

CASCADE CONNECTIONS

A newsletter from Cascade Charter Township • Winter 2021

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- A photograph of a snowy night scene. In the foreground, there is a large pile of snow. Several trees are decorated with warm white string lights. In the center, a tree is wrapped in multi-colored lights. To the left, there is a light display of a reindeer. In the background, there are buildings and streetlights, including a red traffic light.
- + Winter Driving Tips
 - + The History of Cascade's Covered Bridges
 - + Winter 2021 Tax Information

NEWS FROM THE SUPERVISOR GRACE LESPERANCE



Dear Cascadians,

As 2021 closes, I am reminded of what a special community Cascade is. Together, we met the challenges of another unusual year. I truly appreciate the character and spirit of our Cascade community.

I have especially enjoyed – and appreciated – all of you I have had the opportunity to meet individually over the past year. Thank you for sharing your concerns, hopes and thoughts regarding the challenges and opportunities that lie before us.

I also appreciate those who have taken time out of their busy schedules to serve on Township committees and commissions, along with those who have simply shared their feedback on specific issues. Three areas where resident participation is particularly invaluable are:

Strategic Plan Survey: We will gather resident feedback that will help inform the Township's long- and short-term priorities. Please take a few minutes to return your completed survey, which is also available at connectingcascade.com. Your participation is crucial for this effort to succeed. Stay tuned for information on additional opportunities to provide input after the holidays – including public focus groups and meetings on specific issues.

PFAS Remediation: Our highest priority continues to be getting clean municipal drinking water to residents affected by PFAS contamination in the Trout Creek area as soon as possible at no capital cost to them (or any Cascade residents) with as little disturbance to their property and neighborhood as possible. Residents serving on our PFAS Advisory Committee have been extremely helpful as we navigate this complicated issue. Thank you also to state Rep. Thomas Albert, who, as chair of the House Appropriations Committee, recently helped secure an additional \$1.65 million in state funding for this project.

Parks and Recreation Plan: Thanks largely to the hard work of residents serving on our Parks Committee, we will soon prepare a new five-year parks and recreation plan as required by the state of Michigan. This plan will identify goals and objectives for our parks, open spaces and pathways.

Preserving the quaint charm and unique character of Cascade not only maintains or increases our property values, it ensures Cascade continues to be an idyllic place to live – a hiatus from our business/vocation. Proactive planning with ample public participation will ensure Cascade continues to be a particularly desirable place to live.

As always, do not hesitate to contact me with your questions, comments or suggestions. I wish you all the happiest of holidays, a very merry Christmas and a happy new year!



Township Contacts

Township Hall Office Hours

Monday through Friday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Supervisor

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glesperance@cascadetwp.com

Clerk

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sslater@cascadetwp.com

Treasurer

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kpeirce@cascadetwp.com

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Assessing

Jennifer Genter; 949.6176
jgenter@cascadetwp.com

Building Inspections

Brian Wilson; 949.3765
bwilson@cascadetwp.com
Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Friday, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Community Development

Brian Hilbrands; 949.0224
bhilbrands@cascadetwp.com

Fire

Adam Magers; 949.1320
amagers@cascadetwp.com

Sheriff/Non-Emergency Dispatch

336.3113

Community Policing Officer

Omar Dieppa; 632.6435
omar.dieppa@kentcountymi.gov



From the **CLERK**

Sue Slater

Cemeteries

Krissi Brott's first few months as public service administrator/deputy clerk have gone by quickly, with some innovative ideas. She has been busy updating the records for Cascade, Whitneyville and Snow cemeteries, making them all electronic while also keeping their history intact. In collaboration with Buildings and Grounds Supervisor Jim MacDonald, a new, streamlined approach to communicating with residents, funeral homes and monument companies has been created. This has enhanced our customer service focus.

Winter brings with it a time for family gatherings and visiting loved ones' graves. Please remember that any items placed on graves must follow Cascade Charter Township's regulations. To view regulations, visit cascadetwp.com and click "Cemeteries" under "Services/Departments" and "Clerk's Office."

As a reminder, Cascade residents qualify for two burial sites at time of need. One may be reserved for the surviving spouse. If you have any questions, contact Krissi Brott at kbrott@cascadetwp.com or 616.949.1508.

Passport Applications

Cascade Charter Township is once again a Passport Application Acceptance Facility. Residents are encouraged to utilize this by making an appointment online. To view fees and required documents, visit cascadetwp.com and click "Passport Appointments" under "Services/Departments" and "Clerk's Office."

Residents who need to renew their passports may also make an appointment to check all documents before sending the form themselves. No fees are assessed by the Township; however, the U.S. Department of State requires fees for renewal and expediting applications, if applicable.

If you have questions, contact Krissi Brott at kbrott@cascadetwp.com or 616.949.1508.

Elections

Although potential changes may happen due to redistricting and new legislation, we know of only one voting change at this time: Precinct 9 voters are moving to a new polling location.

Thornapple Covenant Church – currently used for Precinct 2 – has graciously agreed to also host Precinct 9. The church has the space, parking and separate entrances to accommodate both precincts. All Precinct 9 voters will be sent a new voter card with the updated polling location information well before the 2022 elections.

Be on the Lookout For Oak Wilt, a Tree Killer

Oak trees are beloved for providing us shade and being a “keystone species” in the ecosystem, but they are now under threat by an invasive fungus known as oak wilt.

Oak wilt is a fungus that takes over the sapwood of the tree and prevents water from getting to the leaves. The disease causes leaves to wilt and fall in the summer months (see photo). Oak wilt can kill a fully grown tree in just a few weeks. In Cascade Township, there are several confirmed cases of oak wilt.

Follow these tips to help prevent the spread of oak wilt:

- Never prune oak trees in spring or summer months. November through March are the best and safest times to prune an oak tree. If storm damage occurs, contact a certified arborist to repair the damage.
- Burn firewood from a local source or from trees you know are not infected with oak wilt or another tree disease.

The key to protecting trees from oak wilt is **early detection and rapid response**. There is no known cure for oak wilt, but there are actions that can be taken to prevent the disease from spreading to other oak trees:

- Quickly remove infected oak trees.
- Cut the roots of infected trees so the disease cannot spread to other oak trees (many oak trees co-mingle their roots).
- Once cut down, tarp infected trees for at least a year before cutting them up for firewood.



If you notice signs of oak wilt, contact a **certified arborist** to assist you with confirmation and next steps. The earlier you find oak wilt, the less expense and less destruction there will be.

For more information on oak wilt and additional resources, visit michiganoakwilt.org. To report oak wilt, visit misin.msu.edu.

Ginny Wanty, Chair
Cascade Township Parks Committee



Purchase a Dog License for Your Furry Friend

Kent County dog licenses are available in our office year-round. A current rabies certificate and proof of neuter/spay must be provided at the time you apply for the license.

For more information, visit cascadetwp.com.



Winter 2021 Tax Information

Winter 2021 tax bills and informational notices were mailed Dec. 1.

Winter tax payments must be paid by Monday, Feb. 14 to avoid any penalty or interest. If you do not receive a tax statement during December, visit cascadetwp.com or call the Township Treasurer's Office at 616.949.6944.

Payments are receipted on the same business day they are received. We recommend you allow at least seven days to ensure a timely delivery. An informational letter is enclosed with the bill for alternative payment instructions and E-Z pay application. Please include a telephone number on your check – sometimes we do need to contact you. **Please note: Postmarks are not accepted for timeliness – only actual delivery.**

Your tax bill information is available 24/7 at cascadetwp.com:

- Click on "Property/Parcel Lookup" (left side of the screen).
- Click the drop-down arrow to select data search at the top of the page (address, name, parcel number).
- Enter parcel number, address or name in the search bar.
- Double click on the parcel number and tax information tab.

On March 1, 2022, all unpaid real property taxes will be forwarded to the Kent County Treasurer for collection.

For more information, call 616.949.6944.

Building Department Update

The Township Board continued its support of the Building Department during a recent meeting by approving a small increase in permit fees beginning in 2022.

Fees had not been updated since 2009, and research of local building departments showed Cascade's Building Department is providing a great value to residents.

Even with the increase, the fees will still be well below average – 0.35% of project value compared to approximately 0.6% in other municipalities.

Did you know the Building Department operates only with the fees collected for permits?

That's right – no general fund or property tax dollars are used for Building Department operations. The Township is committed to operating the department without any tax dollars – instead using property tax dollars for services that benefit all residents, such as parks, roads and fire services.

Cascade residents benefit from a strong Building Department.

By partnering with other local communities, we provide a full-service department that is committed to serving residents and assisting with their construction projects. Efficiencies are created that allow the department to provide great service with low permit fees to residents and businesses.

Professional staff are available to answer code questions and guide residents through the permitting process. Ultimately, the department helps ensure buildings in our community are safe through the enforcement of construction codes.

By supporting the small increase in permit fees, the Township Board has recognized the importance of building codes for public safety and demonstrated its commitment to providing quality services to all Cascade residents.

For permitting, code or inspection questions, contact us at 616.949.3765.

Brian Wilson, Director of Inspections



WINTER DRIVING TIPS

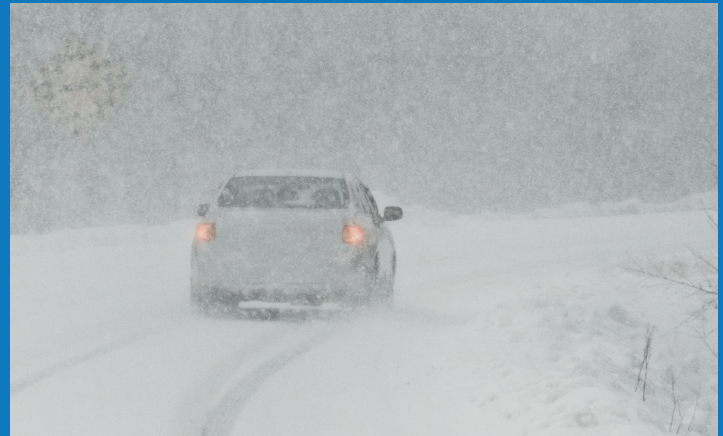
from Deputy Dieppa

Greetings from your community police officer.

With the winter months upon us, it's now time to "relearn" how to drive in snowy weather. We all know driving on snow and ice can be hazardous. Here are some helpful tips to make your travels safer during the cold and snowy months:

- Before driving, properly clear windows of ice and snow. It's important to make sure you can see all around your vehicle and not just the small hole in the windshield. Additionally, clear off the snow on the roof of the car. An abrupt stop could cause all the snow to fall forward and obscure your vision or blow off the back, striking a vehicle behind you.
- Check your vehicle's tires. Having appropriate tread and air pressure ensures your vehicle gets needed traction and grip. It's highly recommended you get snow tires.
- Slow down, give yourself more time and leave a much larger gap between vehicles. And remember: Four-wheel drive doesn't mean you can drive as fast as you can.

We all tend to forget how our vehicle handles in the winter and make small mistakes during the first snowfall. Keep these tips in mind and save yourself and others injury, car dings and towing bills.



A crime we see a rise in during the winter is vehicle theft. Drivers who want their vehicle to stay warm often leave it running unattended. If you start your vehicle to warm it up or keep it running while you do an errand, either lock your doors or remove your keys and use the remote start. Someone who may not have had intent to steal may see your running vehicle as an opportunity.

Have a great holiday season and, most importantly, be safe!

Deputy Omar Dieppa

Check Out the Latest Happenings at the Kent District Library Cascade Township Branch

Storytimes resumed this fall at the Kent District Library – Cascade Township Branch.

These programs will pause in December but resume in January and February, with Babytime on Mondays, Yoga Storytime on Wednesdays and Family Storytime on Tuesdays and Thursdays. All storytimes will take place at 10 a.m. in the Wisner Center, 2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE.

Visit kdl.org/location/cascade-township-branch-events for event descriptions and changes.

Attention, wizards: The library will host a Wild Wizarding Session for the area's many Harry Potter fans 10 a.m.-noon Dec. 28. Attendees will make their own potent potions, plant a magic bean to take home and much more.

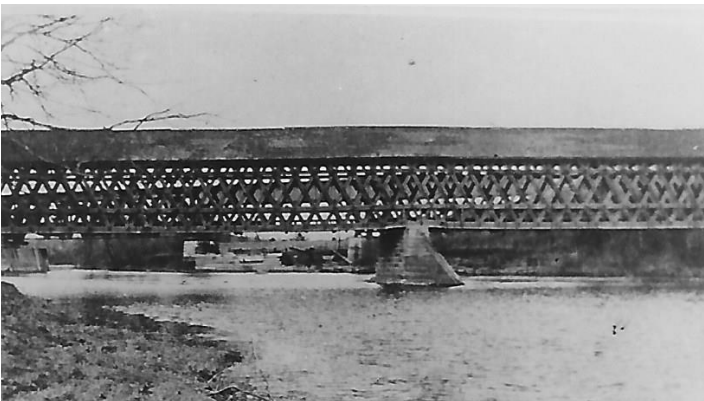
The library will host Kent ISD Bright Beginnings Winter Playdates on one Friday each month. This program promotes the early development, learning and health of young children by supporting and engaging their parents and caregivers. Check out kdl.org for specific dates and times.

Cascade's Covered Bridges

Covered bridges are a scenic connection to the past in any season, but they are particularly picturesque in autumn and winter, set against colorful foliage or freshly fallen snow. Each covered bridge is a feat of engineering and craftsmanship, matching beauty with practicality, in that the deck and trusses of an enclosed bridge are less likely to rot from exposure to rain and snow.

The first covered bridge was built in Philadelphia in 1805. By the mid-19th century, covered bridges were common throughout the growing country, with two of them here in Cascade spanning the Thornapple River.

The first of these was built in the 1870s and crossed the Thornapple on 48th Street SE. It was known as Cook's Bridge because several brothers from the pioneering Cook family (Sylvester R., John F. and William F.) had farms west of the bridge. This covered bridge was washed away in a flood in 1901, rebuilt and washed away again before being replaced with a modern bridge in 1931.



Cook's Bridge on 48th Street ran alongside the CSO (now CSX) railroad bridge.

The C&O Railroad Bridge crosses the Thornapple on a high wooden trestle right next to Cook's Bridge. The two structures stand out against the water and the high hills on the east side of the river and are still an impressive sight today, almost a century after concrete and steel replaced the covered bridge.

Cascade's second covered bridge was near the northern boundary of the township on the site of the "new" Camelback Bridge where Thornapple River Drive SE crosses the river. On old maps, it can be seen just downstream from two small islands where the river was easy to ford when the water was low. When the Ada Dam was built, the water deepened and the islands disappeared.

This bridge was known as the Withey Bridge because its northern terminus was on J.H. Withey's farm and he had

operated a ferry there prior to the bridge's construction. The location of the bridge was most likely surveyed by pioneer Henry Holt in 1854 when he laid out a road straight north from his farm to Ada. Two decades elapsed before it was built because Cascade Township did not want to pay for a bridge that would take local business to Ada instead of keeping it in Cascade. Furthermore, J.H. Withey opposed the bridge because it would mean the end of his ferry service. The bridge was finally built after the case was taken to court.

In 1927, the covered bridge was replaced with a two-lane bridge that could safely accommodate heavier traffic. The new bridge was constructed using massive concrete-reinforced steel girders that gave the structure distinctive "camelback" arches. Some of the timbers from the covered bridge were salvaged by Frederick Wykes, who used them in the construction of his home on one of the larger islands upstream.

The Camelback Bridge came to be an iconic landmark on the road between Cascade and Ada. In 2004, when it, too, required replacement, the Kent County Road Commission created a design that honored the sweeping curves of the earlier bridge.

Was there ever a covered bridge crossing the Thornapple in Cascade Village? A 1958 report by the KCRC states that a covered bridge replaced a simple, uncovered wooden bridge in 1870 in the same location as today's bridge. According to "Cascade Chronicles," an 1887 journal entry by early settler Henry Denison says the iron bridge in Cascade had been swept off its foundations by a flood and mentions the inconvenience of having to go all the way to Withey's Bridge or Cook's Bridge to cross the river.

A well-known photograph of George Gorham walking up the hill east of Cascade with the village and what is clearly an iron bridge in the background is dated 1906 — the same year, according to the KCRC report, the covered bridge was smashed by snow and ice and then replaced with a wood and steel bridge, known as the "iron top" bridge.

Another account says there was never a covered bridge on Cascade Road and the first bridge in the village was built of iron in 1855. A flood took out this bridge in 1923, and it was replaced with a cement structure that was widened in the late 1920s.

Varying accounts and all are at least partially accurate. Whatever the truth is, a covered bridge at that beautiful spot on the river would certainly have added to Cascade's charm.



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Cascade Charter Township

5920 Tahoe Drive SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
(p) 616.949.1500
(f) 616.949.3918
cascadetwp.com

TOYS FOR TOTS
TOY DRIVE

Join the Cascade Township Fire Department this holiday season in making a difference in a child's life with your donation of a new unwrapped toy.

Now Collecting
UNWRAPPED TOYS

NOV. 8 through DEC. 8

DROP-OFF LOCATION
Cascade Township Offices
5920 Tahoe Dr. SE,
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
616.949.1500

Donations are accepted 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Put a **FREEZE** on Winter Holiday Fires

It's fun to decorate for the winter holidays, but holiday decorations can increase your risk for a home fire. As you deck the halls this season, be fire smart.



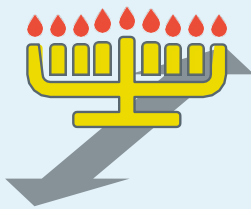
Half of the home decoration fires in December are started by candles.



More than 1/3 of home decoration fires are started by candles.



Christmas is the peak day for candle fires.



Keep candles at least **12 inches** away from anything that burns.



A dry Christmas tree can burn very hot and very fast.



More than 1 in every 5 Christmas tree fires were caused by a heat source too close to the tree.



Read manufacturer's instructions for the number of light strands to connect.



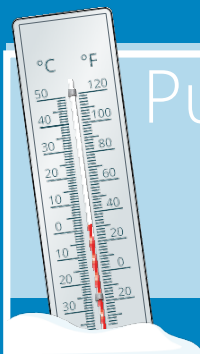
Make sure your tree is **at least 3 feet away** from heat sources like fireplaces, radiators, space heaters, candles or heat vents. Also, make sure your tree does not block exits.



Get rid of your tree after Christmas or when it is dry.



For more information on how to prevent winter fires, visit usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/holiday.html and nfpa.org/winter.



Put a **FREEZE** on Winter Fires



Home fires occur more in winter than in any other season. As you stay cozy and warm this winter, be fire smart!



Half of all home heating fires occur in December, January and February.



1 in every 7 home fires and 1 in every 5 home fire deaths involves heating equipment.



Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet from any heat source like fireplaces, wood stoves, radiators or space heaters.



Keep portable generators outside, away from windows, and as far away from your home as possible.



Install and test carbon monoxide alarms at least once a month.



Plug only 1 heat-producing appliance (like a space heater) into an electrical outlet at a time.



Have a qualified professional clean and inspect your chimney and vents every year.



Store cooled ashes in a tightly covered metal container, and keep it outside at least 10 feet from your home and any nearby buildings.



For more information on how to prevent winter fires, visit www.usfa.fema.gov/winter and www.nfpa.org/winter.