

MINUTES

Cascade Charter Township
THORNAPPLE RIVER SAD AD-HOC COMMITTEE MEETING
December 4, 2023 at 5:30pm
Cascade Charter Township Hall
5920 Tahoe Dr. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

ARTICLE 1. The meeting was called to order at 5:31pm.

Members Present: Members Scott Rissi, Leann Rowland, Jeff Carpenter, Trustee Shipley, Chuck Whitley, Michael Wiegand
Absent: Thomas Keith,
Others Present: Parks & Recreation Director Melanie Manion, Township Manager Jade Smith, Management Office Administrative Assistant Jessica Stine

ARTICLE 2. Approve the current Agenda

Motion was made by Member Rissi to approve the agenda as written. Supported by Member Rowland. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 3. Acknowledge Visitors & Public Comment

The leader from the Thornapple River Watershed Council introduced herself as did Renee VanHouten. Clarence Maring introduced himself as the Vice President of the CTRA (Cascade Thornapple River Association).

ARTICLE 4. Approve the Minutes of the September 18, 2023 Meeting

Motion was made by Member Carpenter to approve the minutes as written with the addition of Supervisor Lesperance to the attendance. Supported by Member Rissi. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 5. Finances- *Jade Smith, Township Manager*

Manager Smith included the 2024 budget in the packet and explained that there was a healthy fund balance. The budget was significantly under what they had anticipated for 2023. Manager Smith will continue to provide financial reports at meetings showing what is spent between meetings going forward.

ARTICLE 6. Debris Relocation by Larry's Tree Service- *Member Rissi*

Member Rissi explained that they were happy with the relocation of the mobile obstacles Larry's Tree Service was able to complete and will wait until after the spring floods to see if more show up. He only completed work on the North side of the railroad bridge as South side access was unavailable. They rejected the locations the Township was able to offer the on the South side and said he would only use the Kilmer ramp or a private residence ramp. Member Rissi asked Beaverwood and they may be willing to launch from their ramp and use their less sophisticated barge to clear mobile objects from the South side in future years. Depending on the quantity and location of

floating debris in the spring, the committee may employ both Beaverwood and Larry's Tree Service to each clean up debris on the side of the river they have access to. There were some problems this year with a lack of communication but the Township will be taking over communications contractors and potential ramps going forward.

ARTICLE 7. Safety/Navigational Marking Project by Viking Marine Construction- *Member Carpenter*

Member Carpenter talked about the updated water depth survey data and explained that they have all the survey data and information available for permitting. The raw data and professional mapping are both available to both the committee as well. Viking Marine Construction has subcontracted the permitting to Peterson Vandenburg. The permits for the navigational marking were originally rejected due to missing information but they are currently in the process of resubmitting the information to EGLE. They expect approval by Christmas. The committee will need to value engineer the design and award the bid to place the markings in the winter. They are currently looking to get signed permission from two to three homeowners because the marking would be in waterway that is on their property, rather than township property like the rest of them, and Manager Smith is reaching out to those residents.

ARTICLE 8. Aquatic Vegetation Control and Harvesting by PLM- *Melanie Manion, Parks & Rec Dir.*

Director Manion went through PLM's annual report and explained that while all the water quality test results appeared to be within acceptable ranges, other than nitrates, there is cause for some concern due to the amounts of PFAS and heavy metals in the river. She shared information from the Kent County Health Department related to fish and how many it is safe to eat from the river due to mainly mercury and PFOS in the water. It is likely residential septic fields and lawncare are at fault for elevated nitrates in the water. It is recommended that residents in the SAD be educated about these risks from eating excessive amounts contaminated fish in the future. There will be further discussion, when the next contract is written, as to if some of the data being collected is adding value or not worth the additional costs.

ARTICLE 9. Contractor Access- *Member Rissi*

Member Rissi said that his wife had originally be the contact with Maracaibo Shores but he will be connecting Director Manion and Manager Smith with them going forward. Member Rissi will still serve as an emergency contact, but the township should be responsible for receiving communication related to the SAD. Maracaibo Shores may be used for contractor access in this way but will only work for contractors with low height boats/barges. Member Rissi will still allow contractors to use his ramp that can safely turn around on his property without having to back in from across the street as that can cause an unsafe stoppage of traffic. The Township also has access at the Goodwood ramp but this may only be for emergency services.

ARTICLE 10. Communications- *Manager Smith and Member Carpenter*

Manager Smith discussed how the channels of communication are currently under township control and are interested in what types of communication the committee is looking for. They discussed an eblast schedule for summer swimming restrictions and setting up a communications meeting with Communication Specialist Lakeberg after the new year to plan out what they want for 2024.

ARTICLE 11. 3-5 Year TRSAD Strategic Plan Introduction- *Member Carpenter*

Member Carpenter recommended holding work sessions to create a more long-term plan for how the SAD would spend their funds. It was suggested these take place in some of the months when there wasn't a regular meeting scheduled.

ARTICLE 12. February 2024 Board of Trustees Deliverables- *Manager Smith*

Manager Smith said he will be bringing the report included in this meetings packet to the Board of Trustees meeting in February 2024 and presenting them with the same information he had tonight.

ARTICLE 13. Any Other Business

The meetings will move to a bi-monthly frequency, taking place on the first Monday of each month on Friday, at the township office.

ARTICLE 14. Roundtable Q & A

Trustee Shipley shared that the Thornapple River is a large part of the surrounding ecosystem of rivers that the citizens must work hard to protect.

ARTICLE 15. Public Comment

VanHouten asked additional questions about the movement of buoyant objects in the river and the results of depth testing. Members agreed to meet with her later and share the information they have gathered.

Commissioner Bujack stated that he believes that Cascade has some of the best stewardship related he has seen in his years working with the Thornapple River Watershed Council.

Trustee Shipley shared that he appreciates that Commissioner Bujack is very supportive and takes to heart what the residents of his area really want.

ARTICLE 16. Adjournment

Motion was made by Member Rissi to adjourn. Supported by Member Carpenter. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Approved by the Thornapple River SAD Ad-Hoc Committee – February 12, 2024