verizon location on Old Chicago. Overall, while questions remain regarding environmental impacts and market demand, the Commission indicated that all three gas station proposals are progressing through review and could ultimately receive approval if outstanding concerns are addressed.

Chair Lee was not able to attend the last meeting of the Land Preservation Advisory Board.

Commissioner Frazier was not able to attend the last meeting of the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority.

Commissioner Miksicek reported on recent Parks and Recreation Commission activity. The report focused primarily on floodplain mitigation, park planning, and ongoing capital improvement efforts. Director Dan Opsommer provided an update on a proposed township acquisition of the flood-prone property at 5040 Algonquin Way in the Ottawa Hills subdivision,

which experienced significant flood damage during recent storm events and lies within the Pine Lake Drain floodplain. The township plans to purchase and demolish the existing residence using FEMA-funded Swift Grant resources, with approximately 90% of the project costs covered by federal funds and the remaining 10% provided by the township. Long-term options for the site include incorporating it into the adjacent Shriner Park pocket park, converting it into a natural preserve, or potentially transferring it to the Ingham County Drain Commissioner because of its proximity to drainage infrastructure. The Commission also received updates on development of the township's five-year Parks and Recreation Plan, including ongoing public engagement through listening sessions and a community survey, with commissioners recommending that public feedback be used to establish several key priorities for the plan. The July Parks Commission meeting was canceled.

C. Teams

Commissioner Miksicek provided a report from the Energy Team.

The Energy Team reported on its June and July meetings, highlighting the June 20 Energy Fair held at the Meridian Farmers Market. The event featured exhibits from the Energy Team, Absolute Solar, Michigan Interfaith Power & Light, and Michigan Saves; a geothermal installer. Although attendance was somewhat lower than expected, participants considered the fair successful and discussed expanding future events to include demonstrations of cordless electric lawn care equipment to encourage residents to transition away from gas-powered tools. The team also noted ongoing sustainability progress by Lansing School District, which recently added six electric buses and intends to expand its electric fleet to twenty buses. Members discussed emerging vehicle-to-home (V2H) technology, which allows certain electric vehicles to supply power to homes during outages or integrate with residential solar systems. While currently limited to select models such as the Ford F-150 Lightning, Tesla Cybertruck, and some GM vehicles, the technology is expected to become more common in future electric vehicle offerings. The team emphasized the potential benefits of V2H technology for grid resilience, renewable energy adoption, and customer energy independence. Additionally, commissioners promoted an upcoming Solarize workshop for Ingham County residents scheduled for August 20 at Red Cedar Spirits, noting that although residential federal solar tax incentives have changed, opportunities remain for homeowners to reduce costs through group purchasing programs, while commercial, nonprofit, and faith-based organizations continue to have access to solar funding and support. The Energy team's next meeting is scheduled for August 13.

Commissioner Frazier provided a report from the Green Team.

The Green Team reported continued collaboration with the Meridian Farmers Market on community sustainability outreach and educational events. In July, the Green Team hosted its annual Green Fair in conjunction with the Farmers Market, featuring several vendors and environmental organizations. Attendees generally considered the event successful. The team is scheduled to meet again next week to plan upcoming activities for August and September. Commissioners also discussed potential future event locations, including the possibility of returning to the middle school as a venue for the Recycling events once construction is fully completed, though the

Farmers Market and mall parking lot locations continue to provide convenient and effective gathering spaces for community engagement.

D. Haslett/Okemos High School

The High Schools have been out of session for the summer.

E. Other

No reports.

12. OTHER MATTERS AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioners discussed the status of Meridian Township's Bird City application, noting that the application had been submitted to the Audubon Society several months earlier, although no formal approval update had yet been received. Members expressed optimism that the designation would be granted and agreed to seek additional information on the application's progress.

The conversation also highlighted the work of township naturalist Emma Campbell, particularly her 'backyard habitat consultation program' available to Meridian Township property owners. Commissioner Belisle shared a highly positive personal experience with the program, praising Campbell's expertise in native plant recommendations and her detailed, property-specific guidance, while encouraging other residents to take advantage of the resource.

Commissioners echoed those compliments, recognizing Campbell's significant contributions to the township's environmental initiatives and noting her involvement in numerous programs discussed throughout the meeting. In addition, members announced an upcoming memorial event honoring Leroy Harvey, scheduled for August 15 at the Harris Nature Center, and encouraged interested residents and commissioners to attend the celebration of his contributions to the community.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 PM.