

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION **-ADOPTED-**
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
517.853.4000, Township Hall Room
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2nd, 2025, 7:00PM

PRESENT: Commissioners Harrison Batten, Laura Belisle, Tom Frazier, Yu Man Lee,
John Sarver, Richard Miksicek, Cynthia Peterson, and Chair Bill McConnell

ABSENT: Nickolas Lentz, Trustee

STAFF: Dan Opsommer, Deputy Township Manager
Jack Hughes, Project Engineer

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair McConnell called the April 2nd, 2025, Township Environmental Commission meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Deputy Manager Opsommer called the roll of the Commission.

3. PRESENTATION

Dr. Joy Wang, director of Michigan's *My Solar for All* program, presented an overview of the program, which is funded by a \$156 million award from the U.S. EPA's Solar for All program (part of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund). The goal is to provide affordable, resilient, and clean solar energy to low-income families, aiming to reduce their electricity bills by an average of 20% (estimated \$400-\$450 monthly or \$11,000-\$17,000 over 25 years).

The program will allocate 75% of funds to direct project implementation, focusing on residential rooftop and residential-serving community solar projects, including upgrades such as roof or electrical repairs and associated storage. The remaining 25% will support community and technical assistance, education, outreach, workforce training, and program management.

Key definitions include residential rooftop solar (serving single-family, manufactured, and multifamily homes) and residential-serving community solar (facilities up to 5 MW AC, with at least 50% of benefits going to residential customers in the same utility territory).

Due to strong interest expressed in an online form, Michigan will offer pilot funding in late May: \$1 million for residential rooftop solar, \$6.5 million for community solar, \$1 million for enabling upgrades, and \$375,000 for associated storage. Eligible applicants include governmental entities, tribes, nonprofits, utilities, schools, and property owners.

To facilitate partnerships, virtual and in-person matchmaking sessions will be held. The program is currently in the design and input phase, seeking feedback to create a flexible program that meets federal and state needs. Despite some federal funding uncertainty, the grant agreement with the EPA is a binding contract.

Current activities include hiring support teams and conducting a solar storage study. Dr. Wang encouraged ongoing engagement through virtual listening sessions, an interest form, a listserv, and surveys, urging communities to develop projects and apply for funding. The program anticipates creating 700 jobs and significant environmental benefits, including a reduction of 272,000 metric tons of CO2 emissions over 25 years.

Refer to Environmental Commission website for presentation slides.

4. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No public comment.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) Report from Meridian Township.
Chair McConnell introduced the program for those unfamiliar.

Commissioner Peterson inquired as to how the Township participates in this water quality monitoring program.

Deputy Manager Opsommer outlined various components including public education requirements and sites designated for routine sampling, deferring to the Township Engineer for further questions.

Chair McConnell clarified that the testing results are not publicly available however if the 'Total Maximum Daily Loading' of *Escherichia coli* into the Red Cedar River is higher than the acceptable amount, remediation actions must take place.

Deputy Manager Opsommer offered to invite the Township Engineer to the next meeting for a more detailed discussion on the program.

Chair McConnell shared some information from MSU stating most of the *E.Coli* loading takes place in rural, upstream communities as opposed to urban areas.

Deputy Manager Opsommer explained that the Red Cedar River itself is not being directly tested, instead the runoff water from parking lots, roads and other nonporous surfaces entering the river is being sampled. A potential presentation for the Commission from a member of EGLE would be beneficial in covering an overview and technical details of the program.

Project Engineer Hughes provided some additional information on the Township's sampling interval and how that is determined.

6. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair McConnell proposed to approve the agenda.

Without objection, the agenda was approved unanimously.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 5 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes were approved as Amended with a few minor notes and corrections provided by Chair McConnell and Commissioner Frazier.

Without objection, the minutes for the March 5 meeting, as amended, were approved unanimously.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2025 Green Grant Award Recommendation

Chair McConnell thanked the staff and subcommittee for their quick processing of recommendations.

Deputy Manager Opsommer introduced the six received applications available for review inside this meeting's packet along with a recommendation from the Green Grant subcommittee (GGSC).

The first application discussed was the Cornell Woods Homeowners Association's request for funding to plant native species on a section of their property. Before accepting this application, the GGSC has asked if a portion of this land could be utilized for public education, including signage. The GGSC also recommended the applicant reduce the footprint from 0.25 acres to allow inclusion of a stormwater detention area. Since an answer was not received in time for this meeting, the GGSC would like to address this application at the next meeting. The GGSC is currently recommending the minimum award requested for this project.

The other grant application currently pending additional information is for MidMichigan Land Conservancy. The GGSC would like them to specify how many trees they intend to plant, as well as clear up a few other ambiguities with their application. Deputy Manager Opsommer is comparing this application to a similar one received in 2024 to ensure there is no overlap and that the cost per planted tree is acceptable. The GGSC would like to review this application at the May meeting of the Environmental Commission.

For the four applications not pending further information, the total amount sums to \$13,557, averaging \$2,259.50 per application.

The first to be discussed is from a Girl Scout Troop seeking funding to improve a courtyard/outdoor classroom at Haslett Middle School.

Commissioner Batten advocated for the teacher steering this project, having had classes and worked with her before. He provided some context for how the application came to be and why he is in favor of supporting it. He also shared there were surveys taken years ago which were routinely in favor of further utilizing the courtyard.

Commissioner Peterson shared another experience seeing the courtyard used by students and agrees there is a real demand for this courtyard to be improved.

The next application to be discussed was from the Montessori Radmore School on Mt Hope for a solar powered pond pump. This grant application also includes native plant plantings, continuing a trend of recent grant awards.

Chair McConnell shared the improvements he was aware of that have already taken place. Commissioner Miksicek added that the grant would address the removal of invasive species along with planting native ones. It would also bolster educational gardens designated for Bats and Bees with additional plantings.

Commissioner Peterson asked if the trails and gardens were publicly accessible despite the 'No Trespassing' signs. Deputy Manager Opsommer replied it was technically private property although he does not believe there would be issues with residents traversing the

trails. Chair McConnell agreed.

The next applicant was the Pine Creek II Haslett Condo Association, a homeowners association (HOA). It is for the removal of invasive species on some of the open space parcels that the HOA owns, located adjacent to wetlands in an area west of downtown Haslett. Deputy Manager Opsommer pointed out this location on a digital map of the Township.

Chair McConnell noted this applicant had received a green grant last year for some invasive species removals. He purported from the provided illustration that it was not a formal wetland delineation.

Deputy Manager Opsommer doubted the applicant would have had the resources or the wherewithal to have the wetland delineated on their own and may require support.

Chair McConnell expressed concern they wouldn't be subject to regulations regarding work in a wetland buffer.

Deputy Manager Opsommer offered to talk to them about the buffer.

Chair McConnell believes if it were a designated wetland they wouldn't have any trouble getting a variance to do this work in the buffer, as planting native species is highly desired in a buffer space.

Deputy Manager Opsommer offered the Township's help for this applicant in walking them through the delineation process.

Chair McConnell noted a lot of these projects are quite similar and expressed interest in seeing connections between the funded projects during implementation so they have the opportunity to learn from each other. He posed the idea of even sharing resources in terms of contractors or materials, with a reservation about not necessarily trying to shove all the business one way. He remarked HOAs routinely hire help in pulling weeds and might be interested in a better solution.

Commissioner Lee agreed a larger strategy towards tackling invasive species would be more beneficial than isolated annual removals.

Commissioner Belisle wondered how they are currently even tracking progress considering how rapidly invasive species can spread.

Chair McConnell stated if it were a formal wetland mitigation, the Township wetland consultant would be looking at the property to make sure that the mitigation was successful. He posed a future consideration when funding this kind of remediation that the Township set aside funds for the consultant to evaluate the proposed plans.

Deputy Manager Opsommer replied it's a tough call because doing so may require as many funds as the project being awarded. He reminded the Township would be spending hundreds of dollars worth of man hours alone walking applicants through the process of getting a wetland use permit. He reasoned the Commission cannot simply send them an email asking them to go and obtain one as it is an involved process.

Chair McConnell agreed not to impose any more regulation than needed if the applicant is not planning to disturb something not thought of as a wetland, instead to provide them with some expertise about what has been done in the past in terms of remediation.

Commissioner Lee suggested applicants work with Emma Campbell of the Parks Dept.

Commissioner Miksicek pointed out that their application included the statement “in-service sessions were held prior to last year's project with Vern Stevens and Emma Campbell”, noting they've already consulted.

Deputy Manager Opsommer concluded that at a minimum, the Township will connect them again with Emma and have her give them a soft delineation line in the field of where not to go past.

Deputy Manager Opsommer then introduced the last application, the committee's favorite, which was from the YMCA. The applicant is looking at creating an outdoor education space. One notable aspect of the YMCA's application was the inclusion of information on contacting the press to do public relations and bring some attention to their project. For background, they have two existing outdoor nature camps and they're intending to create a nature education component at the Parkwood YMCA on Haslett Road.

This would have space to accommodate 10 to 20 children at a time, ages 3-11, for their preschool youth and summer day camps. Currently these programs are serving a little over 1,000 youths. For the proposed educational outdoor classroom the applicant plans to make use of existing trees and green space with nature as a backdrop. They would also be constructing a canopy for shade, benches and an outdoor chalkboard which they have a drawing of in their application. The educational programming would highlight environmental sustainability with specific units that would focus on outdoor education such as native plantings.

The applicant is also proposing having Channel 10 come out and do a segment spotlighting their project. They plan to make social media posts including on their Facebook page and other social media platforms along with a promotion within their YMCA membership and program participants for the camps and the preschool program. It is noted this is likely the most robust community outreach plan that the Commission has seen amongst any of the applicants. Deputy Manager Opsommer asked the commission if there were any questions.

Commissioner Lee asked if the grant would be for the materials- and then if the applicants are building it themselves- or if that is what the match part is for.

Commissioner Miksicek recalled from the application that they are sourcing some materials from other YMCA facilities. He was not sure where they're located, but they identified logs and things that they'll be using as part of the construction.

Deputy Manager Opsommer responded the applicant is looking at \$2,607 for lumber and other building materials but is also estimating about 1200 in-kind volunteer hours would be required. He noted that might even be under selling if they're working with ~\$2600 in material since usually it would be more of a one to one ratio in labor to material.

Chair McConnell checked if there were further questions before entertaining a motion to approve the recommendation from the committee.

Commissioner Miksicek moved to approve awards of \$5,000 for the Cornell Woods Homeowners Association \$1,000 for the Girl Scout Heart of Michigan troop 337. \$3,950 for the Montessori-Radmore School project, \$1,000 for Pine Creek 2 of Hazlett Condo Association, and \$2,607 for the YMCA of Metropolitan Lansing's Parkwood Branch.

Commissioner Sarver seconded.

Commissioner Belisle asked a question looking to clarify if the Commission would approve their proposals now and then amend later if there was discussion with an applicant about items on their application.

Chair McConnell replied it is his understanding that this motion covers the recommended amounts. In some cases the amount may move back up to the requested rather than a minimum, depending on the answers to those questions. He stated that would be a new motion at a new meeting and that this motion does not cover the Mid-Michigan Land conservancy, which would also be considered at a future meeting should the committee propose it.

Deputy Manager Opsommer noted there is \$20,000 budgeted so the Commission can almost approve the full amount requested for each applicant, being \$757 shy. He plans to bring attention back in May to the Mid-Michigan land Conservancy and the Cornell Woods Homeowners Association applications.

Commissioner Frazier posed another question regarding the Cornell Woods application. Considering one of the ideas is to try to incorporate the Cornell Elementary School with educational signage for kids, he wonders if there would be any liability concerns for the Homeowners Association.

Deputy Manager Opsommer notes it's a relatively flat piece of land.

Chair McConnell agreed it's safe to get from the school site to that property using the sidewalk.

Deputy Manager Opsommer stated the HOA wouldn't bear any responsibility if someone were injured on a public pathway. He did take Commissioner Frazier's point and had that same thought on why the HOA may decline. He predicted a mixed bag of responses from the HOA, such as the HOA approving the excavation and constructing what would more typically be referred to as a bioswale but not grant the school groups access to the site. He considered the Township still doing the education signage so that even if classrooms don't have access to it, the general public would. The decision will be left to the committee on whether to increase the allocation or maintain it at the existing \$5,000.

Chair McConnell asked for any further questions or discussions on the motion. Hearing none, he called the motion. The motion carried unanimously. He thanked staff and the committee again for their work on this motion. He appreciated the rapid turnaround with a great set of projects coming in around the budget. He enthused this is how the system is supposed to work.

Without objection, the motion to approve the recommendation, was approved unanimously.

B. 2024 Climate Sustainability Funds

Project Engineer Hughes provided an overview on the 2024 Climate Sustainability Funds.

Of the initial \$30,000 allocation, \$5,000 has been spent, leaving \$25,000 available. The Environmental Commission was invited to propose potential uses for the remaining funds, though a recommendation from the Township was put forward to allocate the full amount toward a bioswale creation project at Marshall Park.

The Township has a plan to resurface the road in the area and identified drainage issues, particularly in the southeast corner of the park, which experience significant stormwater accumulation. Without additional funding, standard drainage ditches will be installed, but with financial support, bioswales could be implemented instead.

Bioswales are enhanced ditches designed to improve drainage and to provide environmental benefits such as integrating native plant species, creating biodiverse habitats and reducing long-term maintenance. The proposed project aims to improve both the aesthetic and functional aspects of the park while addressing resident concerns regarding flooding.

If the Commission supports the initiative, an engineering firm, Spalding DeDecker, would be invited to present design concepts, allowing for input on native species selection and broader environmental considerations. The Parks Department expressed initial interest, and further collaboration will be planned to refine details. Due diligence on the Township's part would include exploring alternative mitigation strategies, though the bioswale project remains the preferred solution.

Commissioner Lee had a couple questions. When looking through the notes from last year she found other projects that also are approved for this funding such as the recycling center signage and a composting one.

Commissioner Frazier had the same two issues. There was approval from the Environmental Commission and from the Township for funding both of those projects, one for signage at the Meridian recycling site and the other for additional food composting at the Meridian market, at a \$2,500 cost and a very minimal \$635. He proposed still squeezing those in before considering this Bioswale one as well. However, one other issue that is that the Green Burial Group is looking for funding and is working on a presentation to the Board before moving forward.

Commissioner Lee stated the wetland education signage was completed at a lower cost than originally approved. However, additional funding may still be needed for buffer signage and other remaining elements. Further coordination with Emma is required to determine whether these outstanding items will proceed and to confirm associated costs. While the full originally allocated amount may not be necessary, some remaining funds could be applied toward completing aspects of the initial proposal.

Deputy Manager Opsommer stated a review is needed to determine if any outstanding signage remains to be purchased. Documentation including recycling center signage was recently shared with the Township. He recommended that the contract with the recycling center's vendor be reviewed to clarify cost responsibilities. Since signage may fall under operational expenses, it

was advised that the township confirm whether this cost should be covered by the private company managing the center rather than being subsidized. Further discussions may be required to establish vendor obligations.

Chair McConnell summarized that additional fact-finding is needed to review prior discussions, proposals, grants, and expenditures before proceeding with formal approval of the recommendation. A decision is not expected at this time, as further clarification and historical review are advised. The importance of maintaining institutional knowledge and ensuring past considerations was emphasized.

When asked for clarification, Commissioner Lee confirmed that five signs were acquired at a lower cost than originally budgeted. Additional funding for buffer signage is still being reviewed, with further clarification needed on whether to proceed with remaining components. The initial budget for the buffer signage was approximately \$250. Other proposed elements, including letters and a social media campaign, are still under consideration, requiring further coordination to determine the next steps.

Deputy Manager Opsommer stated the Township can handle that and the compostable bags for food waste drop off.

Commissioner Fraizer clarified there is an opportunity for residents to drop off their food compost at the farmers market. The idea behind the proposal was to expand and promote the effort to reach more residents and try to get more participation in the program.

Chair McConnell elaborated on the *My Green Michigan* initiative, funded by an environmental grant, providing curbside organics composting through Hammond Farms. Waste is collected in carts similar to trash or recycling bins and transported to a composting facility in Dimondale, using windrow composting methods. Collection points are available at both the market and the recycling center.

Residents have shown preference for compostable bags to bring food waste to the market rather than using personal compost buckets. During the program's initial pilot phase, these bags were subsidized, leading to strong participation. However, when subsidies were removed and residents were expected to purchase their own bags, engagement declined. A request was made to reinstate the subsidy to encourage growth in participation and expand the program's reach.

Deputy Manager Opsommer asked about the equipment they were seeking.

Commissioner Fraizer answered there's two big carts for compost at the farmers market for deposit and then the proposal would also pay for the cost of pickup on a more regular basis with additional resident participation. He recalled Commissioner Lee felt it was important to really promote this effort to the residents of the Township so it might involve the communications department in trying to help with that effort. He cleared up her confusion on the costs for composting which had been corrected recently.

Deputy Manager Opsommer optioned to work with Commissioner Fraizer on future composting initiatives to be discussed at a later meeting. He stated that previous discussions with the Chair indicated interest in pursuing a larger-scale project that could serve as a community demonstration. The bioswale concept project was introduced as a potential candidate for this, with funding balances available to support the other approved projects. Any additional funds required for the bioswale effort could be supplemented through the Township's road millage

program. Collaboration with the Park Commission was proposed, including the possibility of joint meetings to enhance coordination.

Chair McConnell agreed this was a real issue of public concern, however asked if the proposal explicitly references which parts of the climate sustainability plan it would address. Considering the Commission is asking grant recipients to do so as we move forward he'd like to know specifically which objective this would meet.

Commissioner Lee stated there is a lot to consider and to think about as we continue to track our progress on the Climate Sustainability plan.

Chair McConnell asked for any other discussion of the agenda item 8B. Seeing none, and with no Unfinished Business, he prepared to move on to Reports and Announcements.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

10. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deputy Manager Opsommer first posed a question about moving the meeting time to earlier in the evening instead of 7PM, as most other Boards and Commissions meet at 6:00 or 6:30PM.

Chair McConnell stated they did push the Planning Commission meetings up to 6:30PM which became an occasional challenge for people who work full-time in Lansing but so far it hasn't caused too big a problem. He would personally be in favor of an earlier starting time, asking for thoughts of the other Commissioners on starting times.

Commissioner Sarver would support an earlier time.

Commissioner Peterson would need some time to make arrangements for that adjustment.

Chair McConnell decided to give it some thought and circle back at a future meeting.

A. Staff

Deputy Manager Opsommer gave a preview of the upcoming meeting agenda. A wetland use permit will be required for the Sanctuary boardwalk project, which is currently in the design phase. The boardwalk will be constructed along Bennett Road on the north side, adjacent to the Schultz Vet clinic's frontage, and the permit request will be presented at the May meeting. Additionally, a presentation on food rescue will be delivered by Lafferty. These items constitute the planned agenda for the May meeting.

B. Liaisons

Chair McConnell relayed a summary of the March 24 planning commission meeting, including public hearings on a second group childcare west of Okemos Road, and continued work on the schedule requirements for parking spaces. In unfinished business, Okemos Local Investments is another cannabis retail facility. Moving from there he introduced the Land Preservation Advisory Board.

Commissioner Lee stated the Land Preservation Advisory Board met on March 12th and discussed several items of interest. Five wetland education signs, funded through climate sustainability resources, were scheduled for installation in mid-March at Hartrick Park, Hillbrook, North Meridian, Lake Park, and Nancy Moore Boardwalk.

The board began work on the acquisition prioritization and scoring process. Additionally, a partnership with Michigan Waterways for the Red Cedar River cleanup effort was highlighted, focusing primarily on removing trash from the river, including discarded items such as scooters. Future efforts may involve addressing invasive species, with collaboration from campus organizations.

The township is planning efforts to control the spread of lesser Celandine, an invasive species that negatively impacts native wildflowers. Management strategies will be implemented at Ted Blackwoods and Ottawa Hills Park. A prescribed burn was conducted at the Davis Foster Preserve as part of ongoing land management efforts.

The Meridian Conservation Corps has 384 members now, and they contributed 659 hours of stewardship to the Township.

Commissioner Sarver provided an update from the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority. There were previous discussions about a new MISTA Affordable Housing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program that initially the Township Board didn't seem very interested in. The authority didn't seem that interested either, however it's back on the table for discussion.

Commissioner Miksicek provided an update from the Park Commission meeting. The March 11th Park Commission meeting included discussions on commission liaisons, with Mike McDonald designated as the liaison to the Environmental Commission.

The primary agenda item was planning for a township cricket field. Due to the size and layout requirements of a standard cricket field, approximately three to four acres with a central paved pitch, the project presents unique challenges compared to existing park facilities. There was strong interest in moving forward, and potential locations for temporary practice fields were identified, including Nancy Moore baseball fields, Newton Road Park, and Hillbrook Park. Underutilized baseball fields were noted as possible spaces for adaptation. A practice field-sharing schedule for summer 2025 is being developed.

For a permanent cricket field, the southern section of North Meridian Park is under consideration, though parking limitations and access issues would need to be addressed, potentially requiring a new entrance off North Meridian Road. Additionally, the Park Commission is updating its memorandum of understanding with the Friends of Historic Meridian, extending the lease for another five years. The next Park Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 8th, at 4:30 PM, where an update on the senior center is expected, likely from the senior center task force.

C. Teams

Commissioner Sarver stated that the Energy Team has its solarize meeting next week, April 9th, 6:30-8:00PM at Henry's. When he checked the other day, they had 24~25 pre-registered. He's sure they'll pick up some more people between now and next week.

Commissioner Frazier stated that the Green team is focused on the Spring recycling event on April 26th from 9AM-1PM. It's similar to previous spring events where metals, bikes, paint, document shreddings and egg cartons are collected. Those that are Consumers Energy customers can also participate in a rebate program for small appliances there as well. They were still looking for volunteers.

The Food & Composting Team has a presentation at a forthcoming meeting about the food rescue operation.

Commissioner Frazier stated that the Green Burial Team was working to finalize a presentation for the Township Board.

D. Haslett/Okemos High School

Commissioner Batten relayed that March was an active month for sustainability efforts at the high school. Following the Environmental Commission meeting, a presentation was given at the Michigan Science Teachers Association conference, focusing on student advocacy for environmental and sustainability issues in education. The discussion emphasized integrating climate and sustainability topics across multiple subjects beyond science.

Shortly after, students were invited to join the newly formed Michigan Youth Climate Council, connected to the Michigan Climate Action Network (MiCAN). The council has held two meetings and is in the process of establishing a mission statement and refining objectives. The group consists of students from various regions across Michigan and aims to share and promote environmental initiatives throughout the state.

A district sustainability team meeting also took place, with efforts focused on aligning members around a common mission statement and exploring examples of successful sustainability plans in other schools. Research and outreach will be conducted to gather insights on effective strategies. The superintendent has expressed strong support for growing these efforts, though additional education in sustainability topics is needed among leadership and staff. Despite this, there is enthusiasm among educators willing to expand their knowledge and involvement.

Commissioner Peterson expressed regret on missing a Green Grant Application due to the timing coinciding with Spring Break.

Commissioner Batten stated they hope to find another source to fund their rechargeable batteries.

E. Other

No reports.

11. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No public comment.

12. OTHER MATTERS AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Trustee Lentz couldn't attend the meeting as he was attending the Michigan Township Association Annual Conference, learning skills for his job as a Township Trustee. Chair McConnell presented a couple of highlights he would have wanted to share:

Trustee Lentz encourages everyone on the Board and on the Commission who care about the environmental impact of transportation to fill out the survey for the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission for their update to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. It is a great way to let voices be heard regarding transportation in our region, which we know has a relationship to our environmental impact as humans. The survey can be found at movingmidmichigan.org.

Chair McConnell added that the Tri-County Regional Planning Agency serves as the municipal planning organization and connection to federal funding for transportation projects. Their metropolitan transportation plan guides funding proposals, and inclusion in the plan is necessary for project consideration.

On March 26, time was spent with Tri-County Regional Planning Department staff, including an hour with environmental personnel, to understand the region's environmental efforts. Meridian Township was recognized as a model community in mid-Michigan for environmental protection and sustainability initiatives.

Meridian Township is the only Tri-County community to participate in the Green Stormwater Manual, a year-long process evaluating ordinances related to stormwater management. Ordinance updates, such as allowing native plants and reducing parking lot sizes, are reviewed to support responsible stormwater programs. The next steps in implementing these changes will be managed by the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Batten reiterated a note about the Climate Council. He is using it as a way to share some of the things he is doing in Haslett and so are the other kids on the board. If there's anything that any of the Commissioners would like to share with a wider audience he is able to do that. There are members from EGLE and all sorts of various organizations across Michigan able to be connected with.

Chair McConnell rose one final issue for the evening. A discussion was held regarding the absence of a vice chair, requiring a review of past notes to determine how this oversight occurred. In the event of an absence at future meetings, it was suggested that Commissioner Lee serve as Chair Pro Tem to ensure continuity.

It was noted that a formal officer election process may have been unintentionally skipped, prompting a recommendation to include it on the next meeting agenda. Encouragement was given for members to express interest in leadership roles, with an emphasis on the benefits of turnover in commission leadership. The topic will be revisited at a future meeting.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:44pm.