

# CASCADE CONNECTIONS



Cascade Charter Township Newsletter  
September/October 2024



# An Update from the Supervisor

Dear Cascadians,

As we come to the end of another beautiful Michigan summer, we are fortunate that Cascade’s natural beauty provides us with a front-row seat to the changing seasons.

It was this natural beauty that moved early settlers to declare: “Cascade is to be a place of trees and falling waters.” Although it looks quite different today, retaining Cascade’s unique character for future generations in the face of intense development pressures is a top priority.

To that end, I would like to highlight some current and ongoing Township initiatives—all of which further the goal of enhancing our residents’ quality of life and preserving Cascade’s unique character:

## IMPROVING COMMUNITY SPACES

**Cascade Rd Pedestrian Bridge over the Thornapple River:** The reconstruction/widening of the pedestrian portions of both sides of the Cascade Road bridge is ready to proceed as we wait on an official start date due to a contractor delay.

**Friendship Park (in front of the library):** Residents have been enjoying the gathering space in front of the library since it opened at the end of June. Additional landscaping will be done this fall—including replacing the dead grass along 28th Street with native prairie grasses and wildflowers.



**Westdale Memorial Park (kitty-corner from Tuffy):** Thank you to the volunteers from the Kent Garden Club who have been tending to the overgrown flower beds. Plans to soften the park’s post-modern design—removing some of the concrete and restoring landscaping, including a real Christmas tree—are scheduled for this fall.

## PUBLIC SAFETY INITIATIVES

**Targeting High Crime Areas:** To crack down on the disproportionate amount of crime and illicit activities in and around several hotels near 28th Street and the Interstate 96 overpass, the Board of Trustees adopted Cascade’s first hotel licensing ordinance earlier this summer. Efforts to roll out the new ordinance in partnership with the Kent County Sheriff’s Department have been positive.

**Deer Management:** Without natural predators and with fewer people hunting—especially in suburban areas like Cascade—the deer population is thriving—to the detriment of many residents’ flowering bulbs and shrubs. Although the destruction of vegetation is an ongoing source of frustration, public safety is the biggest concern. Kent County had the most deer-vehicle crashes in the state last year.

“ Cascade and KCRC are working together to address an important regional issue that affects our community. We are hopeful that this collaboration will result in an effective solution to residents’ concerns.

-Grace Lesperance

Cascade recently partnered with the Kent County Road Commission and other local communities to create a deer management task force. The task force is working with Grand Valley State University (to assess the local deer population) and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (to develop possible cost-effective deer management strategies).

## NEW MASTER PLAN ADOPTED

**Future Land Use & Zoning:** An initiative vital to ensuring Cascade remains a place of trees and falling waters was the adoption of a new Master Plan in 2024. Cascade’s former Master Plan encouraged industrial development east and south of the airport. Such development would drastically change the nearby rural areas and neighborhoods. In fact, in its 2023 Airport Access Study, the Grand Valley Metro Council, in partnership with the airport, actually cited Cascade’s 2019 Master Plan as a basis for the need for multiple new M-6 expressway on/off ramps in Cascade Township. The newly-adopted 2024 Master Plan protects and buffers this part of Cascade, and emphasizes smart growth that compliments and enhances residents’ safety, quality of life, and property values.

## HERITAGE FESTIVAL - SEPT. 14

We hope you join us as we gather as a community to celebrate our fourth annual Heritage Festival. Find all the details about this family-friendly event—including live music and food trucks—on the back page of this newsletter.



*It is an honor to serve as your Supervisor. Please allow this note to serve as a personal invitation to attend our Board of Trustee meetings. Remember—in addition to regular business hours—I have “after hour” office hours the first Thursday of each month from 6 - 7 pm. in the History Room of the Cascade Library. I look forward to hearing from you!*

**Grace Lesperance**  
**Cascade Township Supervisor**



## NEW on our website TOWNSHIP PROJECTS

Learn about projects in the township and track their progress. We’ve added a new page to our website to help keep residents informed about projects and initiatives that are coming soon, in progress, and completed.



Scan QR code or visit:  
[www.cascadetwp.com/projects](http://www.cascadetwp.com/projects).



# An Update from the Treasurer

Cascade Township has obtained the **highest possible opinion of "unqualified,"** from our auditors. The auditors have confirmed that the township adhered to State budget and accounting regulations.

Our financial status is secure, **boasting a \$5.8 million fund balance** in the General Fund. The mandatory special audit on ARPA funds demonstrates that Cascade Township allocated the funds in alignment with federal regulations.

**-Wendy Korstange**

## PUBLIC HEARING FISCAL BUDGET 2025

A public hearing for Cascade Charter Township’s Fiscal Year 2025 Budget will be conducted during an upcoming Board meeting. During that session, Township leadership will analyze how public funds will be dispersed for local services and infrastructure over the coming year.

Residents are encouraged to attend and share their input on the proposed allocations with the Board of Trustees.

## SUMMER TAX BILLS

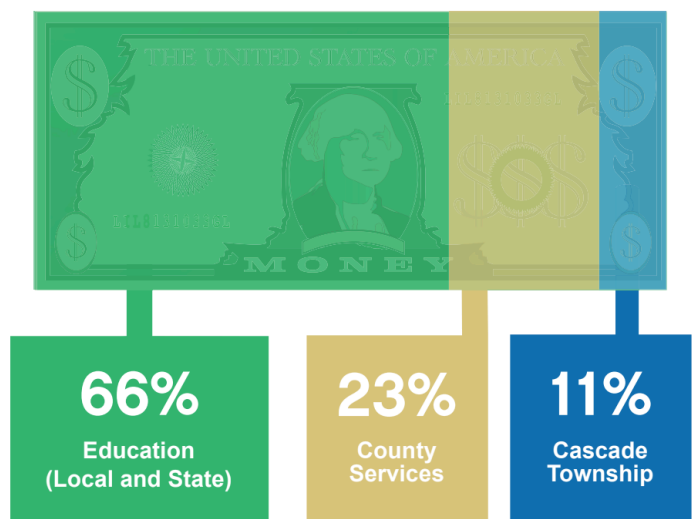
Summer tax bills are due on September 16, 2024. There are multiple convenient ways to pay your taxes:

- **IN PERSON:** At the Township Office during business hours or in the drop box outside the main entrance.
- **ONLINE:** Visit [cascadetwp.com](http://cascadetwp.com) and select the blue “Taxes” button on the home page.
- **BY PHONE:** Call 855.770.5856, use access code 90603016
- **BY MAIL:** Please use the return envelope provided with your tax statement. Allow at least seven days for delivery.

## HOW YOUR PROPERTY TAXES ARE DISTRIBUTED

Although nearly **50%** of Cascade’s annual revenue is funded through property taxes, only about **11%** of an individual property owner’s tax bill goes to Cascade Township. Using an average tax bill scenario, out of **\$6,702**, Cascade would receive **\$746**.

**Where does the rest go?** Townships serve as the tax collector for other government entities, such as school districts, state education, county government and library systems.



# An Update from the Clerk



September finds us hard at work preparing for the final election of 2024. Much progress has already been made and we will continue at a fast pace to ensure everything is set for the upcoming General Election.

-Sue Slater

## ELECTION NEWS

During the recent August Primary election, Cascade Township experienced a significant increase in early voting.

### What's the difference between early voting and voting absentee?

Both early voting and absentee voting give voters the chance to vote prior to Election Day. The distinction lies in early voting, during which voters can cast their ballot in the tabulator similar to voting in person on Election Day.

Absentee voting allows voters to request a ballot either by mail or in person at the Clerk's office.

Absentee voters can fill out the ballot, once identification is verified, and submit it in the enclosed envelope either in person at the Clerk's office, by mail, or through a drop box. Once received, election officials mark the absentee ballots as "received" only.

Ballots from both are counted on Election Day.



## ELECTION DAY

Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

The early voting initiative at the Wisner Center was a success and we intend to maintain this practice. On Election Day, voters are only able to vote at their assigned precincts. No early voting or absentee ballots are available on Election Day.



You may register to vote online anytime up to 15 days before an election.

For more election information, scan the QR code or visit: [cascadetwp.com/elections](http://cascadetwp.com/elections)

# PRECINCTS

### PRECINCT 1

Forest Hills Administration Building  
6890 Cascade Road SE

### PRECINCT 2

Cascade Fellowship  
Christian Reformed Church  
6655 Cascade Road SE

### PRECINCT 3

Cascade Fellowship  
Christian Reformed Church  
6655 Cascade Road SE

### PRECINCT 4

Buttrick Fire Station  
2990 Buttrick Avenue SE

### PRECINCT 5

Ada Bible Church (South Entrance)  
8899 Cascade Road SE

### PRECINCT 6

Cascade Christian Church  
Centennial Hall  
2829 Thornapple River Drive

### PRECINCT 7

Cascade Library Wisner Center  
2870 Jacksmith Avenue SE

### PRECINCT 8

Thornapple Community  
Reformed Church  
3260 Thornapple River Drive  
(at Thornhills)

### PRECINCT 9

Cascade Library Wisner Center  
2870 Jacksmith Avenue SE

### PRECINCT 10

Ada Bible Church  
8899 Cascade Road SE  
West Entrance

## FIRE EMERGENCY SERVICES MILLAGE PASSES

On August 6, our residents voted in favor of the Fire Emergency Services millage, allowing us to sustain fire services to our Township.

“  
*Thank you, voters, for your overwhelming support in passing the fire millage. Your commitment to the safety of our community ensures that our firefighters have the resources they need to protect us all.*  
—  
*-John Shipley, Cascade Township Trustee*”

Thank you for supporting this important initiative for our Township.



## HALLOWEEN FUN WITH EMBER THE OTTER

Schedule with neighborhoods and times TBA

Cascade Firefighters and their mascot, Ember the Otter, are going Trick-or-Treating! On Halloween, they will visit neighborhoods throughout the Township handing out goodie bags. Follow our Facebook page and website for times and locations.

## SCHOOL SAFETY & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The Forest Hills School District is collaborating with the Cascade Township Fire Department, Michigan State Police, Kent County Sheriff's Office, and other first responders to offer training that will enhance interagency operations and emergency preparedness in the district.

Training will occur in the recently vacated FHPS administration building (6590 Cascade Rd.) Training will take place over the next several months, at various times during the day. During these training initiatives, you will see multiple types of response vehicles located at the main entrance of the former administration building.

If you have questions, feel free to email FHPS director of safety and security, Ryan Kimball, at [rkimball@fhps.net](mailto:rkimball@fhps.net).

## SMOKE & CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

Notification devices like smoke alarms save lives and reduce the chance of dying by nearly half. If all homes had working smoke detectors, an estimated 890 lives could be saved annually.

Building codes mandate smoke and carbon monoxide detector installation for projects needing a building permit, like interior renovations. Smoke alarms should be inside and outside each bedroom and on every level of the home. Carbon monoxide alarms are required near all bedrooms.

Wireless smoke alarms offer interconnectedness without rewiring, providing faster and louder notifications for a safer exit from the home.

## REMEMBER

- Test alarms monthly.
- Replace batteries as prescribed by manufacturer.
- Never disable a smoke alarm.
- Replace every 10 years.
- Plan regular fire drills.
- Teach children what to do in the event of a fire.
- Establish a meeting area outside of your home in a safe location.
- Teach children to stay at the meeting spot, never return. GET OUT-STAY OUT- STAY SAFE!

## AIR SEALING AND INSULATION

New homes must have a continuous air barrier to maintain conditioned air. They are built tightly, requiring mechanical ventilation for fresh air.

Existing homes may have air leaks leading to increased energy costs, equivalent to leaving a window open year-round.

## ADDITIONAL BENEFITS:

- Reduced noise from the outside.
- Less pollen, dust and insects entering your home.
- Better humidity control.
- Lower chance for ice dams.
- Common areas for air leakage include:
  - Knee walls
  - Porch roofs
  - Attic access panels
  - Recessed lighting
  - Attic fans
  - Rim joists
  - Windows and doors
  - Fireplace walls

Often a few tubes of caulk can have a dramatic effect on air leakage and provide a more comfortable home with lower energy costs.



Scan for more information or visit:  
[www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).

You are also welcome to contact the Cascade Township Building Department at 616.949.3765.



## YARD WASTE PICK-UP

Mondays from Oct. 14 - Dec. 2

Bagged yard waste pick-up is offered to residents in the restricted burn area (generally west of Buttrick Ave. and north of I-96) every Monday from October 14 - December 2.

Limit 20 tags per resident. Tags available at Cascade Township office during normal business hours.



To view map of restricted burn area and for more info, scan QR code or visit:

[cascadetwp.com/community/community-programs](http://cascadetwp.com/community/community-programs)



## FALL CLEAN-UP

8 AM - Noon

Ada Bible Church 8899 Cascade Road SE

- Non-hazardous household waste ONLY.
- Proof of Cascade Township residency required.
- No yard or hazardous waste accepted.
- Paint cans that are open and dried are allowed.



For questions call: 616.949.1500

Scan QR code for more information or visit:

[cascadetwp.com/community/community-programs](http://cascadetwp.com/community/community-programs)





Cascade Park, often called Cascade Recreation Park, is the oldest and most-frequented park in the Township. Although there have been improvements and updates over the years, a comprehensive assessment hasn't taken place since the park opened.

In 2022, the Cascade Township staff and Parks Committee initiated an evaluation of Cascade Recreation Park. This evaluation prompted the need for a master plan.

“ *I encourage all residents to take a moment to share with us your wishes as we plan for the future of Cascade's Rec Park. Let's work together to ensure that the park continues to be a vibrant welcoming place for all.* ”

**-Timmy Noordhoek,  
Cascade Township Trustee**

Troyer Group, a design firm specializing in recreational spaces, was chosen to develop the Master Plan. They are gathering public feedback to identify the most-utilized and most-desired amenities by residents.



**PLEASE GIVE US  
YOUR INPUT!**

Scan the QR code or visit the link below to provide your feedback.

[cascadetwp.com/recparksurvey](https://cascadetwp.com/recparksurvey)

# CARING FOR PEACE PARK'S HABITAT

Cascade Township is organizing volunteer workdays at Peace Park to combat Autumn Olive, an invasive shrub. Mark your calendars for these Saturday workdays from 1 - 3 pm at Peace Park's Bolt Drive entrance:

- September 7
- September 21
- October 19
- November 23

Workdays include a brief presentation on the purpose and techniques for treating Autumn Olive and other woody invasives, followed by a guided walk to identify and treat Autumn Olive shrubs and Oriental/Oval Bittersweet climbing trees. All necessary tools, materials, and work gloves will be provided. Participants are advised to wear layered clothing and closed-toed shoes.



## PATHWAY ETIQUETTE



Cascade boasts more than 17 miles of pathways, offering a variety of recreational opportunities and fun. However, ensuring safety is crucial due to topography and high traffic volume on both roads and pathways.

- Stay to the right—bikes and pedestrians.
- Pass with care. Call out to pedestrians, then pass on the left. Use care on steep slopes and blind corners.
- Have situational awareness.
- Class 1 eBikes are permitted but should not exceed 15 mph when sharing the pathway.
- Dogs are required to be on a leash 6' (or less).
- Small children should be closely supervised.

## TARGET PRACTICE

### INFORMATION FROM KENT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

You are permitted to target practice/shoot firearms on your property with a few necessary requirements:

- There must be an adequate backstop to prevent bullets from traveling beyond the confines of your property.
- You must not shoot recklessly.
- Do not shoot at fireworks, explosives or other incendiary devices.
- Hunting with a firearm on private property requires the hunter be 450' or 150 yds away from the nearest occupied structure, residence, barn, or agricultural outbuilding without written permission from the property owner.
- There is no law mandating the times which residents may target practice on their property.
- Use good judgment and do not confront your neighbors or anyone you feel is shooting recklessly on their property.
- Law enforcement is accustomed to handling these complaints.

# Embrace the Fall Season at Your Local Library

*As the leaves change and the air turns crisp, our library is the perfect place to embrace the beauty and excitement of the fall season. We have a fantastic lineup of events, programs, and resources for all ages to enjoy this autumn.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Friends of the Library Fall Book Sale:** Discover a wide selection of books, including fiction, non-fiction, children's books, and more—all at unbeatable prices

- September 21, 9:30 am – 4 pm
- September 22; 1 - 4 pm

Proceeds from the sale support library programs and services. This is a fantastic opportunity to find great reads and support your local library.

## FALL WEEKLY CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Join us for our special **Fall Storytime Series**, where children can listen to enchanting tales about the season. Storytime sessions are every Monday through Friday at 10 am. Perfect for families with children ages 0-6.

If you have school-aged children, the library offers programs like **KDL Lab**, **Nature Adventures**, and **Art Party** on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays at 4:30 pm. Every Wednesday at 6:30 pm, we offer a variety of programs that rotate between **Pokemon Club**, a **kids book club**, and **other fun activities**.

## ADULT PROGRAMS

This fall, we have an amazing slate of adult programs. Every week we offer **Awesome Adults** at 10 am, a program designed for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their care partners. Every month, you can join our **Bingo Hour** and **Friends of the Library Book Clubs**. Be sure to join us on September 19 at 6:30 pm for **Author Talk**. Shelby Van Pelt, author of *Remarkably Bright Creatures*, will talk about her writing process, sources of inspiration, and how she brings her beloved characters to life.

## THE WHOLE FAMILY

**Eerie Excitement** on October 26 from 10 am - 12 pm is a not-so-scary event for the whole family. Prepare for a spine-tingling good time. Enjoy ghost stories, a costume contest, and trick-or-treating. There will also be games, crafts and activities!

For a complete line-up of events in September and October visit [kdl.org/events](http://kdl.org/events).

## NEW FALL COLLECTIONS

### Seasonal Books and Movies

Check out our curated collection of books and movies that celebrate the fall season. From heartwarming autumn tales to spooky Halloween classics, we have something for everyone to enjoy.

### Gardening and Harvesting

Autumn is the perfect time to learn about gardening and harvesting. Visit our gardening section for books on fall planting, composting, and preserving your garden's bounty.

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

**Tech Help:** Need help with your gadgets? We offer tech tutoring sessions where our tech-savvy librarians will provide one-on-one assistance with your devices, from setting up e-readers to navigating new apps. Call or stop by the desk to book your next appointment.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### Become a Friend of the Library:

Looking to give back this fall? Our library is seeking volunteers to help with events, book sales, and more. It's a great way to connect with the community and make a positive impact.

## STAY CONNECTED

Follow us on social media and sign up for our newsletter to stay updated on all the exciting events and programs happening at the library this fall. We look forward to seeing you and celebrating the season together!

# Board of Trustees



**Grace Lesperance**  
Supervisor

616.949.1500 | glesperance@cascadetwp.com

**Committees:** Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Parks, PFAS Advisory, Pathways, Strategic Plan Implementation, Personnel & Finance, Infrastructure, Village Design Review



**Sue Slater**  
Clerk

616.949.1508 | sslater@cascadetwp.com

**Committees:** Election Commission, Governance



**Wendy Korstange**  
Treasurer

616.949.6944 | wkorstange@cascadetwp.com

**Committees:** Strategic Plan Implementation, Personnel & Finance, Village Design Review



**Timmy Noordhoek**  
Trustee

tnoordhoek@cascadetwp.com

**Committees:** Planning Commission, Personnel & Finance, Public Safety Advisory



**John Shipley**  
Trustee

jshipley@cascadetwp.com

**Committees:** Infrastructure, Public Safety Advisory, Thornapple River SAD, Strategic Plan Implementation



**Tom McDonald**  
Trustee

tmcdonald@cascadetwp.com

**Committees:** Zoning Board of Appeals, Infrastructure



**Jim Koessel**  
Trustee

jkoessel@cascadetwp.com

**Committees:** Public Safety Advisory, Election Commission

# Contact Us

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**Adam Magers**  
Fire Chief  
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**Katie Murawski**  
Human Resource Director  
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**Lorna Nenciarini**  
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**Aric Thorne**  
Township Engineer  
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athorne@cascadetwp.com

**Brian Wilson**  
Building Inspections  
616.949.3765  
bwilson@cascadetwp.com

**Open Position**  
Parks & Recreation Director  
616.949.1500

**Sheriff /  
Non-Emergency Dispatch**  
616.336.3113

**Kate Chase**  
Community Policing Officer  
616.430.7811  
katherine.chase@kentcountymi.gov

**Omar Dieppa**  
Community Policing Officer  
616.632.6435  
omar.dieppa@kentcountymi.gov



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### Cascade Charter Township

5920 Tahoe Drive SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49456  
616.949.1500  
cascadetwp.com

### Township Office Hours

- Monday: 7 am - 4 pm
- Tuesday: 7 am - 4 pm
- Wednesday: 7 am - 4 pm
- Thursday: 7 am - 4 pm
- Friday: 8 am - 12 pm



Scan for more info!

# JOIN US!

## SEPTEMBER 14, 2024

5:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.

Historic Stonehouse at 2781 Orange Ave



Beer, Wine, and Cider



Family Activities



Food Trucks



Live Music



Art Exhibit