

MINUTES
CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MONDAY, May 19, 2025
6:00PM
2870 JACKSMITH AVE SE

ARTICLE 1. Chairman Rowland called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.
Members Present: Rowland, Madiol, Korstange, Cribbs, Kraemer
Members Absent: None
Others Present: Community Planning and Development Director (CP&D Director) Andrea Hendrick, Township Engineer Aric Thorne, Zoning Administrator Ryan Sennett, Legal Counsel Leslie Abdoo of Foster Swift, Planning Assistant Nick Govan and others listed on the sign-in sheet.

ARTICLE 2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

ARTICLE 3. Approve the current Agenda

Motion was made by Chairman Rowland to adjust the current agenda to add an additional article between nine and 10. That new article will be article 10, and that will be the commission going to a closed hearing to hear some legal information. So other articles that were currently on the agenda, 10 through 14 will now be 11 through 15.
Supported by Member Madiol. Motion carried 5 to 0

ARTICLE 4. Disclose any Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest.

ARTICLE 5. Approve the Minutes of the April 21, 2025, Meeting

Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange to approve the minutes.
Supported by Member Cribbs. Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 6. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak.

(Comments are limited to five minutes per speaker)

ARTICLE 7. Cascade Charter Township Stormwater Ordinance Review & Education

Township Engineer, Aric Thorne, presented information on the stormwater ordinance in Cascade Township and the stormwater site review process. He explained that the stormwater ordinance has three main components: water quality, flood control, and channel protection. The ordinance is required for all municipalities that discharge to state waters and is regulated by EGLE under an NPDES MS4 permit on a five-year cycle.

Engineer Thorne explained that the ordinance affects developments more than one acre, developments disturbing less than one acre that are part of a larger common plan of development, and other specific situations outlined in Chapter 21 of the Zoning Ordinance.

He described the partnership with Kent County Drain Commissioner, Road Commission, and GVMC (Grand Valley Metro Council) in implementing and enforcing the ordinance.

Member Cribbs asked if all site plan applications go through the township engineer first before coming to the Planning Commission. Engineer Thorne

confirmed this process and noted that he may make recommendations for approval with conditions or exceptions based on site-specific conditions.

ARTICLE 8.

Case #25-3887 – WITHDRAWN

Applicant: Engelsma Homes

Property Address: 7320 Whispering Ridge Dr. SE

Parcel Number: 41-19-22-126-030

Requested Action: Request for a Type I Special Use Permit to build an accessory building over 832 sf.

Community Planning & Development Director Andrea Hendrick announced that the applicant for Case #25-3887 had withdrawn their application.

ARTICLE 9.

Case #25-3885

Applicant: Old National Bank

Property Address: 2851 Charlevoix Dr. SE

Parcel Number: 41-19-17-102-007

Requested Action: Request for Site Plan approval for a new bank at 2851 Charlevoix Dr SE.

Director Hendrick presented the application for an approximately 3,000 square foot bank with drive-through and associated parking and landscaping on an out lot of an existing 100,000 square foot office building in the Centennial Park Overlay district.

Director Hendrick reviewed the overlay standards, noting that while building height and area regulations were met, there were a number of Zoning Ordinance requirements that were not compliant. She pointed out that no side of the proposed development meets the required setbacks that must remain as green space under the Centennial Park Overlay. She also noted that the proposed roof-mounted HVAC equipment lacked adequate screening, and she explained that the lighting plan exceeded ordinance requirements, which would require Zoning Board of Appeals approval since the Planning Commission cannot waive lighting requirements. Director Hendrick further identified that the dumpster enclosure failed to meet overlay requirements and observed landscaping deficiencies throughout the site. She highlighted that the application included non-conforming parking spaces along the street in areas that should be landscaped under proper setback compliance, and she noted that pedestrian access to 28th Street was problematic as it required crossing through parking areas.

Township Engineer Thorne also confirmed he had been working with the applicant's engineer John Male on storm water requirements and that revisions were 90% complete, with remaining issues addressable through conditions.

Josh Higginbotham, architect for Old National Bank, presented the application. He started the proposal mentioning taking an underutilized resource and removing 61 parking spaces while improving stormwater runoff by reducing impermeable surfaces.

Higginbotham addressed the challenges of working with existing infrastructure and explained their efforts to maximize use of existing parking while meeting buffer requirements. He confirmed they could meet dumpster enclosure requirements and addressed lighting concerns, explaining their proposed motion-activated lighting system. He also confirmed that there was a cross access and shared parking agreement with the office currently on the existing parcel.

Treasurer Korstange questioned the need for three drive-through bays compared to nearby banks that had been reduced to two bays, and another had eliminated all their drive through lanes. Dawn Kangas with Old National Bank responded that they do require them and provided the reason being that one contained the night drop box and atm while the outer two would be drive up lanes.

Treasurer Korstange also asked about the plans for removing two mature trees on 28th Street, Higginbotham explained that one appeared to have suffered ice damage from recent storms. He acknowledged they could revisit keeping the trees if the Commission preferred, noting they would reassess the trees' condition.

Commission members then discussed the various non-conforming aspects of the proposal. Treasurer Korstange emphasized the township's intent to clean up non-conforming properties and require appropriate greenery.

Chairman Rowland expressed concern about conforming to requirements while appreciating having a building instead of a parking lot.

Vice Chair Kraemer emphasized the importance of meeting requirements absent specific reasons why compliance is not possible. The Commission discussed each staff recommendation in detail.

Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange to APPROVE Case #25-3885 for Site Plan Review Approval at 2851 Charlevoix Dr. SE with the following provisions:

- 1. The required buffer yard plant material may be dispersed throughout the site.**

Furthermore, the following conditions shall be placed on approval:

- 1. The applicant meets the requirements of the Cascade Charter Township stormwater ordinance as recommended by the township engineer.**
- 2. The plans are modified to meet the setback and open space requirements of section VI.2 of Centennial Park Overlay abutting Charlevoix Drive.**
- 3. The roof mounted mechanical equipment be fully screened by means of adding additional screening around the proposed mechanical or increasing the height of the proposed parapets.**
- 4. The dumpster enclosure meets the requirements of the Centennial Park Overlay.**
- 5. The lighting levels meet the requirements of chapter 19 of the zoning ordinance.**
- 6. The applicant meet the sign requirements of Centennial Park overlay.**
- 7. The applicant provides the required buffer yards and planting requirements on the north and east side of the property and adds an additional landscaping island to the parking spaces lining the west property line, an equal distance between the two current islands.**
- 8. All soil erosion and sediment control plans are approved by the Kent County Road Commission.**
- 9. The Easement and Operating Agreement be reviewed and approved by the township attorney.**
- 10. The approved access and maintenance agreement is executed and recorded with Kent County.**

11. A stormwater maintenance agreement is recorded with county.
 12. The applicant provides a landscaping performance bond adequate to the estimated cost of the landscaping.
- Supported by Vice Chair Kraemer. Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 10. Request for Closed Session

Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange Regarding the cases of Fresh Coast Ventures LLC v Cascade Charter Township (Case No. 25-20007-CH) pending in the Kent County Circuit Court and Gerald R Ford International Airport Authority v Cascade Charter Township (Case No. 24-02765-CH) pending in the Michigan Court of Appeals, to go into closed session to consult with the Township's attorney regarding trial or settlement strategy in connection with specific pending litigation because an open meeting would have a detrimental financial effect on the litigating or settlement position of the Township.

Supported by Member Madiol.

Roll Call Vote:
Korstange: Yeah
Cribbs: Yeah
Rowland: Yeah
Kraemer: Yeah
Madiol: Yeah

Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange to go back to Open Session.
Supported by Member Madiol. Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 11. Case #25-3883 – Public Hearing
Applicant: Tony Bonnema, W.M. Brick & Stone, LLC

Property Address: 6103 60th St. SE
Parcel Number: 41-19-32-400-018

Requested Action: Request for a Conditional Rezoning from AC – Airport Commercial and ARC – Agriculture Rural Conservation to I – Industrial.

Director Hendrick presented the application for conditional rezoning of a 6-acre tear-shaped lot located between 60th Street and M-6. The applicant consolidated their request to one specific use: a contractor storage yard consisting of outdoor storage of equipment and materials with associated sales on the west side of the property.

Director Hendrick explained the property is currently split-zoned with AC (Airport Commerce) on the west side and ARC (Agricultural Rural Conservation) on the east side, with the eastern portion containing navigation easements that limit development. She noted significant challenges with the application, including its inconsistency with Master Plan goals and objectives, failure to meet setback standards for material storage, concerns about visual aesthetics at what serves as a gateway to the community, and the property's lack of current utilities and need to extended public water and sewer connections needed for the property. Based on the issues noted in the staff report, Director Hendrick recommended denial of the conditional rezoning request.

Treasurer Korstange asked Director Hendrick about the utility boundary, noting that according to the utility boundary map in the new Master Plan, most of this

property falls within the area designated for public utilities. Director Hendrick confirmed that the utility service boundary does extend through the entire property but indicated she would need to review the Master Plan language to determine if connection is required or just intended as a goal. Treasurer Korstange emphasized that during the drafting of the Master Plan utility boundary, the intent of the designation was that properties in this area should be serviced by public water and sewer systems, which she considered important to the application review.

Patrick Sweeney, attorney for the applicant, presented the case along with Tony Bonnema, owner of West Michigan Brick and Stone. Sweeney explained that the property has been undeveloped throughout its history due to its unique location at the end of an airport runway. He also noted the eastern half of the property was topographically uneven and was never farmed, while the western half became unsuitable for farming after M-6 construction.

Sweeney argued that the property's location precludes residential uses and is too small for large-scale commercial or industrial uses. He explained that West Michigan Brick and Stone sells landscaping materials primarily to contractors and the general public, with no manufacturing or processing on-site. He noted the proposal includes mixed indoor and outdoor storage with full fencing and landscape buffers. Sweeney addressed setback concerns, noting that M-6 is a limited access expressway with different requirements than typical streets, and the actual distance from roadway to storage areas would be approximately 170 feet. He also noted that the property is far from current utilities and that there's no reason to believe a well and septic system would be insufficient for the small number of employees on site.

Member Cribbs questioned the landscaping plans, lighting, signage, and daily truck traffic. Mr. Bonnema confirmed plans for trees and natural buffers, with an average of 12 trucks per day and up to 10 employees. He stated they had not worked on lighting and signage due to where they were in the application process.

Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange to open public hearing. Supported by Member Cribbs. Motion carried unanimously.

There was no one wishing to speak.

Motion was made by Chairman Rowland to close public hearing. Supported by Member Madiol. Motion carried unanimously.

Commission members engaged in extensive discussion about the application. Chairman Rowland expressed his primary concern about setting precedent, emphasizing that his issue was not with the specific applicants but with the potential implications for future requests. He noted his longstanding position that decisions should consider not just the current applicants but the next five who might follow with similar requests.

Vice Chair Kraemer expressed support for productive land use but emphasized his role in applying the standards rather than creating new ones. He also noted the requirements to find consistency with the future land use map, which he could not do in this case.

Treasurer Korstange provided detailed opposition, referencing her board experience and the ongoing zoning update process designed to support the

recently adopted Master Plan. She argued that approving this request would contradict the comprehensive planning work currently underway and would undermine the community's expressed desire for natural buffers around the airport to protect residential areas. Korstange noted that while the immediate area appears isolated, there are residents nearby who would be affected by increased truck traffic. She emphasized that the Master Plan reflects the community's values and the board's mandate to preserve certain characteristics.

Treasurer Korstange also addressed the split zoning issue, clarifying that the parcel's division between AC and ARC districts was never intentional. She referenced Planning Commission meeting minutes from March 2023 showing that the intent was to designate the entire parcel as ARC, not to allow any Airport Commerce zoning on the property. Regarding the applicant's claim of being the only interested party, Treasurer Korstange noted that other businesses had inquired about the property over the years but were deterred by the zoning restrictions and requirements for public utilities.

Legal Counsel Abdo clarified the procedural aspects before the motion was made, noting that conditional rezonings require applicant-offered conditions and that the township cannot impose additional conditions beyond what the applicant proposes.

Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange to recommend DENIAL for Case Number 25-3883 for a conditional rezoning of 6103 60th Street for the following reasons:

- 1. The request is not consistent with goals and objectives of the master plan and future land use designation for the subject property, including the utilities boundary.**
- 2. The request does not meet the performance and location standards set forth for the proposed use.**
- 3. The preliminary plan does not demonstrate compliance with special use regulations of the zoning ordinance.**

Supported by Vice Chair Kraemer. Motion carried 4 to 1.

Yeas: Korstange, Kraemer, Madiol, Rowland

Nays: Cribbs

ARTICLE 12.

Case #23-3780

Applicant: Cascade Charter Township

Requested Action: Set Public Hearing for Airport Overlays.

Motion was made by Chairman Rowland to set public hearing for Cascade Charter Township Airport Overlays for June 16, 2025. Supported by Member Madiol.

Motion carried 5 to 0.

ARTICLE 13.

Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak.

There was no one wishing to speak.

ARTICLE 14.

Other Business

Chairman Rowland encouraged commissioners to not be afraid to vote no when they have concerns and to attend township board meetings to voice opinions if they feel strongly about issues.

Treasurer Korstange agreed that the township board appreciates input and that public comments generate meaningful discussion among board members.

ARTICLE 15. Adjourn

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Hendrick, Community Planning and Development Director, Recording Secretary