



AGENDA
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
October 6, 2021 7 pm

ZOOM MEETING: **867 3903 8953** Password: **5151** (click [here](#) or phone 646 558 8656 or 301 715 8592)

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. HASLETT MIDDLE SCHOOL GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT UPDATE
3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES
5. PUBLIC REMARKS
6. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. Consent Agenda and other ideas for more productive, enjoyable meetings.
7. OLD BUSINESS
 - A. Wetland Education and Outreach Campaign
8. COMMISSIONER UPDATES
9. CHAIR'S REPORT
10. STAFF REPORT
11. Commission, Committee, Study Group and Trustee Reports (*if applicable*)
 - A. Board and Commissions
 - Board of Trustees
 - Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
 - Land Preservation Advisory Board
 - Planning Commission
 - Transportation Commission
 - B. Teams and Study Groups
 - Earth Club and Student Groups
 - Energy Team
 - Environmental Justice
 - Green Infrastructure Grants
 - Green Neighbors
 - Green Team
 - Tree Team
 - Wetland Education
 - C. Other
12. PUBLIC REMARKS
13. ADJOURNMENT



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

September 1, 2021

View at <https://youtu.be/sq1Su6QxZI4>

Agenda: Frazier motioned to approve the agenda. Seconded by McConnell. Approved unanimously.

Meeting Minutes Lafferty motioned to approve the minutes. Seconded by McConnell. Approved unanimously. The E.C. also approved a **condensed version** of meeting summaries. Suggestions: include more detail if there's a public hearing; include reference to the time agenda items appear on the video recording; include a summary of next steps; invite Commissioners to review summary – and indicate next steps.

Wetland Outreach & Education (13:50) There is consensus in doing a proactive outreach to citizens and others. C. Wisinski, Grasseschi, Emma Campbell, and Harvey met with Brandie Yates to discuss ideas including a timeline (seasonal), interdepartmental collaboration, a campaign (like scoop the poop). Recent flooding concerns provide an opportunity to stress the preventative benefits of green infrastructure. Other ideas:

- We have big stormwater projects underway. The Drain Commissioner has some helpful materials they've prepared for the Daniels Drain, Toward Garden, etc.
- Repeat the basics (25% of Twp. is wetlands, existing ordinance/requirements, etc.) and build from there
- Seasonal issues/topics/opportunities (yard waste dumping, native plant sale, World Wetland Day, etc.)
- Involve Earth Club, National Honor Society (volunteer hours are required and desired), and others
- Partner with youth groups and HOMTV on social media campaign
- *What are the top actions we want people to take? What can the average person do?*
- *What measures connect with their values (protecting homes, beautifying the neighborhood)*
- Concise packet of information to share with others (including the Green Neighbors Network)
- Embrace peer pressure to prevent negative behaviors
- Are there obvious prime wetland examples? (along Inter-Urban Pathway, Lake Lansing, Land Preserves, etc.)
- Simple dos and don'ts (deep-rooted vegetation and others mentioned in the [flyer](#))
- Section on the Township Website with focus on wetlands
- Other ideas: Offer Webinars, More Green Fairs, Promote Emma's Wetland Clean-ups, flyer in water/tax bills

Updates (43:30)

- **Chair's Report:** Sarver mentioned progress on the Capital Area Sustainability Partnership.
- **Staff Report:** Harvey mentioned "Think Green Thursday" and invited EC members to help develop news items (Title, picture, paragraph, hashtags, etc.). A grant to improve our Recycling Center was submitted to EGLE. Volunteers are needed for the Sep 18 recycling event. Volunteer [here](#).
- **Board of Trustees:** Wisinski reported that the budget will be discussed next week. Contact her if you have suggestions. Community Survey results are coming in.
- **Brownfield Redevelopment Authority:** Jackson reports that construction is continuing. BRA did not meet.
- **Land Preservation Advisory Board:** Grasseschi reported that the LPAB met to discuss the code including the no-mow zone. A focus is on education first to hopefully avoid enforcement.

Jackson suggested education sign to help people recognize and understand wetlands. Campbell is working on signage.

- **Planning Commission:** McConnell reports that the MPUD and Form-based Codes are being updated.
- **Transportation Commission:** McConnell mentioned renewed interest in [Safe Routes to Schools](#).
- **Student Groups:** Osborne mentioned record attendance at the Earth Club meeting. They are brainstorming ideas. Audrey Hirschert-Walton reports that subcommittees are being discussed.
- **Energy Team:** Sarver mentioned a Virtual Solar Tour, next steps for Township solar, and a new effort involve promote solar with neighborhoods (community meetings and discounts).
- **Environmental Justice:** Grasseschi sees connections with the wetland education and outreach.
- **Green Infrastructure Grants:** Harvey reports that Montessori Radmoor is almost done with their project and he's recently asked for an update from Haslett Middle School. Sarver mentioned interest in tours.
- **Green Team:** Frazier mentioned the upcoming Electronics Recycling Event. Osborne mentioned the youth activities at the Green Fair. She mentioned that the Chippewa Middle School Climate Change Club also attended.
- **Tree Team:** Grasseschi mentioned a possible tree planting, buffer strip planting possibility in the spring.
- **Capital Area Sustainability Partnership:** Lafferty mentioned that the State of Michigan Solutions on Climate recommendations will be available soon. She also mentioned that the Transportation Committee has stalled.

Next Steps?



Meridian Township
5151 Marsh Road
Okemos, MI 48864

P 517.853.4000
F 517.853.4096

Township Board:

Ronald J. Styka
Township Supervisor

Deborah Guthrie
Township Clerk

Phil Deschaine
Township Treasurer

**Patricia Herring
Jackson**
Township Trustee

Dan Opsommer
Township Trustee

Kathy Ann Sundland
Township Trustee

Courtney Wisinski
Township Trustee

Frank L. Walsh
Township Manager

October 4, 2021

Dear Meridian Township Resident,

On behalf of the Township Board, Commissions, Staff and neighborhoods of Meridian Township, we invite you to join us in preserving and enhancing one of our community's greatest assets; our wetlands. You are receiving this letter because you have a wetland on or adjacent to your property.

Protecting wetlands is important for many reasons. Wetlands act like a sponge, protecting us from flooding. They also help recharge our groundwater/drinking water and provide other benefits such as protection of fish, wildlife, and pollinator habitats.

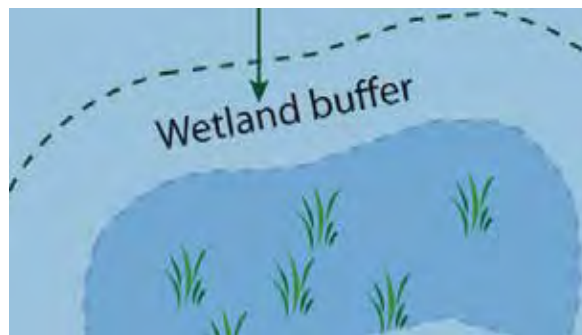
This letter and the enclosed brochure describe these benefits and current laws that may affect your property.

There are different types of wetlands and most are protected. Protected wetlands include:

1. Wetlands, equal to or greater than 1/4 acre and determined to be essential to the preservation of natural resources.
2. Wetlands contiguous to inland lakes, streams, rivers or ponds (or within 500 feet of the ordinary high water mark)*
3. Wetlands, determined by the State of Michigan, are essential to the preservation of the natural resources of the State from pollution, impairment or destruction.

* Unless determined by Michigan Department of Energy, Great Lakes, and the Environment (EGLE) that there is no surface or groundwater connection between the wetland and the water body.

A wetland buffer or natural vegetation strip is also protected by law. Wetland buffers/vegetation strips help minimize erosion, stabilize streambanks and wetland edges, protect water quality, preserve wildlife habitat and protect from flooding.



The wetland buffer is typically 20-50 feet wide, depending upon the size and location of wetland, and is treated the same as the wetland.

There are some things that you can and can't do in a protected wetland and wetland buffer/vegetation strip. For example:

Do...	Don't...
Preserve natural ground cover to the fullest extent feasible. Trees, shrubs, and native plants have deep roots which help protect your property from flooding.	Do not alter existing soil and organic matter. Please do not add or remove soil, stones, yard debris, etc. Do not add fertilizers or pesticides.
Plant perennial native species, especially on exposed soil and steep slopes. Lawns have shallow roots and do not protect from flooding.	Do not mow or clear cut more than 10% of the length of the buffer strip. A lawn is not considered a natural vegetation strip.
Minimize pruning and removal of trees, shrubs, and ground covers unless providing access or views to water features, removing hazardous or nuisance exotic vegetation, or improving wildlife habitat.	Do not remove stumps. Live root systems must be maintained to provide erosion control.
	Do not build structures or grade the soil without contacting the Planning Department.

We hope that this information is helpful in understanding the importance and benefits of our wetlands in reducing flooding, protecting our water resources, and preserving the environmental quality and natural beauty of our community.

If you'd like to learn more about wetlands, natural landscaping, rain/pollinator gardens, land preserves, native plant sales, or the Meridian Conservation Corps, please visit our website at www.meridian.mi.us/GreenMeridian. For code or construction-related questions, please contact the Community Planning & Development Department at 517.853.4500.

Thank you,



John Sarver, Chair
Meridian Environmental Commission

Wetlands in the Township

Most people are familiar with the cattail or lily pad wetland found in areas with standing water, but wetlands can also be grassy meadows, shrubby fields, or mature forests.

Many wetland areas have only a high ground water table and standing water may not be visible.

Over 25% of Meridian Township is covered in wetlands (5778 of 20,160 acres), making wetland stewardship an important responsibility and opportunity in every neighborhood.

The Township has a wetland ordinance that protects wetlands as small as 1/4 acre. This ordinance requires a 20-foot natural vegetation buffer.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, over 50% of Michigan's original wetlands have been drained or filled (57% in Meridian), thereby making the protection of remaining wetlands that much more important.

Want to help protect our wetlands?

Volunteer with the Meridian Township Conservation Corps! Call Emma Campbell at 517.853.4614 for more info!

Also visit MyWatersheds.org, MGROW.org, and Meridian.mi.us/gogreen to learn more about local water protection efforts.

Your actions can help
keep our water clean,
reduce pollution, and
prevent flooding!



*Help keep Meridian Township beautiful!
Find out how and spread the word!*

Meridian.mi.us/GoGreen
www.MyWatersheds.org



POLLUTION
ISN'T PRETTY.



Protect Our Wetlands

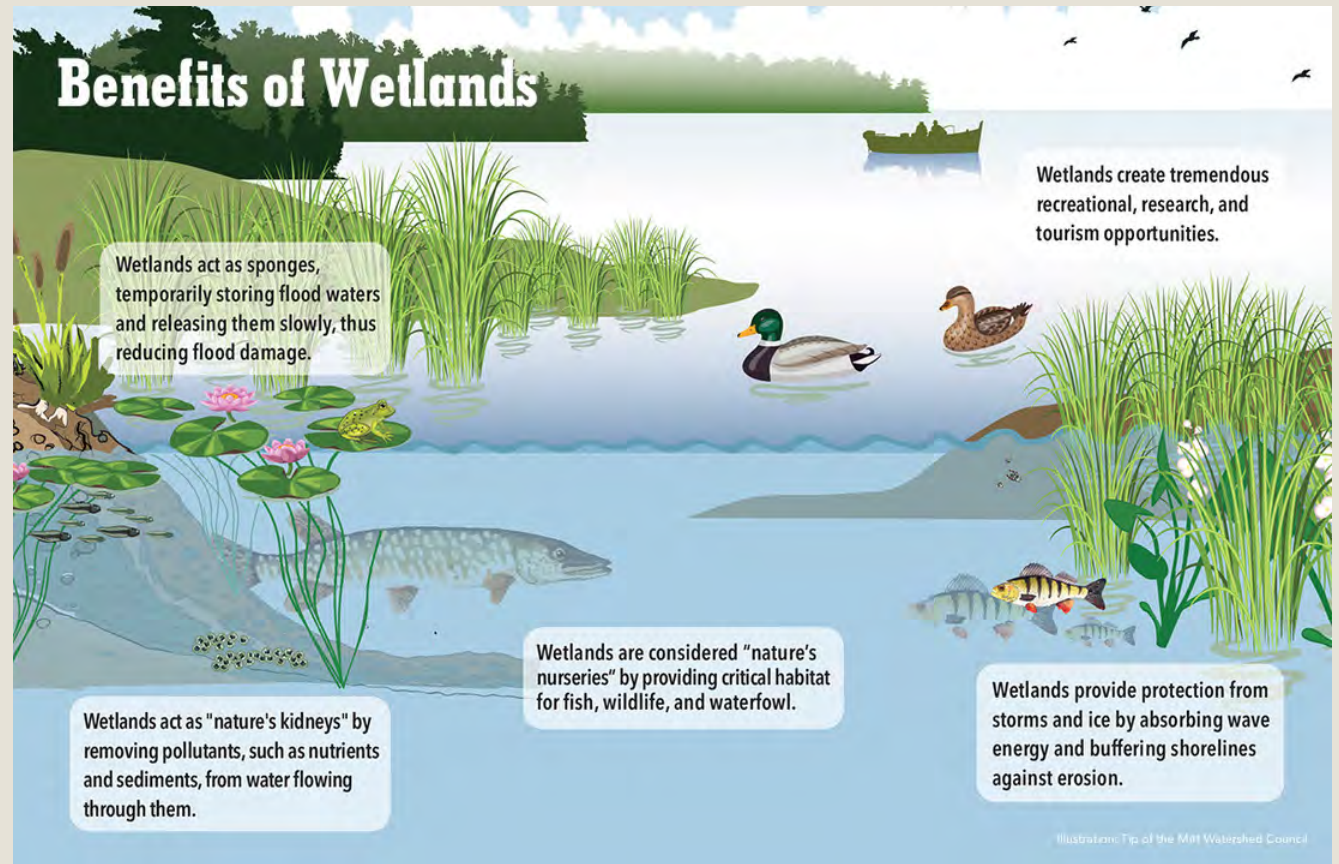
*Your actions can help
keep our water clean*



Wetland Services

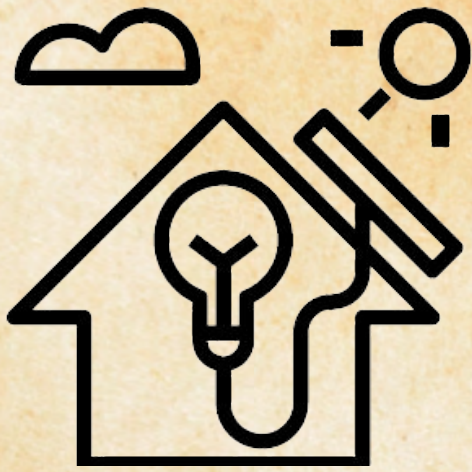
Wetlands are a critical part of our environment helping reduce flooding, clean water, provide habitat, and offer other benefits:

- Reduction of mosquito populations – a healthy, functioning wetland can actually reduce mosquito populations by providing proper habitat for the natural enemies of mosquitos and by preventing or reducing flooding.
- Water storage – wetlands act as a sponge to absorb water during floods and slowly release the water back during droughts. They also slow down the water's momentum, decrease erosion, and help recharge our groundwater.
- Water filtration – wetlands naturally filter pollutants like sediments and nutrients, improving water quality.
- Habitat and nurseries– wetlands are diverse ecosystems that are home to a wide variety of plants and animals.
- Recreation – wetlands offer opportunities to hike, birdwatch, canoe and enjoy nature along with educational opportunities for youth and adults alike.



Together We Can Protect Our Wetlands

- Do plant native vegetation on your property and remove invasive species.
- Do protect the required 20 foot natural vegetation buffer around the wetlands.
- Do not remove trees, stumps, roots and other natural vegetation from the wetlands or buffer.
- Do not mow in the wetlands or within the buffer.
- Do not use chemicals, fertilizers and pesticides in the wetlands and the 20 foot natural vegetation buffer. For information about invasive species removal, call 517.853.4614.
- Do not put yard waste or "fill material" (soil/ dirt, stones, mulch, etc.) in wetlands or within the 20 foot natural vegetation buffer.
- Contact the Planning Department at 517.853.4560 if you are planning construction or landscaping within 40 feet of a wetland.
- Contact Public Works at 517.853.4440 if you are moving dirt or disturbing soil. A Soil Erosion/ Sedimentation Control Permit may be required.
- Inform neighbors, developers, and state and local decision-makers about the importance of wetlands.



Meridian Township's **ANNUAL SOLAR & SUSTAINABLE TOUR**

Discover solar in our community!



Join us for the kick-off on October 2 from 8:00 am - 2:00 pm at the Marketplace on the Green.

Tour sustainable destinations all month long!

Visit meridian.mi.us/GreenMeridian or use the QR code for a list of solar locations in the area.

The map is designed to give you a virtual, walk, bike or drive-by tour. The map also features links to in-depth interviews with homeowners and installers.

In collaboration with:

ASES NATIONAL
SOLAR TOUR

