



# CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP

5920 Tahoe Dr SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546-7140

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

In accordance with Public Act 228 of 2020, which declares that public bodies subject to the Open Meetings Act can use telephone and/or video conferencing technology to meet and conduct business during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Cascade Charter Township Zoning Board will conduct a regular meeting on Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at 5:30pm utilizing the Zoom video conferencing platform, for the purpose of conducting official business while complying with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services orders and recommendations designed to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. For up-to-date information regarding the ongoing public health crisis, please visit:

<http://www.Michigan.gov/coronavirus> or <http://www.CDC.gov/coronavirus>

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85497391501>

Or iPhone one-tap :

US: +13126266799,, 846 6411 0453 # or +19292056099,, 854 9739 1501#

Or Telephone:

Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 312 626 6799 or

+1 929 205 6099 or

+1 301 715 8592 or

+1 346 248 7799 or

+1 669 900 6833 or

+1 253 215 8782

Webinar ID: 854 9739 1501

International numbers available: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85497391501>

*\*\*Members of the public with disabilities may utilize the Michigan Relay System (7-1-1) to participate in the meeting. If other aids or services are needed for individuals with disabilities please contact the Township Manager, Ben Swayze, at [bswayze@cascadetwp.com](mailto:bswayze@cascadetwp.com) or 616-949-1500 at least 24 hours prior to the meeting\*\**

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Members of the public will be able to listen to and view all discussion by the Planning Commission, and all official materials for this meeting prepared for the Planning Commission will be included in the meeting packet and available to the public on the Township website.

[www.cascadetwp.com](http://www.cascadetwp.com)

Individuals will be permitted to speak during public comment periods in accordance with the Township Remote Public Meeting Procedure Policy.

If you would like to contact the Township about any matter, on the agenda or otherwise, please do so via email at the addresses below a minimum of 8 hours prior to the meeting. If you wish comments to be read into the public record during the public comment period, you must indicate so and draft communication that can be read in the allotted 3-minute timeframe.

Clerk Sue Slater: [sslater@cascadetwp.com](mailto:sslater@cascadetwp.com)

Manager Ben Swayze: [bswayze@cascadetwp.com](mailto:bswayze@cascadetwp.com)

Community Dev. Director: [speterson@cascadetwp.com](mailto:speterson@cascadetwp.com)

**AGENDA**  
**Cascade Charter Township Zoning Board of Appeals**  
**Tuesday, April 13, 2021**  
**5:30 pm**  
**Virtual Zoom Meeting**

- ARTICLE 1. Call the meeting to order  
Record the attendance**
- ARTICLE 2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**
- ARTICLE 3. Approve the current Agenda**
- ARTICLE 4. Approve the minutes of the December 8, 2020 meeting**
- ARTICLE 5. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak to non-agenda items.  
(Comments are limited to five minutes per speaker.)**
- ARTICLE 6. Case #21-3626/Caulfield, Adam & Margaret  
Public Hearing  
Property Address: 7056 Whispering Timbers Ct SE  
Requested Action: The applicant is requesting a variance to construct an accessory building in the front yard.**
- ARTICLE 7. Election of Officers**
- ARTICLE 8. 2020 Annual Report**
- ARTICLE 9. Rules of Conduct**
- ARTICLE 10. Planning Principles**
- ARTICLE 11. 2021 Calendar**
- ARTICLE 12. Any other business**
- ARTICLE 13. Adjournment**

**Meeting format**

- 1. **Staff Presentation** *Staff report and recommendation*
- 2. **Project presentation-** *Applicant presentation and explanation of project*
  - a. **PUBLIC HEARINGS**
    - i. *Open Public Hearing. Comments are limited to five minutes per speaker; exception may be granted by the chair for representative speakers and applicants*
    - ii. *Close public hearing*
- 3. **Commission discussion –** *May ask for clarification from applicant, staff or public*
- 4. **Commission decision - Options**
  - a. *Table the decision*
  - b. *Deny*
  - c. *Approve*
  - d. *Approve with conditions*
  - e. *Recommendation to Township Board*

MINUTES  
Cascade Charter Township Zoning Board of Appeals  
Tuesday, November December 8, 2020  
5:30 P.M.  
Virtual Meeting

**ARTICLE 1.** Chairman Milliken called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.  
Members Present: Berra, McDonald, Milliken, and Mead  
Members Absent: Moxley (excused, meeting link would not connect)  
Others Present: Community Development Director, Steve Peterson, and Planner Brian Hilbrands

**ARTICLE 2.** Chairman Milliken led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ARTICLE 3.** Approve the Agenda.

**Motion was made by Member Mead to approve the Agenda. Supported by Member McDonald. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 4.** Approve the Minutes of the October 13, 2020 Meeting.

**Motion was made by Member McDonald to approve the Minutes of October 13, 2020. Supported by Member Berra. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 5.** Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak to non-agenda items.

Mr. and Mrs. Klamer (6891 Berger Dr.) wished to voice their support for the applicants request.

**ARTICLE 6.** Case #20-3613/BDR Inc.

**Public Hearing**

**Property Address: 6921 Burger Dr SE**

**Requested Action:** The Applicant is requesting a variance to keep an accessory building on the property while the existing house is demolished and a new house is built.

Planner Hilbrands states that the Township ordinance states that a house to be 50% complete before an accessory building is constructed, however there have been similar variances granted when the house is built in a timely manner and a performance bond is provided to the Township. Mr. Hilbrands states that the applicant has indicated that they believe the house will be built within a year, and is willing to obtain a \$10,000 bond to ensure the house is built, and allow the Township to remove the building if the property does not come into compliance.

Mr. Hilbrands states that Staff is recommending approval of the variance with the following three conditions:

1. The house is at least 50% complete within one year.
2. The applicant provides a performance bond of a minimum of \$10,000 for removal of the accessory building if the home is not at least 50% complete within one year.
3. The bond will be released when the property comes into compliance.

**Motion was made by Member McDonald to open Public Hearing. Supported by Member Berra. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

Member McDonald stated that he believes it to be helpful when comment and information is received from neighbors regarding cases.

Mr. Hilbrands stated that he received an email earlier in the day from a neighbor on the other side of the applicant that is also in support of the applicants request.

Mr. Klamer again voiced support for the applicant, and stated that they are very comfortable with the applicants building being close to their property line.

**Motion was made by Member McDonald to close Public Hearing. Supported by Member Mead. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

**Motion was made by Member McDonald to approve the applicant's variance as presented with Staff conditions. Supported by Member Berra. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 7. Any other business.**

There was no other business.

**ARTICLE 8. Adjournment**

**Motion was made by Member Mead to adjourn. Supported by Member McDonald. Motion carried 4 to 0. Meeting adjourned at 5:38p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Aaron Mead, Secretary

**STAFF REPORT**

STAFF REPORT: Case #21-3626/Caulfield  
REPORT DATE: April 5, 2021  
PREPARED FOR: Cascade Charter Township Zoning Board of Appeals  
MEETING DATE: April 13, 2021  
PREPARED BY: Brian Hilbrands, Planner

APPLICANT:

Adam & Margaret Caulfield  
7056 Whispering Timbers Ct SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49512

STATUS OF APPLICANT: Property Owner

REQUESTED ACTION: The applicant is requesting a variance to construct an accessory building in the front yard.

EXISTING ZONING OF SUBJECT PARCEL(S): R1, Residential

GENERAL LOCATION: East of Whispering Timbers Dr, south of Kilmer Dr

PARCEL SIZE: Approximately 2 acres

EXISTING LAND USE ON THE PROPERTY: Residential

ADJACENT AREA LAND USES: All Residential

ZONING ON ADJOINING PARCELS: All R1

**STAFF COMMENTS:**

1. The applicant would like to construct a 14' x 24' (336 square feet) accessory building located in the front yard.
2. The lot is a corner lot, therefore both the yard facing Whispering Timbers Ct and the yard facing Whispering Timbers Dr are considered front yards which limits where an accessory building can be located. The accessory building would be in the front yard facing Whispering Timbers Ct with a setback of 40 feet from the edge of the street.

3. The required front yard setback is 35 feet from the right-of-way. The building would be located approximately 16 feet from the right-of-way, so it would be located within the front yard setback.
4. We have granted some other variances for buildings in the front yard where it has been demonstrated that a hardship exists and no other alternative is possible. However, we do not have much of a history of having accessory buildings located within the front yard setback.
5. The building is shown to be approximately 17'10" tall at the peak of the roof and 14' tall at the midpoint. The grade of the proposed location of the building is approximately 8' lower than that of the road, so only the top 10' or so of the building would be visible from Whispering Timbers Court.
6. The topography steeply drops off immediately behind the proposed location of the building, which would make it difficult to locate it any further from the street. There is steep topography running through a large portion of the property which also limits where an accessory building could be placed.
7. The home is located on the only relatively flat area of the property. The septic tanks and drain field are located immediately behind the home.
8. We do have some allowance for building an accessory building in the front yard provided they meet the following standards:
  1. A lot in which the topography of the property makes it impossible to construct the building in the rear or side yard, or extensive grading and tree removal is required which would significantly change the landscape and views of the neighborhood if required to locate the building in the rear or side yard.
  2. A lot in which the property owner would have to drive over a drain or septic field in order to access the garage.
  3. A lot in which the accessory building is setback a minimum of two-hundred (200') feet from the Right-of-Way.
9. Since the applicant would not meet the third standard a variance is required.
10. Whispering Timbers Court is a short cul-de-sac with two other homes located on it, both to the east of the applicant's property. The accessory building would appear to be in the side yard of both of these homes. There is not a home located on the north side of Whispering Timbers Court, opposite of the applicant's property. The nearest home to the location of the proposed accessory building is on the west side of Whispering Timbers Drive, at least 250 feet away.

11. Since the building is below 832 square feet the applicant would only need to receive the variance before they can apply for a building permit.
  12. The property is less than 3 acres, so this is the only accessory building they are allowed.
  13. There does not appear to be any other homes on the street with an accessory building in the front yard.
  14. The applicant has indicated that any access to the building will come from the existing driveway off of Whispering Timbers Ct.
  15. Along with the topography the property is also very wooded, and it provides at least a partial screening for the proposed building to the west and to the south. In the application the applicant also indicated that they could install landscaping to more completely obscure the building from the road.
- A. Before the Zoning Board of Appeals can grant a variance, it must be assured that the request meets all the findings of fact listed in the table below:

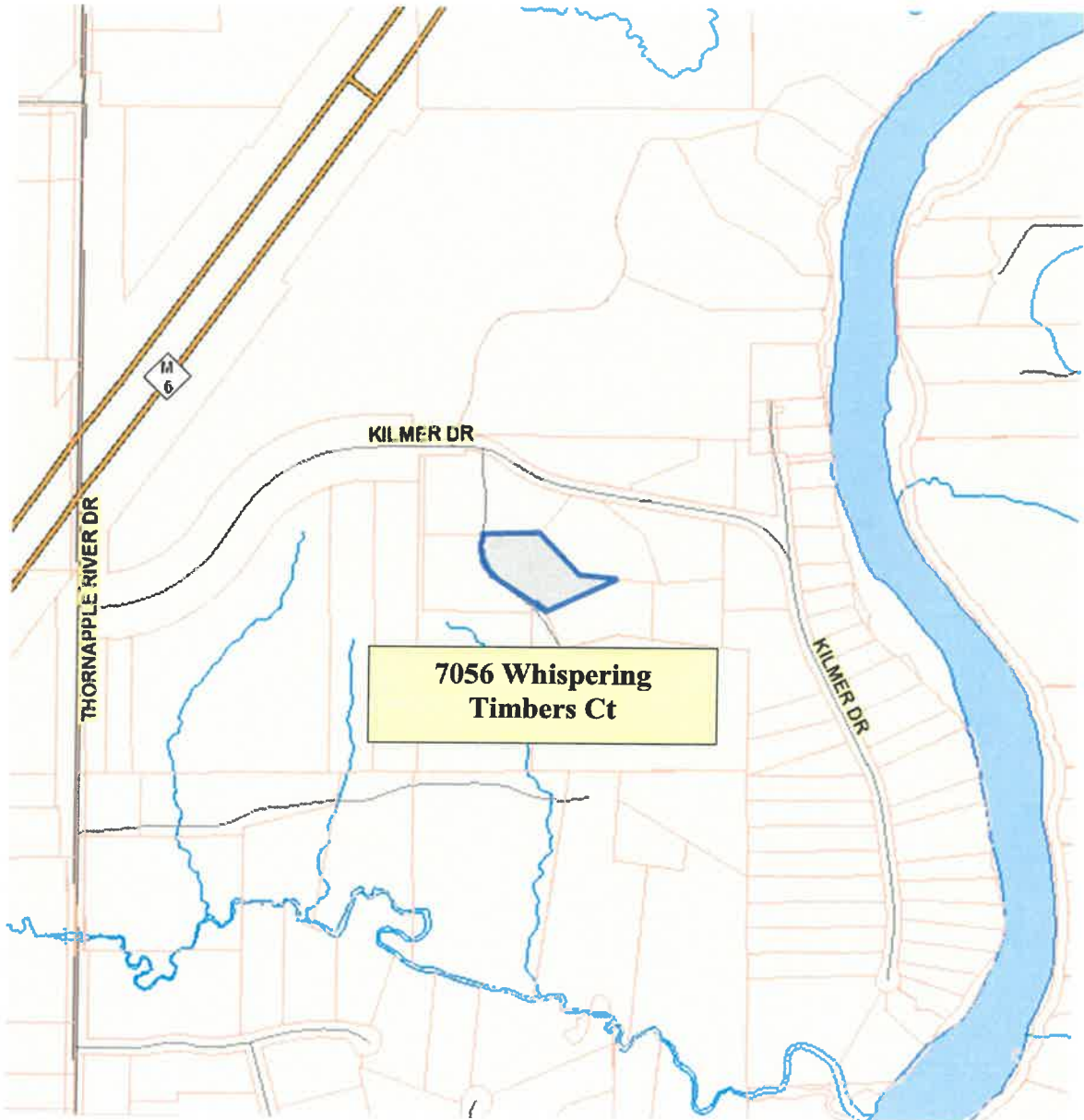
Findings of Fact	Comment
That there are exceptional or extraordinary conditions or circumstances that are inherent to the property in question and that do not apply generally to the other nearby properties in the same zoning district.	The property is located in a wooded area that has some steep topography in the rear and side of the site that would make it difficult to locate the building behind the home or outside of the front yard setback. It is also a corner lot with two front yards, which further limits where the building can be placed. The most impacted neighbor is to the west across a street and over 250 feet away.
That the exceptional or extraordinary conditions or circumstances are not the result of actions of the applicant taken subsequent to the adoption of this Ordinance (any action taken by an applicant pursuant to lawfully adopted regulations preceding this Ordinance will not be considered self-created)	The conditions of the property are not the result of actions taken by the applicant.
That such variance is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of the land, building or structure.	The approximately 16-foot setback from the right-of-way is within the 35-foot front yard setback, but it appears that this is the furthest back that the building can be located.
That the granting of the variance will not be injurious to the neighborhood or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare.	Given the fact that the closest home is located across a street and over 250 feet away, it would not appear to be injurious to the neighborhood.
That the condition or situation of the specific piece of property, or the intended use of the	The steep topography, existing trees and the septic location limit the ability to place an

<p>property, for which the variance is sought is not of so general or recurrent nature as to make it more reasonable and practical to amend the Zoning Ordinance.</p>	<p>accessory building on the property in the rear or side yard and outside of the front yard setback.</p>
<p>The Zoning Board of Appeals shall further find that the reasons set forth in application justify the granting of the variance, and that it is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of the land, building or structure.</p>	<p>Given the relatively small size of the building, that it is a corner lot with severe topography challenges and large amounts of existing trees, that it is located on a small cul-de-sac with no homes within 250 feet and would appear to be in the side yard of the homes immediately to the east, and given the location of the septic and drain field, the variance is justified.</p>

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that you approve the variance as requested to allow the accessory building in the front yard and within the front yard setback.

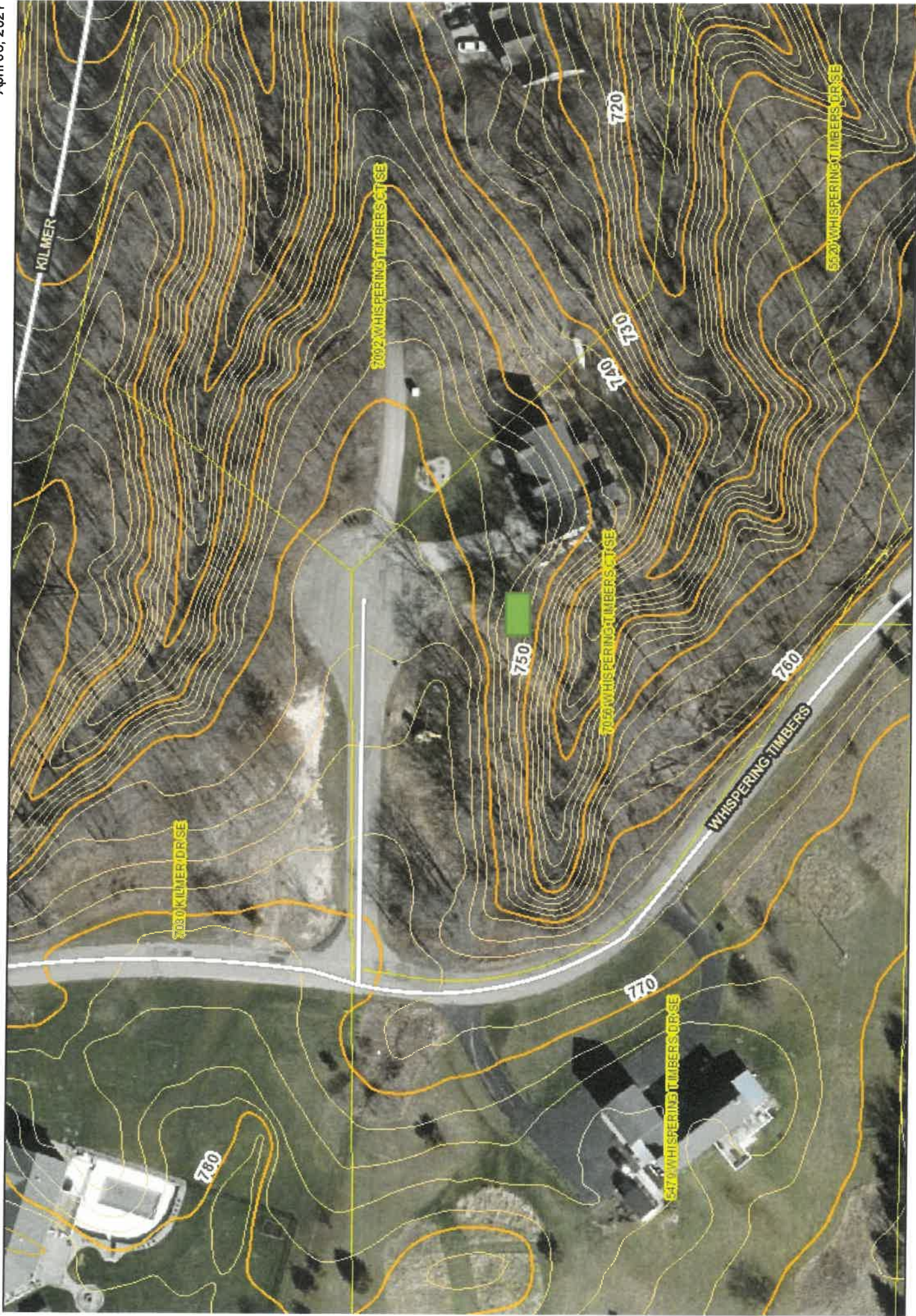
Attachments: Application package  
Site plan



**7056 Whispering  
Timbers Ct**

# Kent County Web Map

April 06, 2021





# CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP

2865 Thornhills SE Grand Rapids, Michigan  
49546-7140

## PLANNING & ZONING APPLICATION

**APPLICANT:** Name: Adam & Margaret Caulfield  
Address: 7056 Whispering Timbers Ct SE  
City & Zip Code Grand Rapids, MI 49512  
Telephone: 651-497-4669  
Email Address: adamcaulfield@gmail.com

**OWNER: \* (If different from Applicant)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City & Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**NATURE OF THE REQUEST: (Please check the appropriate box or boxes)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Appeal       | <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Site Plan Review |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deferred Parking            | <input type="checkbox"/> P.U.D. – Rezoning *             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> P.U.D. – Site Condominium * | <input type="checkbox"/> Rezoning                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Site Plan Review *          | <input type="checkbox"/> Sign Variance                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special Use Permit          | <input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision Plat Review *       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zoning Variance  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ *                  |

**\* Requires an initial submission of 5 copies of the completed site plan**

**BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR REQUEST:\*\***

\_\_\_\_\_  
Please see attached description and images.  
\_\_\_\_\_

(\*\*Use Attachments if Necessary)

**-SEE OTHER SIDE-**

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY\*\*:**

PART OF NE 1/4 COM AT E 1/4 COR TH S 89D 18M 25S W ALONG E&W 1/4 LINE 850.0 FT TH N 0D 21M 18S W 674.41 FT TO BEG OF THIS DESC - TH N 56D 42M 49S W 155.0 FT TH NWLY 170.78 FT ALONG A 150.0 FT RAD CURVE TO RT /LONG CHORD BEARS N 24D 05M 52S W 161.70 FT/ TH NLY 23.80 FT ALONG A 1000.0 FT RAD CURVE TO LT /LONG CHORD BEARS N 7D 50M 11S E 23.80 FT/ TH N 89D 38M 42S E 220.76 FT TH S 47D 05M 00S E 260.0 FT TH S 85D 12M 50S E 123.0 FT TH S 64D 40M 36S W 316.77 FT TH NWLY 86.52 FT ALONG A 150.0 FT RAD CURVE TO LT /LONG CHORD BEARS N 40D 11M 25S W 85.32 FT/ TO BEG \* SEC 33 T6N R10W 1.98 A.

(\*\*Use Attachments if Necessary)

**PERMANENT PARCEL (TAX) NUMBER:** 41-19 -33-200-038

**ADDRESS OF PROPERTY:** 7056 Whispering Timbers Ct SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512

**PRESENT USE OF THE PROPERTY:** primary residence

**NAME(S) & ADDRESS(ES) OF ALL OTHER PERSONS, CORPORATIONS, OR FIRMS HAVING A LEGAL OR EQUITABLE INTEREST IN THE PROPERTY:**

Name(s)	Address(es)
N/A	

**SIGNATURES**

*I (we) the undersigned certify that the information contained on this application form and the required documents attached hereto are to the best of my (our) knowledge true and accurate. I (we) also agree to reimburse the Cascade Charter Township for all costs, including consultant costs, to review this request in a timely manner. I (we) understand that these costs may also include administrative reviews which may occur after the Township has taken action on my (our) request.*

***I (we) the undersigned also acknowledge that the proposed project does not violate any known property restrictions (i.e. plat restrictions, deed restrictions, covenants, etc.)***

Adam & Margaret Caulfield  
Owner – Print or Type Name  
(\*If different from Applicant)

\*  
Owner’s Signature & Date  
(\*If different from Applicant)

Adam & Margaret Caulfield  
Applicant – Print or Type Name  
Adam Caulfield 3/14/21  
Margaret Caulfield 3/14/21  
Applicant’s Signature & Date

PLEASE ATTACH ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS NOTED IN THE PROCESS REVIEW SHEET – THANK YOU

**Cascade Charter Township**  
**Zoning Variance Application**  

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**7056 Whispering Timbers Ct SE**

**Purpose:**

We would like to build a small storage shed on our property, yet the topography of our lot is particularly unique and prohibitive.

**Rationale:**

Living near the Thornapple River, our surrounding neighborhood is filled with ravines (Figure 1). The vast majority of our lot is a large ravine that runs the length of our property and curves around our house on the back side. While a small shed could normally be built off to the side of one's house, this steep ravine starts just 8 ft from our foundation as shown in Figure 2. There is slightly more space directly behind our house, however as shown in Figure 3, this was the only location where septic tanks could be placed at the time of construction. There's really only 1 buildable location which is what we've proposed here (Figure 4). Even without the large ravine complicating build locations, despite having a 2 acre lot, Figure 5 shows that virtually the entire lot would be considered front yard, however, this wooded area does not practically function as a front yard. The closest neighboring house to the intended build location is approximately 290 ft away (Figure 6).

**Building Plans:**

The plan is to build a 336 sq ft (14 x 24 ft) shed off the side of the driveway that architecturally matches the house (Figure 7). The shed would be built as far from the road as possible with the distances from pavement and lot line (middle of the road) detailed below. Because this location is sloped toward the ravine and away from the road, much of the structure would be visually obscured from the road. Landscaping could be used to more completely obscure this shed from the road despite its proximity.

**Figure 1: Neighborhood topographical map and lot image**  
Our house is located at the blue star.



Ravines behind house

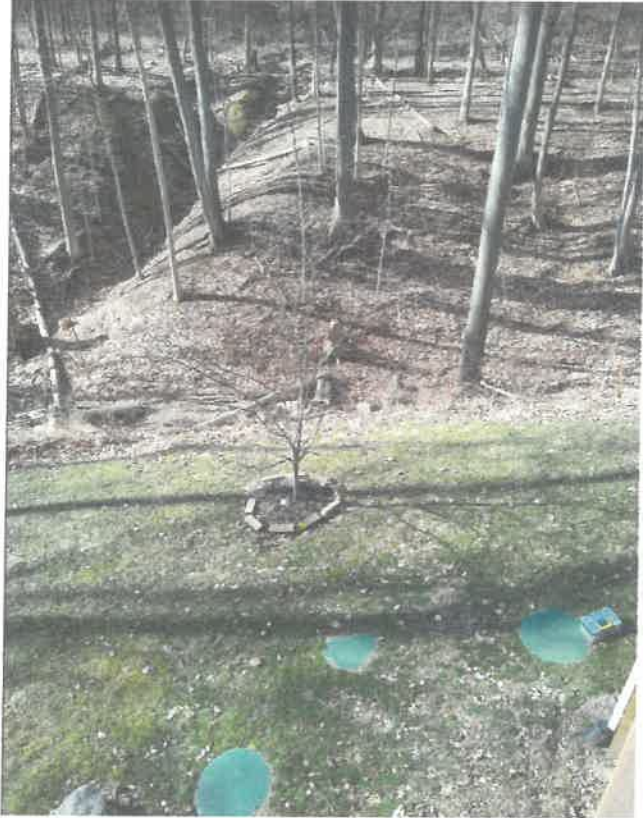


Figure 2: Side of house image



**Figure 3: Back of house image**

Green circles indicate septic tank access locations.



**Figure 4: Proposed building location**





Figure 5: Portion of lot considered "front yard"



Figure 6: Closest neighboring house



**Cascade Charter Township**  
**Zoning Variance Application**  
**7056 Whispering Timbers Ct SE**

**Addendum 3/28/2021**

An updated shed location is shown here which increases the distance from the road pavement from 24 feet to 40+ feet at the closest corner. Additionally, at this new location the accessory building is visibly obscured from the road due to being tucked behind a hill.

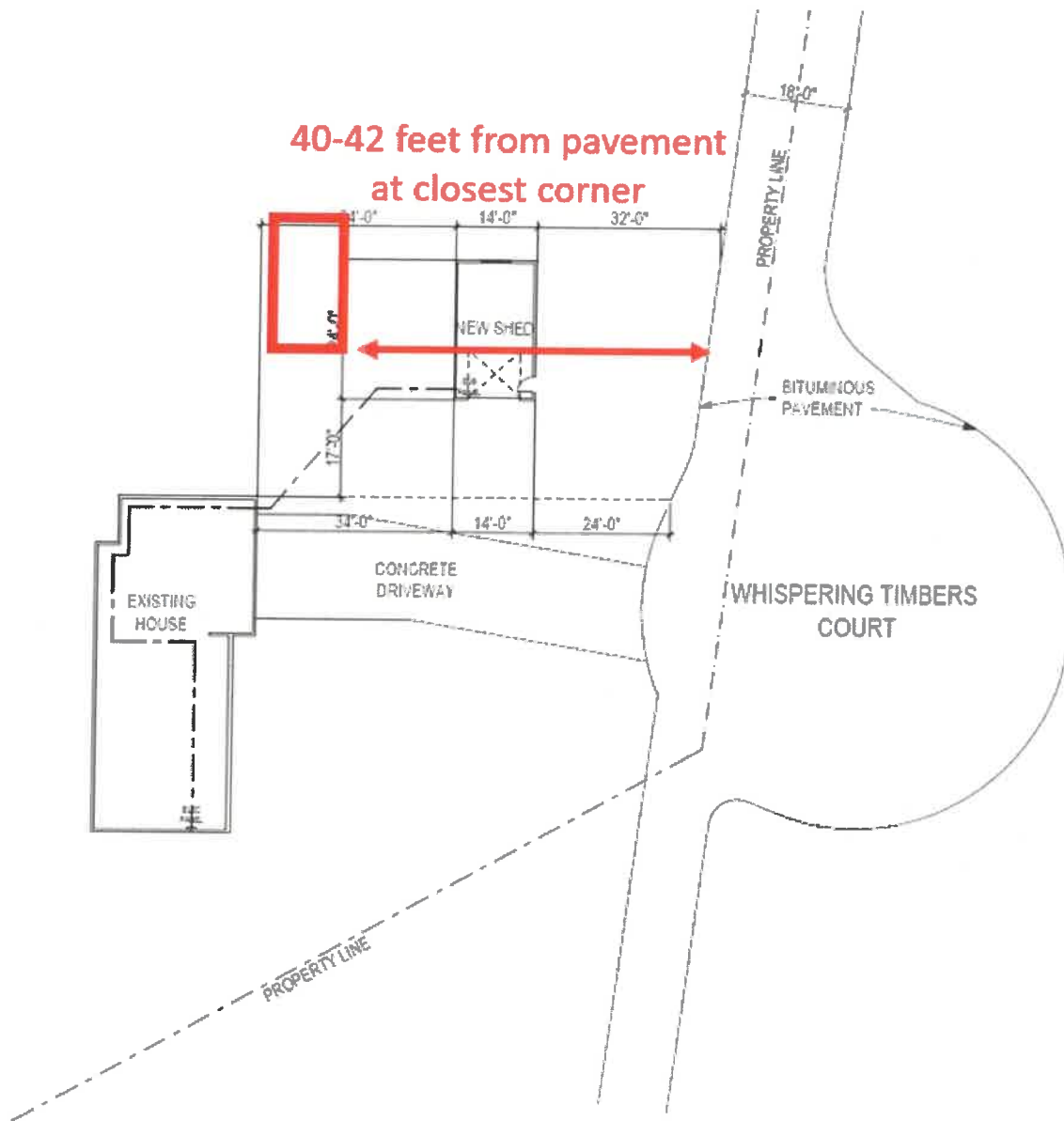
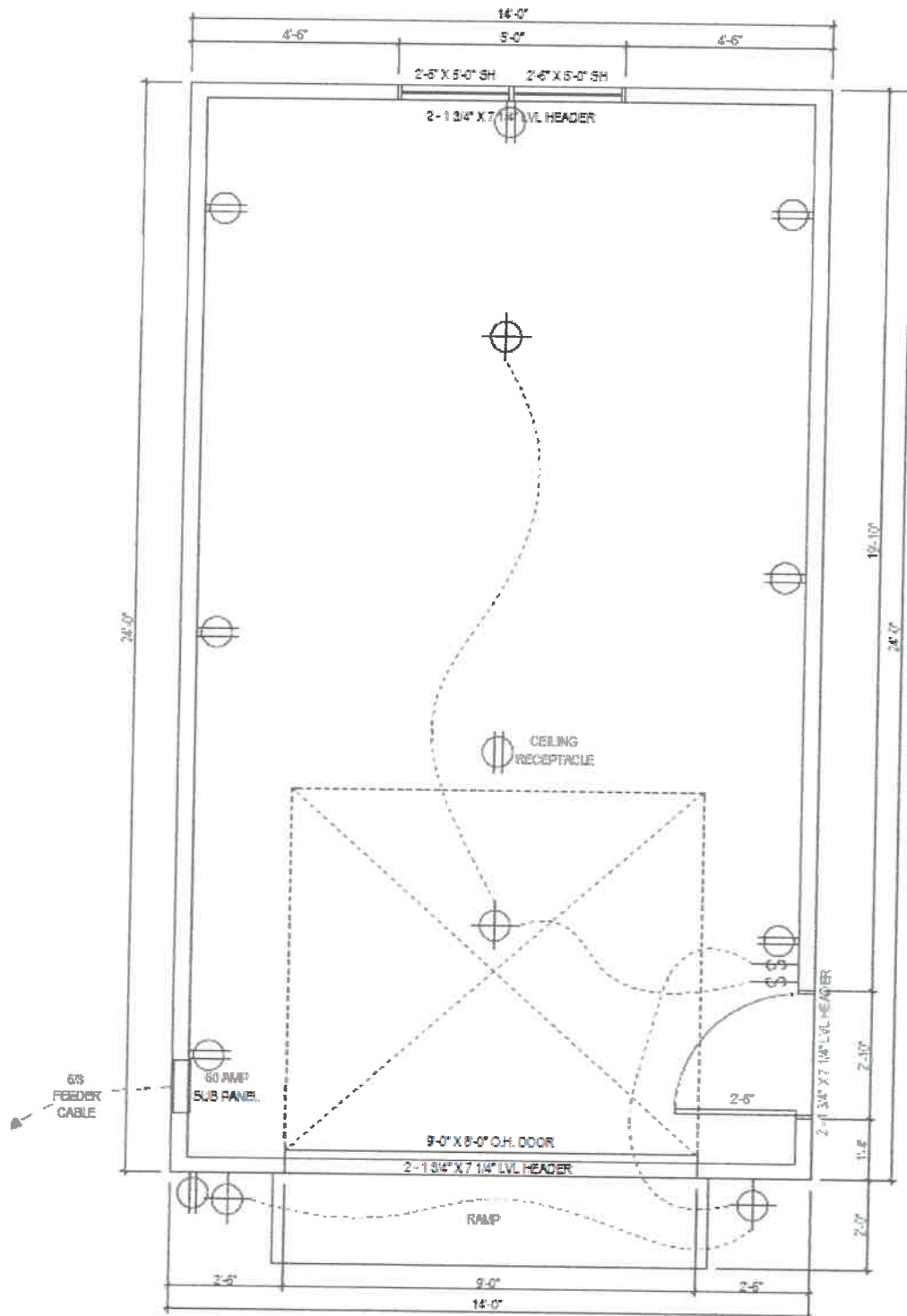
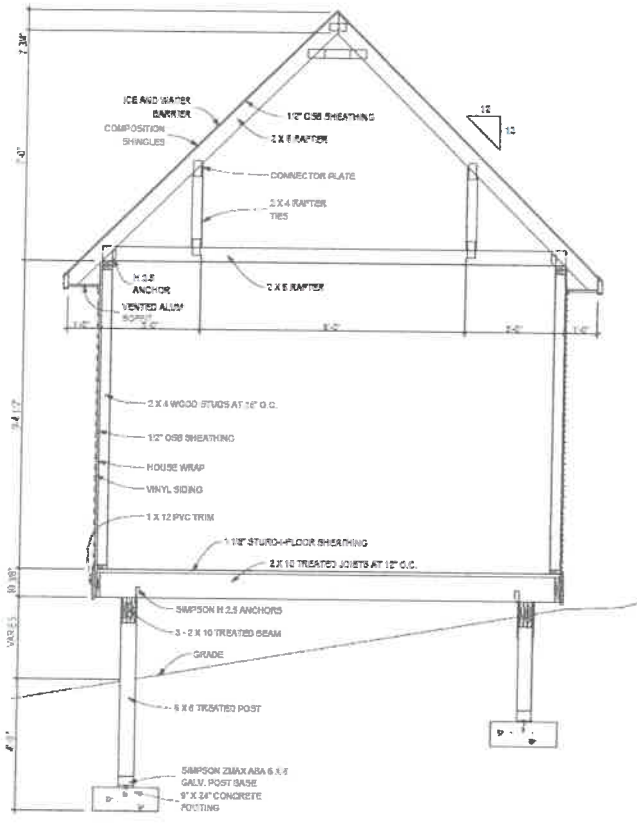


Figure 7: Proposed shed dimensions (cont.)

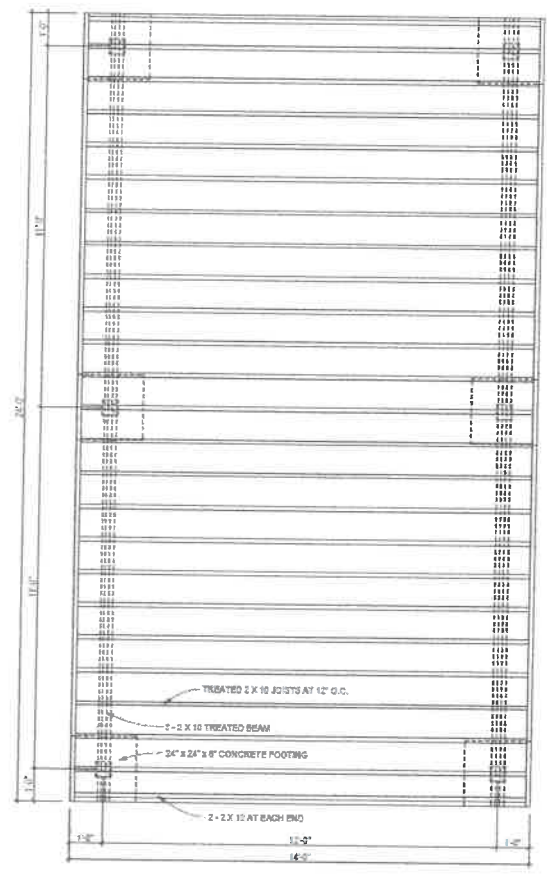


1 SHED FLOOR PLAN  
A1 1/2" = 1'-0"

Figure 7: Proposed shed dimensions (cont.)

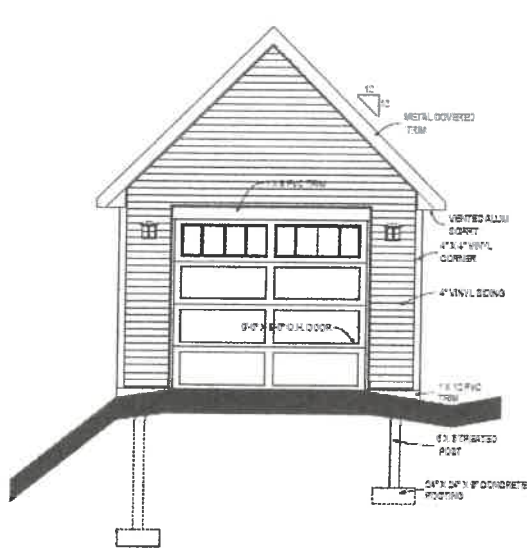


1 SECTION  
1/2" = 1'-0"

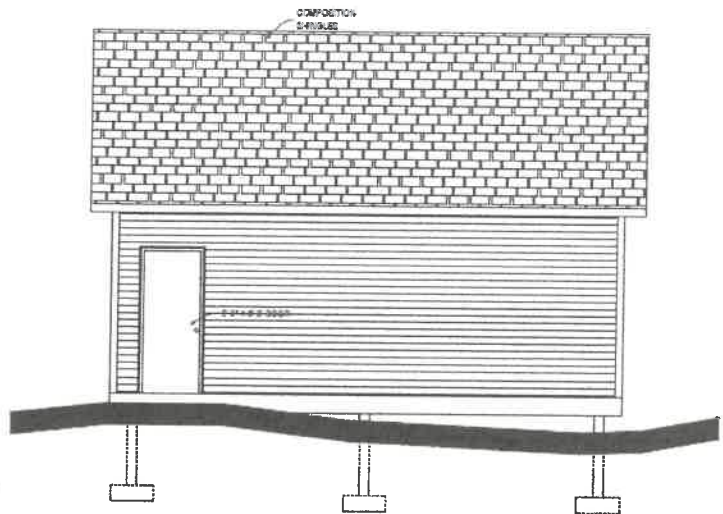


2 FLOOR FRAMING PLAN  
1/2" = 1'-0"

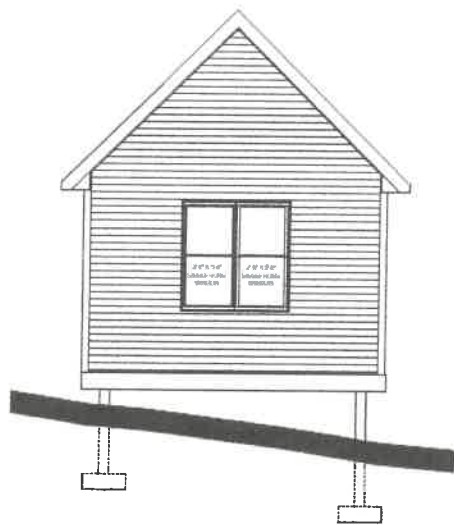
Figure 7: Proposed shed dimensions (cont.)



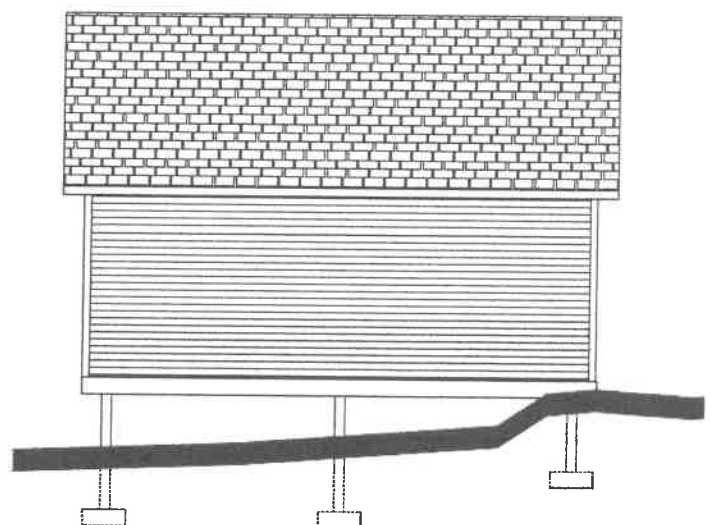
1 EAST ELEVATION  
A3 1/4" = 1'-0"



2 NORTH ELEVATION  
A3 1/4" = 1'-0"



3 WEST ELEVATION  
A3 1/4" = 1'-0"



4 SOUTH ELEVATION  
A3 1/4" = 1'-0"

COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT

2020

Annual Report

CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP

## CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP - 2020

### TOWNSHIP BOARD

Rob Beahan, Supervisor  
Sue Slater, Clerk  
Ken Peirce, Treasurer  
Tom McDonald  
Jim Koessel  
John Shipley  
Jack Lewis

### PLANNING COMMISSION

Ralph Moxley  
Lisa Krieter  
Deidre Deering  
Sue Slater, Trustee  
Scott Rissi, Chair  
Phillip Johnson, Vice Chair  
Bret Katsma  
Ben Rapin  
Chris Noordyke

### ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Aaron Mead  
Lou Berra, Chair  
Ralph Moxley/Planning Commission Rep.  
Tom McDonald, Trustee  
Valerie Millikin, Vice Chair/Sec.  
Jennifer Puplava, Alternate

### PLANNING STAFF

Steve Peterson, AICP, Community Development Director  
Brian Hilbrands, Planner  
Cassie Lockwood, Administrative Assistant

### BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Jim McDonald, Supervisor  
Jason Beaton, Maintenance  
Josh Higgins, Maintenance  
Ryan McCarty, Maintenance  
Chuck Vander Meulen, Maintenance  
Chris Noteboom, Maintenance  
Darcy Devries, Maintenance

January 3, 2021

The Cascade Charter Township Community Development Department is pleased to present our annual year in review in the form of the **2020 Annual Report**. The following report summarizes each type of development request reviewed by the Planning Department, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Township Board in 2020.

The Community Development Department consists of the Planning and Zoning Administration, Parks Administration and the Buildings and Grounds department. In addition, we will continue to work closely on economic development initiatives with the Economic Development and DDA Director, Sandra Korhorn.

In addition to the information contained in this report, the Community Development Department also performs many important duties on a daily basis that are not normally recognized.

Although 2020 has been impacted by the Coronavirus it has not stopped the number of inquiries, permit and request for new projects. It appears that 2021 will be equally challenging as the pandemic has not yet been addressed. In addition to the challenges related to the pandemic we will continue to address the “normal” challenges for the Community Development Department in the upcoming year. Should you have any questions or comments relating to this report or the Community Development Department, do not hesitate to call us at 949-0224.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Peterson', written in a cursive style.

Steve Peterson, AICP  
Community Development Director

**Cascade Township  
Community Development  
Department  
2020 Annual Report**

**I. ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Development Reviews

In 2020, the Planning Department reviewed a total of 52 new development requests. Several of the 2019 requests (and a couple of 2018 projects) were also carried over into 2020 and consumed additional staff time.

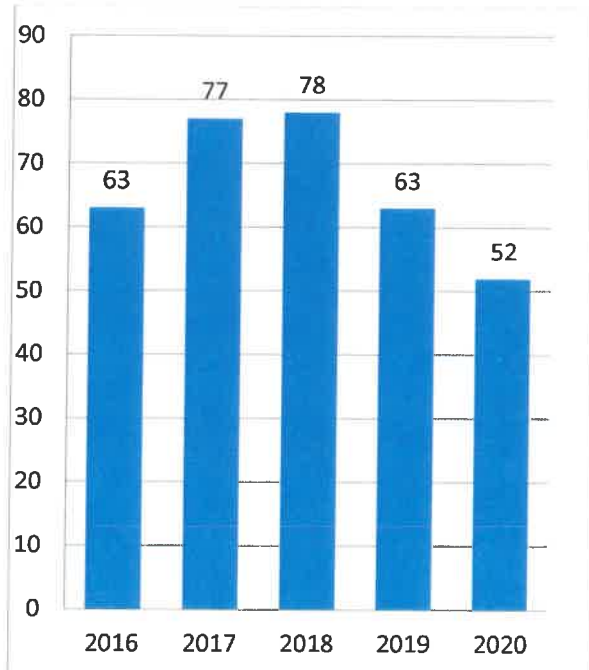
Similarly, many of the projects initiated in 2020 will still be active in 2021. These reviews include those which required action by the Township Board, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Planning Department, with several requiring action by more than one body. The following tables summarize the project review activities of the Planning Department over the past five (5) years:

**DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES  
2016 - 2020**

Activity/Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Planning Commission</b>					
Planned Unit Developments	7	10	4	4	2
Rezoning	1	1	1	0	0
Site Plan Reviews	8	7	9	3	5
Administrative Site Plan Reviews	8	6	5	7	3
Special Use Permits	8	12	19	11	10
Plat/Site Condo Reviews	0	0	0	1	1
Other Activities	3	2	3	3	
<b>Subtotals</b>	35	38	41	29	21
<b>Zoning Board of Appeals</b>					
Variances and other requests	7	14	10	11	16
<b>All Board and Commissions</b>					
Other Requests	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Planning Department</b>					
Lot Split (Cases)	21	25	27	23	15
<b>TOTALS</b>	63	77	78	63	52

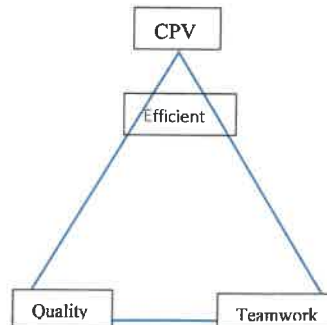
In addition to reviewing all of the development proposals submitted to the township, the Planning Department's days are filled with numerous other activities. Highlighted activities are summarized below.

**DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY TOTALS  
2016- 2020**



Department Vision

The Community Development Department has embraced a modified “triple bottom line” approach to providing services. This modified approach is being used to allow each member of the department to use their skills to help Create Public Value.



### Staff Changes

Probably the most notable change for the year came with staff changes. The Department has added the position of Planner by Hiring Brian Hilbrands. Brian is filling the planner position that has been vacant for about 10 years. This addition to the team will not only allow staff to better process and monitor our projects it will also provide continuity moving forward

As a result of hiring Brian, Stephanie Fast left our department to join the Township Manager's office as the Assistant Township Manager. As a result, the zoning enforcement will stay with the Community Development Department while the general ordinance enforcement will go with Stephanie.

### Coronavirus

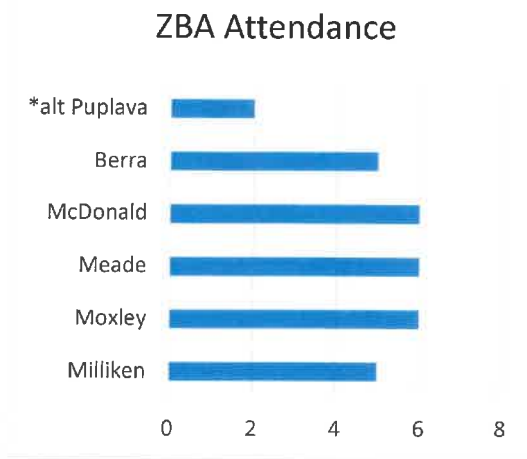
Of course, the pandemic has had a large impact on all our lives. The Community Development Department was no exception. On top of just trying to figure out how to deal with working remotely we did two things to help our business community. We have taken a relaxed approach to sign ordinance enforcement. This was done to allow the businesses to inform the community if they were open, had take out services. Etc. The community has seemed to be supportive of this approach. Second, we developed a temporary outside use permit. This has allowed businesses to have tents, dining or other services in the parking lot or private sidewalk without having to go through a "normal" permitting process. This too has been received well by the community.

### Attendance

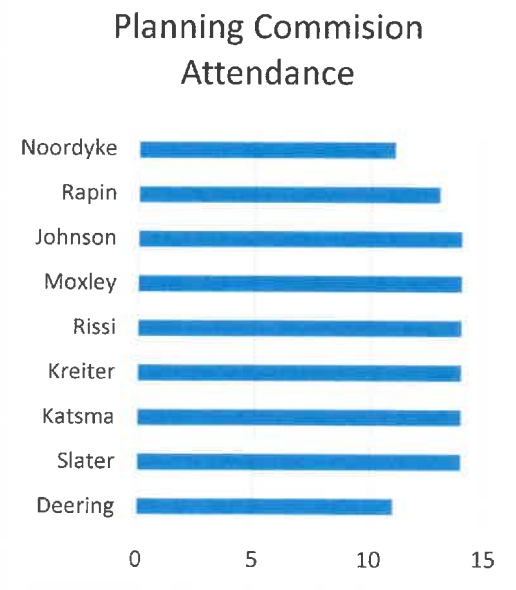
In 2020 the Planning Commission had a total of 14 meetings and the Zoning

Board of Appeals had a total of 6 meetings. \*The alternate for the Zoning Board only attends when needed.

Zoning Board attendance was as follows:



Planning Commission attendance was as follows



### Regional Planning

Staff continued its involvement with regional planning issues in 2020. Staff continues to meet with GVMC/REGIS and other.

### Storm water

More and more staff time is being dedicated to storm water related issues. In 2020, we concluded the Laraway Lake Level project. This will set a level for the lake to avoid flooding homes on the lake. With the improvements done now all maintenance will be done by the home owners on the lake.

### Master Plan

With the completion of the web-based master plan in July of 2019. Staff developed our annual work plan after holding joint meetings with the ZBA, Planning Commission, DDA and Township Board. This comprehensive list will provide the guidance for the annual work plan each year.

### Parks

One other impact of the pandemic has been the use of the parks. While no major improvements occurred in the parks in 2020, we did see significant use especially during the stay home orders.

We did make two small drainage improvements in 2020. One was at the dog park area in the Recreation park. This has significantly improved the amount of time it takes to dry out the dog park and has received several positive comments. The other was at the Grand River Dr entrance at Peace Park. This improvement should help with the significant erosion occurring on a steep path.

### Pathway Committee

Pathway construction on 4 of the 5 pathways from the new millage took place in 2020. While some issues will still need to be wrapped up in 2021 a significant portion of the pathways were completed.

The last segment on Burton St from Spaulding Ave to Patterson will be constructed in 2021. This pathway will include a new pedestrian bridge over I-96. A significant amount of the engineering was completed in 2020 as well as meeting with the impacted neighbors.

### Building and Grounds

While we did not add any new staff members we did have a new employee Darcy Devries fill in a vacancy and will be taking on the custodial duties as her major role. The BG crew continues to show benefits to the Township by providing this service in-house.

The BG will eventually replace the maintenance building at the Recreation Park to operate out of. Before that occurs, we are waiting for the Fire Department to finish some improvements at Station 2 to accommodate the large generator for Station 1.

### Pathway Maintenance

We continued the pathway maintenance by replacing a large piece of pathway on Spaulding as well as several bridge approaches.

### Regional Geographic Information System (REGIS)

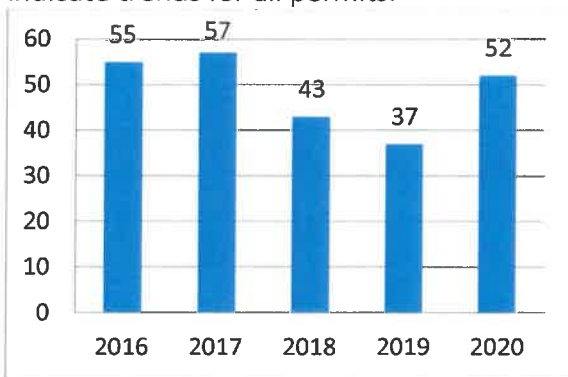
Staff continue to utilize the GIS system in our workday and attends regular REGIS meetings. The public has access to REGIS through staff as well as the internet. <http://ims.gvmc-regis.org:1052/website/public/>

Redevelopment Ready Community

The Planning Staff continued to coordinate with the Economic Development Director to ensure that we would be ready to implement the RRC program.

Building permits

Below is a chart showing the number of new residential building permits for the last 5 years. The Community Development Department is responsible to check to make sure that every building permit complies with zoning regulation. While the graph only shows new residential construction, it does indicate trends for all permits.



Applicant Billing

The Community Development Department will continue to actively pursue the recovery of review costs associated with development proposals. In 2020, we were reimbursed approximately \$45,000 in engineering, planning and legal review fees spent on various development projects. In addition to having our costs reimbursed the Township issued a \$17,000 fine for a development that did not comply with required timelines. Accurate records are kept so the appropriate applicant is billed for their respective fees incurred.

Case Summaries

The following pages provide a brief synopsis for each type of development request that was reviewed in 2020.

**Rules of Conduct  
For  
The Cascade Charter Township Planning Commission**

**1. POLICY AGAINST “EX PARTE” COMMUNICATIONS.**

Planning Commission Members (“members”) should avoid outside contact with applicants, developers, applicants/developer’s representatives (including planners or attorneys or interested neighbors regarding matters before the Planning Commission.

- a. The Planning Commission must act as a board and not as individual members. Advisory opinions should not be given.
- b. “Ex Parte” communication (i.e., outside of public Planning Commission meetings or hearings) by individual members of the Planning Commission with applicants, developers, applicant’s/developer’s representative or interested neighbors in person, by telephone or by visits are to be avoided, except for limited necessary contact during fact-finding site visits.
- c. Site visits – Individual members shall view sites only if they can do so without any unnecessary contact with the applicant, developer, applicant’s/developer’s representatives or interested neighbors and with the specific purpose of gathering physical facts and/or data.
- d. If a member is contacted by an applicant, developer, applicant’s/developer’s representative or an interested neighbor, the member shall promptly inform the party that he or she should not discuss the matter or have any contact whatsoever outside a Planning Commission hearing or meeting except for site visits. The member shall then immediately inform the party that they are welcome to come to Planning Commission meetings to discuss their views, wishes, etc., or to put their concerns in writing with a copy sent to the Chairperson of the Planning Commission.

**2. MEMBER DISCLOSURE**

In order to maintain public trust and ensure fairness, each Planning Commission member shall publicly disclose at the Planning Commission hearing or meeting involved any of the following:

- a. If the Planning Commission member is related to an applicant, developer, applicant’s/developer’s representative or any party involved.
- b. If the Planning Commission member is (or has been) in business or financially connected with the applicant or parties involved

- c. If the Planning Commission is a close friend of the applicant or parties involved.
- d. If the Planning Commission member has an unavoidable bias regarding the matter and could not be fair.

**3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- a. A member should remove himself/herself from the hearing, discussions and decision –making process if the member has a conflict of interest or a potential conflict of interest involving the situation at hand as a conflict of interest is defined by Michigan law.
- b. While not required to do so, where a member of the Planning Commission has an actual or potential conflict of interest, it is often best if he/she move from the place where the full Planning Commission or Planning Commission subcommittee is sitting and go sit in the audience or leave the room until the matter is over. Physical removal often minimizes any public perception that the member with any conflict or potential conflict of interest is unduly influencing his or her fellow members of the Planning Commission by the member's physical presence.
- c. If a member has abstained from a matter due to a conflict or potential conflict of interest, that member has the right to voice his or her opinion at a meeting or hearing of the Planning Commission as a member of the audience. If a Planning Commissioner has a conflict or potential conflict of interest that member shall be treated as an interested party and shall be bound by the requirements of Section 1 above. The Planning Commissioner shall not have any contact with other Planning Commissioners regarding the matter except as otherwise permitted in Section 1 hereof.
- d. A Planning Commissioner shall not represent any applicant, developer, neighbor or party directly interested in a matter before the Planning Commission. Except as otherwise prohibited by law, a Planning Commissioner's employer, fellow employee, or partner may represent a party appearing before the Planning Commission. But in such case the Planning Commissioner involved shall be deemed to have a conflict of interest, shall publicly disclose the situation, and shall remove himself/herself from the proceedings as required by Paragraph 3.a. hereof.
- e. All Planning Commissioners should strive not to place themselves in situations where there would be even an appearance of impropriety or become involved in a hearing, discussion, or decision-making process before the Planning Commission which would place that member in a potential conflict of interest situation.

## MICHIGAN SOCIETY OF PLANNING

# COMMUNITY PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The Michigan Society of Planning exists to promote quality community planning through education, information and advocacy, statewide. With this as its mission, MSP offers the following planning principles for consideration to all cities, villages, townships, counties and regions in Michigan. The principles define what constitutes quality community planning.

### GENERAL STATEMENTS

1. The community planning decision-making process should, first and foremost, be concerned with the long-term sustainability of our communities, environment and economy.
  - Increasing opportunities for reinvestment in established urban centers;
  - Encouraging appropriate intensity and location of new development served by adequate public facilities;
  - Minimizing the spread of low density, non-contiguous development;
  - Encouraging a wide range of housing opportunities which serve all segments of our diverse population;
  - Recognizing the value and encouraging the preservation of agricultural lands and natural resources;
  - Encouraging the preservation and/or restoration of our natural and built heritage environments;
  - Encouraging development in accordance with the adopted community master plan; and
  - Recognizing that land use decisions may have impacts beyond community boundaries.
2. The community planning process should involve a broad-based citizenry, including public and private sector leaders, community interest groups and multi-disciplinary professionals. A positive relationship between development and the making of community should be established through a citizen-based participatory planning and design process.
3. Public policy and development practices should support development of communities that are:
  - diverse in land use, population and character;
  - designed for pedestrians and non-motorized transit as well as for motorized transit;
  - shaped and physically defined by parks, open space and other natural areas;
  - structured by physically defined, accessible public space, and community institutions, and
  - based on local history, climate, ecology, and building practices.
4. Physical solutions by themselves will not solve all problems. A coherent and supportive physical framework should be established to provide economic vitality, community stability, and environmental health.
5. Common challenges that should be addressed by community planning are:
  6. The quality of life for the citizens of Michigan can be enhanced by developments that:
    - Support and restore existing low density, centerless communities into communities of diverse neighborhoods and districts;
    - Preserve and protect natural environments;
    - Maintain and build a positive social and strong economic climate, and
    - Improve the physical design and condition of our region, cities, villages, townships, neighborhoods, districts, corridors, parks, streets, blocks and homes.

# PRINCIPLES

## COMMUNITY

1. Development should be encouraged in existing city, village, and township centers.
2. Historic city, village, and township centers should be preserved.
3. New development or redevelopment in existing communities should respect local historical patterns, precedents, and boundaries.
4. Viability in established or developing downtowns and community or village centers is strengthened by street-level retail, on-street parking, downtown residential, the maintenance of an appropriate street pattern, street-level activity, the retention of historically significant building, and the provision of parking structures.
5. Civic buildings and public gathering places are important and require prominent accessible sites.
6. The scale and configuration of streets and open spaces (parks, greens, squares) should be attractive and comfortable to pedestrians.
7. The design of the streets and buildings should result in safety and security as well as be accessible and open to the public.
8. Architecture, building placement, and landscaping should result in the physical definition of streets and other places.
9. Neighborhoods should include a variety of public spaces (tot-lots, village greens, ball fields, community gardens, etc.) that are strategically distributed and physically well defined.
10. New investment along highway corridors should complement investment in existing community business centers.
11. New development should be seamlessly woven into the physical fabric of its surroundings regardless of differences in size or architectural style.
12. Design is important and should contribute to the community's safety, security, and attractiveness.
13. Complete communities have defining edges with an identifiable center. A center should consist of a full and balanced mix of residential, commercial, office, recreational, cultural, and civic uses.
14. Complete communities should contain housing alternatives available to people of all incomes.
15. Complete communities should provide convenient access to public transportation as well as non-motorized options.
16. Community planning should recognize that regions are composed of urban areas, suburban areas, farmlands, water features and natural open spaces, all contributing to their diverse character.
17. Community planning should involve balances between physical, environmental, economic, social, and cultural conditions within the region.
18. Strategies encouraging development and redevelopment of communities should include previously developed sites (brownfields), infill development, and reuse of existing facilities rather than continuing outward expansion.
19. Community planning should create an efficient and cost effective system of public services, transportation, recreation, cultural institutions and housing to achieve a viable, sustainable region.

20. Intergovernmental cooperation is necessary for achieving a viable, sustainable region.

### ENVIRONMENT

1. Community planning should recognize that natural resources are system-dependent, not limited to jurisdictional boundaries.
2. Lands with unique or sensitive resources should be preserved in their natural state.
3. The health and quality of the natural resource base are directly related to public health, welfare, and economic growth.
4. Natural resource areas, farmlands, and open space characterize the rural landscape. They are important and useful in shaping development and maintaining and establishing a rural community character.
5. To preserve rural community character, site design should encourage clustering of development and preservation of open space.
6. To preserve rural community character, site design should include desirable views and vistas across water features and farmlands.
7. Natural resources are limited in their ability to accommodate development without incurring damage. Development within our natural environments should occur in a balanced and sustainable manner.
8. Sensitive and fragile lands should be protected from degradation.
9. Wildlife habitat corridors should be interwoven with development to achieve environmental balance and biodiversity.

### INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Development should be directed to areas serviced by adequate roads, water and utilities.

2. Expansion and upgrading of public roads, water, and sewer services should be planned to strategically direct growth.

3. Public transportation should connect homes to jobs, community center, cultural, recreational, educational and institutional facilities.
4. A comprehensive transportation plan should support a unified, long-term vision of how the land is to be used.
5. New and expanded public transportation systems should be located to attract urban reinvestment.
6. Non-motorized transportation should be accommodated in new road corridors and strategically retrofitted into existing transit corridors and greenway linkages.
7. The number and frequency of automobile access driveways along road corridors should be minimized.

### PLANS AND IMPLEMENTATION

1. A broad-based citizenry should be involved during the development of local comprehensive master plans, including representation from neighboring and impacted jurisdictions. Local plans should consider and address the impacts of neighboring communities land uses, planned uses, goals, and objectives.
2. Local planning decisions which affect neighboring communities should consider multi-jurisdictional impacts.
3. Local comprehensive master plans should be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to remain viable documents.
4. Local zoning ordinances should be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to ensure they are consistent with the comprehensive master plan.

5. Local zoning ordinances should be consistent with the comprehensive master plan.
6. Local zoning decisions should be consistent with current local comprehensive master plans.
7. Local comprehensive master plans should be accompanied by an action strategy that specifies individual tasks, timing, and responsibilities for implementation.
8. Comprehensive master plans and zoning ordinances should include interpretive graphics conveying standards and design guidelines.
9. All communities should prepare realistic Capital Improvement Programs as a means of making municipal improvements consistent with their comprehensive master plan.
10. Communities should have an administrative structure that provides clear direction throughout the development process. This structure, including information on the status of projects, should be equally accessible to citizens, developers, and local officials.

**CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
2021 MEETING SCHEDULE AND DEADLINE DATES**

***PLANNING COMMISSION***

*Meetings are at 7:00 PM*

<u>Meeting Date</u>	<u>Deadline Date</u>
January 4, 2021 .....	December 7, 2020
January 18 .....	December 21, 2020
February 1 .....	January 4, 2021
February 22 .....	January 25
March 1 .....	February 1
March 15 .....	February 15
April 19 .....	March 22
May 10 .....	April 12
May 17 .....	April 19
June 7 .....	May 10
June 21 .....	May 24
July 12 .....	June 15
July 19 .....	June 21
August 2 .....	July 5
August 16 .....	July 19
September 13 .....	August 16
September 20 .....	August 23
October 4 .....	September 6
October 18 .....	September 20
November 8 .....	October 11
November 15 .....	October 18
December 6 .....	November 8
December 20 .....	November 22

***ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS***

*Meetings are at 5:30 PM*

January 12, 2021 .....	December 21, 2020
February 9 .....	January 11, 2021
March 9 .....	February 8
April 13 .....	March 15
May 11 .....	April 12
June 8 .....	May 10
July 13 .....	June 14
August 10 .....	July 12
September 14 .....	August 16
October 12 .....	September 13
November 9 .....	October 11
December 14 .....	November 15

**Meetings held in person will be at the Cascade Library  
Wisner Center located at 2870 Jacksmith Ave SE.**