

# CASCADE CONNECTIONS

A newsletter from Cascade Charter Township • Summer 2021



- + Cascade Heritage Day
- + Car Safety Tips from Deputy Dieppa
- + A Homesteading Success Story

# NEWS FROM THE SUPERVISOR

---



I hope this newsletter finds you enjoying your familiar routines and having a wonderful summer! It certainly has been a long year with the many challenges of COVID. As supervisor, I want to highlight several important Township happenings:

**Cascade Heritage Day:** Like many of you, I was disappointed that state mandates on public gatherings in place this spring made planning and coordinating our annual Fourth of July celebration too difficult. I look forward to returning to this special tradition next year.

In the meantime, please mark Saturday, Sept. 25, 2021 on your calendars for our first annual Cascade Heritage Day. This family-friendly event will include a 5K & Fun Run, a cornhole tournament, live entertainment, games and rides for the kids and a variety of food and drink kiosks from local businesses. Thank you to longtime resident and Forest Hills Central teacher Brad Anderson for sharing his energy, creativity and time with us to create this special event, as well as the Cascade Fire Department for its hard work putting everything together.

**PFAS remediation:** The PFAS remediation process is moving forward on an expedited basis. Residents living in the 40 homes with PFAS levels above the legally acceptable level will have the option of receiving whole-house filters at no expense until municipal water lines are extended over the next two years. The first phase of this project will be paid for with the \$5 million state grant we recently received for this project. The Township, through its attorneys, is taking steps necessary to ensure those responsible for

the contamination pay for all remaining costs of the project. Throughout all of these steps, our newly-formed Citizens PFAS Advisory Committee will monitor progress. Thank you to the impacted residents who have volunteered to serve! Thank you also to all affected residents for your great patience throughout this process.

**Ensuring Township priorities are resident priorities:** A well-done strategic plan serves the important purpose of unifying a community's residents, leadership and staff around a common vision. To be successful and effective, all Township priorities must have community buy-in. Too often, leadership becomes complacent over time, and elected officials and staff can end up talking too much to themselves, and not enough with the residents they represent. That will not happen here. We recently began the important process of updating our strategic plan to ensure that every decision made by our boards, commissions and staff is based on, and centered around, the needs and wants of our residents and local businesses. Your thoughts and opinions early in this process are essential to ensuring the strategic plan is meaningful. To ensure we hear from as many residents as possible, including residents we normally do not hear from, we will begin by mailing initial questionnaires to all Cascade households later this summer. This is the first step in a process that will offer many opportunities and platforms for all residents to be heard. We will also host community gatherings and offer an online platform for resident feedback. Stay tuned for details.

Your thoughts, opinions and ideas matter. Please do not hesitate to share them with me. I look forward to speaking with you and wish you all a wonderful summer.



# Township Contacts

## Township Hall Office Hours

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

## Supervisor

Grace Lesperance; 949.1500  
glesperance@cascadetwp.com

## Clerk

Sue Slater; 949.1508  
sslater@cascadetwp.com

## Treasurer

Ken Peirce; 949.6944  
kpeirce@cascadetwp.com

## Trustees

Jim Koessel  
jkoessel@cascadetwp.com  
Timmy Noordhoek  
tnoordhoek@cascadetwp.com  
Tom McDonald  
tmcdonald@cascadetwp.com  
John Shipley  
jshipley@cascadetwp.com

## Manager

Ben Swayze; 949.1500  
bswayze@cascadetwp.com

## Assistant Manager

Stephanie Fast; 285.2327  
sfast@cascadetwp.com

## 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

Steve Peterson; 949.0224  
speterson@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*

In this odd year of 2021 when we are unlikely to have any elections, it is a great time to catch up. The Qualified Voter File inbox needs to be constantly updated with residents moving in and out of Cascade Township. There are name changes, deaths and “short moves” (within the Township).

Of course, this also has to be done during an election season – in fact, it is even more critical. But in an off year, it is more enjoyable and less time-pressured. It is a multi-step process with verification at each step to ensure accurate and current voter records. So if you have recently moved, be sure to update your driver’s license with the Secretary of State or contact me directly at 616.949.1508 or sslater@cascadetwp.com.

It is like everything else in life – there is so much behind the scenes to make any operation successful.



## Rev Your Engines at the Cascade METRO CRUISE WARM-UP

The Cascade Metro Cruise Warm-Up is back for 2021!

Join us Thursday, Aug. 26 from 4:30-8:30 p.m. at the Thornapple Centre, 6797 Cascade Road SE (Fowling Warehouse GR parking lot).

The event will offer lots of show cars, food trucks, kids’ activities, music by The Soul Syndicate and more.

Keep an eye on the Township’s website and social media for details.

# Building Department Can Help With Your Construction Project

The Cascade Township Building Department is here to help you through your construction project and ensure all construction codes are met to keep you and our community healthy and safe.

When hiring a contractor for a home project, make sure all required permits are obtained. Inspectors will visit your home during the project to verify the work being done follows the Township's maintenance code.

If you are doing the work yourself, we offer online permitting so the entire process can be done without leaving your home. Visit [cascadetwp.com/services-departments/building-inspections](http://cascadetwp.com/services-departments/building-inspections) and click "Remote Video Inspections Program." Simply follow the steps on the online portal, upload required documents and obtain your permit.

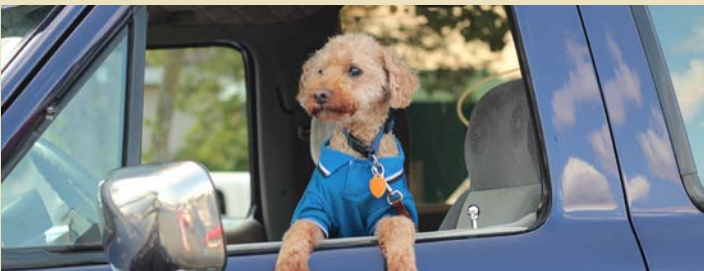
The Building Department also offers a new virtual inspection program that enables us to inspect a simple



replacement such as a water heater or furnace from a video the contractor submits. Also, for minor interior work such as a kitchen or bath remodeling project, a live video inspection can be performed. These enhanced offerings can save time and offer a convenient way for you to get the inspection completed.

For more information about the Township's inspection process or how to submit a video for a water heater or furnace replacement, visit [cascadetwp.com/services-departments/building-inspections](http://cascadetwp.com/services-departments/building-inspections) or call 616.949.3765.

## Car Safety Tips from Deputy Dieppa



Greetings from your community police officer.

As the temperature begins to rise, so does the volume of calls for service. One of the more common calls the Sheriff's Office responds to in the summer is children or pets left unattended in a vehicle. Whether done accidentally or to run a quick errand, leaving children or pets in a vehicle is never safe. High temperatures can cause irreparable organ damage or even death.

### Here are some facts about hot cars and heat stroke:

- Vehicles can heat up quickly – up to 20 degrees in just 10 minutes.
- When it's as low as 72 degrees outside, a vehicle can heat up to 116 degrees within an hour.
- Rolling down windows has shown to have little effect on the internal temperature of the vehicle.
- A child's body heats up five times faster than an adult.
- Heat stroke is the leading cause of non-crash vehicle-related deaths in children younger than 15.

### Here are a few tips to prevent the unthinkable:

- Always check the backseat. Get in the habit of leaving items such as a cell phone or bag in the backseat to force yourself to check.
- Have your child care provider call you if your child is more than 10 minutes late.
- Keep your vehicle doors locked when it is parked to prevent a curious child from entering when no one is around. Many deaths occur when a child mistakenly locks themselves inside.
- Teach your children the vehicle is not a safe place to play.
- Leave your furry friend home when you need to run errands. It may be tempting to stop on your way home from the groomer or dog park, but drop your pet off at home first to keep them safe.

Take action if you see a child or pet inside a vehicle. If you are concerned about their safety, call 911. Get the child or pet out of the vehicle and get them water. If the vehicle is at a business, ask that a parent or owner come outside to the vehicle while you wait for police.

Have a great summer and stay safe!

**Omar Dieppa**

# Cascade Heritage Day



Join us Saturday, Sept. 25 for Cascade Heritage Day, a daylong community event for all ages.

The event will include a 5K and Fun Run in the morning, a cornhole tournament, festival rides and activities and food from local restaurants in the afternoon and live music in the evening. Here are the details:

- **5K** – 9 a.m.
- **Fun Run** – 9:30 a.m.
- **Cornhole tournament, festival rides and local food** – noon-4 p.m.
- **Live music** – 5-9 p.m.

All events will take place outside at the Kent District Library Cascade Branch, 2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE.

The 5K is \$30 per person and includes a T-shirt, medal, Heritage Day tokens, race photo and post-race fuel. The 1-mile Fun Run is \$20 per person and includes a T-shirt,

medal, race photo and post-race fuel. Age group winners will receive challenge coins. Ten percent of each race entry will go toward Folds of Honor, a nonprofit organization that provides educational scholarships to families of service members who have died and who are disabled.

The cornhole tournament will feature competitive, open and school-age divisions. The cost is \$25 per team. All 5K and Fun Run participants get half off the tournament fee. Division winners will receive challenge coins and prizes.

For details and to register for the 5K, Fun Run and cornhole tournament, visit [cascadeheritageday.com](http://cascadeheritageday.com).

Local band Signal Point will perform hits from the 1970s, 80s and 90s. The music is free to enjoy. Food and beverages are cash-only.

Event sponsorships are available. For more information, visit [cascadeheritageday.com](http://cascadeheritageday.com)

## Welcome, Krissi Brott

It's our pleasure to introduce our new public services manager/ deputy clerk, Krissi Brott, to the Cascade Township team.

Krissi joins us from Cedar Springs Public Schools, where she served as the pupil accountant/registrar. She earned her master of science degree in administration with an emphasis in public administration from Central Michigan University.

Public service is a huge passion for Krissi, and she is so excited to be serving Cascade residents. Krissi has already proven herself to be a vital member of our team.

When she isn't working hard to serve our community, Krissi enjoys spending time with her husband, Ron, and their children, Kaden, Kaci and Hudson. She also enjoys listening to true crime podcasts.

Welcome, Krissi!





## Summer Tax Bills and Notices Have Been Sent

Summer 2021 tax bills and informational notices were mailed July 1.

Summer taxes are due Sept. 14. If you did not receive a tax statement during July, check the Township's website or call the Township Treasurer's Office at 616.949.6944.

Please use the return envelope provided with your tax statement. Payments are receipted on the same business day they are received. We recommend you allow seven days to ensure timely delivery, especially for bank bill pay. Reminder: The Township does not accept a postmark as proof of timeliness. All payments must be received in the Treasurer's Office by 5 p.m. on the date they are due.

The summer tax deferral program allows qualifying residents to pay summer taxes after they receive a property tax credit refund from the state. To qualify for this deferral, the household income must not exceed \$40,000 and the taxpayer must be 62 or older or a paraplegic, quadriplegic, totally disabled, blind, an eligible military service member, veteran or widow or widower of a veteran. Deferral application forms are available in the Treasurer's Office at Township Hall, 5920 Tahoe Drive SE, through Sept. 14. The deferral period covers only one year, so residents must reapply each year.

If you will be away this summer, please call the Treasurer's Office to provide your email and temporary address so we can get your tax bill to you in a timely manner. Call 616.949.6944.

To pay your summer taxes online, visit [cascadetwp.com](http://cascadetwp.com) and click on "Taxes." To check your property tax status 24/7, visit [cascadetwp.com](http://cascadetwp.com) and click on "Property/Parcel Lookup" on the left.

## NEW HAPPENINGS AT THE KENT DISTRICT LIBRARY

Thank you to those who have tuned in to our virtual events. In addition to online programming, KDL's Cascade Branch will offer a few small outdoor programs this summer. Information will be posted on the library's Facebook page shortly before the start of each event.

KDL also is introducing its Core Collection. This 100-book collection features titles that are at least a year old and are favorites among KDL librarians and patrons alike. They include "The Nightingale" by Kristin Hannah, "Ordinary Grace" by William Kent Krueger and "The Devil in the White City" by Erik Larson. The KDL Core Collection is now available at all KDL branches.

The 400-gallon aquarium at KDL's Cascade Branch – donated by Claude Robinson in memory of his wife, Marion – has been completed. Visitors of all ages have been enjoying the colorful fish and Michigan Seek and Find mural.





## The House on the Island:

# A Homesteading Success Story

Like so many who become residents of Cascade, the newlyweds were young and ambitious. He was a successful artist and she was a writer. They had grown up during a time of war and pandemic and now were ready to have children and live a rewarding, creative life together. But first, they needed a house, and they wanted to design and build it themselves. They had chosen the perfect location – a leafy, peaceful place surrounded by nature, with abundant natural light and secluded yet close to the village.

The challenging part? The idyllic spot where Frances and Frederick K. Wykes envisioned their home was an island in the Thornapple River. Fred, recently graduated from the Art Institute of Chicago, had been interested in the island for some time and, when he learned it belonged to the U.S. government, he and Frances became homesteaders. Through the Homesteading Act of 1862, the couple would be able to own the property by building a habitable dwelling on the site and living there continuously for three years.

Over the summer of 1928, Fred ferried countless loads of timber and stone for the house to the island by rowboat. The timbers came from an old barn and, according to one account, some of the wood was salvaged from an old bridge farther downriver, a forerunner of the original Camelback Bridge. The stones were dredged from the river bottom, using a horse and sledge. Fred used surplus quarter-inch plate glass manufactured for the burgeoning auto industry for all the windows. The Wykes family, which now included infant daughter Mallory, took occupancy in November of that year and, on July 6, 1932, they were awarded ownership in a deed signed by Herbert Hoover.

For the first three months, the house had no electricity. Gradually, it was equipped with all the modern conveniences. The furnace was shipped across the river in sections. A piano arrived upside down, carefully

walked over in a rowboat with people protecting it on all sides. Ferrying the refrigerator from shore to shore was particularly challenging.

Like other kids of the time and place, Mallory and her younger brother, Roger, rode their bikes to school, weather permitting. Unlike the other children in the neighborhood, the Wykes kids' school day began and ended with a boat ride. Fred painted in his studio space at the top of the house, Frances wrote two books and the kids fished and swam. An interest in natural history and a desire for more shade inspired the family to plant the island with seedlings of every tree native to Michigan. Fred noted their locations on a hand-drawn map of the property, each tree keyed to its description in a 1927 field guide.

The Wykes lived on the island for more than 30 years and, in all that time, the house had to be vacated due to high water only twice. On both occasions, it was because the basement had flooded, making it necessary to turn off the furnace. While the house remained dry, it was too cold to stay there.

Only one other home, a farmhouse, could be seen from the Wykes' island retreat when they first moved in. In a 1967 interview, several years after selling the house, Frances said with all the homes that had been built on both sides of the river, the island was no longer "as ideal" for her family as it had been in 1928. She was happy the new occupants appreciated the unique character of the house and its scenic location.

Subsequent owners have made changes and additions that have enhanced but not changed the essential charm of the island house, which continues to be one of the prettiest, most interesting and best-known residences in Cascade.



PRSRT STD  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
GRAND RAPIDS, MI  
PERMIT NO. 657

## Cascade Charter Township

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

# Cascade Community Foundation Awards More than \$20,000 to Local Organizations and Programs

The Cascade Community Foundation is awarding more \$20,000 in grants to four local organizations and programs that have a significant impact on the Ada, Cascade and Forest Hills community.

The organizations and programs are:

- **Mental Health Foundation of West Michigan's be nice. Faith Action Plan** – Training for local faith leaders and staff to help them better understand and manage mental health needs within their organizations. This program was highlighted during Season 2 of the Cascade Community Foundation's Q&A Livestream series.
- **Ada Township's parks, recreation and land preservation program** – Diverse recreational opportunities, including access to premier natural, historical and cultural areas, that enhance quality of life and inspire the preservation of nature. Funding also will be used for a new accessible outdoor shelter and picnic area at Roselle Park. Construction will begin in 2022.

- **Invasive species removal program** – Removal of the invasive plant species oriental bittersweet and education on treatment of the invasive species in the Ada, Cascade and Forest Hills area.
- **Q&A Livestream series** – Season 3 continues this fall.

The Foundation's grants committee includes Andrew Shier of McShane & Bowie, Curt Monhart of E3 Prime Environments, Ken James of Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce and Kim Livingston of Hungerford Technologies.

Cascade Community Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to serving Ada, Cascade and Forest Hills residents, businesses, local government and nonprofits. Through the Q&A Livestream series, annual grantmaking and private endowment funds, the Foundation helps to preserve this robust community, manage philanthropic resources efficiently and guide support to areas of greatest need.