

## Meeting Minutes

Cascade Charter Township  
Parks Committee  
Tuesday, March 15, 2022  
8:00 AM  
2870 Jacksmith Ave SE

**ARTICLE 1.** Chairperson Wanty called the meeting to order at 8:00 am.  
Members Present: Chair Ginny Wanty, Mike Reese, Windy Korstange, Matt Douglas, and Supervisor Grace Lesperance  
Members Absent: Joe Engel (excused)

Others Present: Planning Director Brian Hilbrands, Building & Grounds Supervisor Jim MacDonald, Manager Ben Swayze, Troyer Group Rachel Walsh, and those listed on the attendance sheet

**ARTICLE 2. Approve the current Agenda**

**Motion was made by Member Reese to approve the current Agenda. Supported by Member Douglas. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 3. Approve the minutes of the February 15, 2022 meeting.**

Member Reese said that the level of detail in this set of minutes is what they were looking for and Chair Wanty agreed.

**Motion was made by Member Douglas to approve the February 15, 2022 meeting minutes. Supported by Member Korstange. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

Supervisor Grace Lesperance arrived at 8:04am.

**ARTICLE 4. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak to non-agenda items.**

Rik Brown shared that he is interested in the committee and learning more about it. He requested to speak at the end of the meeting instead as he thought his concern may be covered by the agenda items.

**ARTICLE 5. Strategic Plan Update**

The parks Strategic Plan community focus group will be held on Tuesday, March 29<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-7:30pm at the Wisner Center. Chair Wanty encouraged all Parks committee members that are available to attend.

Chair Wanty asked Manager Swayze to check into why people who marked interest in being added to the email list on the survey have not started receiving the township newsletter.

The Parks Committee Strategic Plan workshop will be held on Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup> at 8:00am, at the Wisner Center.

**ARTICLE 6. Updates from Manager**

The Parks Committee now has a dedicated email address.

The posting for the Director of Public Works position has closed. There were seven applicants and interviews will begin shortly. Manager Swayze requested a member of the Parks Committee be on the interview team since they will be working closely with the new director. Chair Wanty suggested Member Korstange be on the interview team because she is on the Planning Commission as well and could represent both boards. Member Korstange agreed to join the interview team.

Manager Swayze stated that the Parks Committee is considered to be an Open Meetings Act committee and recommend that they remain one. This is because going from open meeting to closed decreases transparency and that is already a point of contention in the community. Manager Swayze says he believes there may be changes to the Open Meetings Act, at a higher level, in the coming months, due to COVID-19 and how that might affect how members are allowed to attend meetings.

Manager Swayze will be meeting with Deputy Omar Dieppa on 3/15 at 10:00am because the township has purchased two cameras to use for situations such as at Burton Park. They are portable and the township will be able to switch their location to meet community needs.

**ARTICLE 7. Budget Discussion**

Manager Swayze talked about the 2022 township budget and how parks, pathways, and open space fit into it. He offered the committee to be more involved in creating the 2023 budget. He said he could come to the committee meeting in August 2022, look back at the 2022 budget, brainstorm capital projects and general expenditures, and come back for the September meeting with a draft capital plan and draft budget. Brainstorming budget recommendations can be added to a future agenda.

**ARTICLE 8. Parks Master Plan Discussion**

Member Reese and Rachel Walsh reviewed the parks survey. There was an increase in responses over the 2014 parks survey and a lot of consistent answers between the two surveys. One question gave ranges of how much people were willing to spend on a park's millage and, though the ranges were listed as double what was listed for that question in 2014, the percentage of respondents who said they were willing to give in each bracket remained consistent. This shows that, not only do residents greatly value the township's parks and trails, they are willing to spend the money to back it up. At the next meeting, there will be a discussion on how the survey results fit into the Parks Committee's vision and a review of the 2014 implementation plan.

**ARTICLE 9. Parks Committee Bylaws**

Chair Wanty and Member Reese have volunteered to help Member Engel update the committee bylaws. This topic was tabled until the next meeting due to time constraint.

**ARTICLE 10. Update on Oak Wilt Situation at Burton Park**

Building and Grounds Supervisor MacDonald and the Building and Grounds team completed trenching at site one. The Township Board approved Woodland Tree Service to remove 67 infected trees next November. Member Engel worked with the homeowner so the site would be accessible through the Patterson Property. They are currently trying to figure out which neighbor is cutting down infected trees and taking the wood home, which can spread Oak Wilt.

**ARTICLE 11. Submissions for Cascade Newsletter**

Member Douglas agreed to write an article for the summer newsletter on the importance of woodland ecosystems and why they should not be disturbed.

Former Township Supervisor Rob Beahan has agreed to write an article about Peace Park for the summer newsletter.

**ARTICLE 12. Invasive Workdays**

On February 26<sup>th</sup> there was an invasive species removal workday that was sponsored by the Kent County Conservation District to remove oriental bittersweet. There were seven volunteers which is an improvement over previous workdays. There will be more bittersweet workdays in the fall as well as a garlic mustard pull. There will be a garlic mustard pull at Burton Park on Saturday May 7 and at Cascade Cemetery on Wednesday, May 11. Poison hemlock is now growing at Burton Park. Kent County Conservation District took care of poison hemlock at Peace Park last year by spraying it and will do that to the 3 sites at Burton Park this year.

**ARTICLE 13. Old Business**

There was not any old business to address.

**ARTICLE 14. Any Other Business**

Visitor Rik Brown requested to share his public comments at this time. He said he was an avid backpacker and hiker and was impressed by the parks survey. He said he has been to Peace Park a lot and is concerned about erosion control. He recommended water bars and turnpikes be created at the entrance off of Grand River because it frequently washes out. He suggested contacting the National Park Service on how they implement this or watching how-to videos on YouTube. North County Trail in Lowell was mentioned as another resource that may be able to help. Brown said this is a project simple enough that community members could easily complete it with shovels if materials were purchased.

Brown also spoke about the problem with cracks and bumps on pathways, as that makes bike riding dangerous. He recommended hiring an asphalt maintenance consultant as the township's pathway system is clearly important to the greater community.

**ARTICLE 15. Adjournment**

**Motion was made by Chair Wanty to adjourn. Supported by Member Reese. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

**The Meeting adjourned at 9:41 am.**

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Hilbrands, Planning Director/Acting Secretary