

MINUTES
CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MONDAY, August 4, 2025
6:00PM
2865 THORNHILLS AVE SE

ARTICLE 1. Chairman Rowland called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
Members Present: Korstange, Cribbs, Kraemer
Members Absent: Rowland (Excused), Madiol (Excused)
Others Present: Community Planning and Development Director Andrea Hendrick, Zoning Administrator (ZA) Ryan Sennett and others listed on the sign-in sheet.

ARTICLE 2. Approve the current Agenda
Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange to approve the Agenda with the removal of Article 2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, due to absence of flag. Supported by Member Cribbs.
Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 3. Disclose any Conflict of Interest
There were no conflicts of interest.

ARTICLE 4. Approve the Minutes of the July 7, 2025, Meeting
Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange to approve the July 7, 2025 Meeting minutes. Supported by Member Cribbs.
Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 5. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak.
Chris Noordyke (3720 Oak Bluff Drive SE) spoke in support of the application by Carrie Borchers and Dan Wilder. He stated he had known the applicants for years and believed their request was reasonable given the lot setup. Mr. Noordyke mentioned that due to the stream and septic system, there is no good place to put a garage elsewhere. He believed the proposed building would add to the character of the lot and help with property values in the area.

ARTICLE 6. Case #25-3893 – Public Hearing
Applicant: Carrie Borchers & Dan Wilder
Property Address Number: 8751 Cascade Rd. SE
Parcel Number: 41-19-23-400-009
Requested Action: Request for a Type I Special Use Permit for an accessory building in the front yard per Section 17.03.1.b of the Zoning Ordinance.

Zoning Administrator Ryan Sennett presented the application for a Type I Special Use Permit for an accessory building in the front yard. He explained the parcel is a corner lot with frontage on both Cascade Road and Quiggle Avenue, with a stream running through the middle of the property. ZA Sennett stated the property currently has a single-family dwelling and a 280 square foot detached garage that is legal non-conforming as it is located in the front yard.

ZA Sennett explained that the applicants propose to demolish the existing 280 square foot structure and replace it with a 552 square foot detached garage with a total floor area of 795 square feet, when including the upper floor. He noted the new building would be set back approximately 10 feet farther than the existing

building, bringing it in line with the primary structure which is also non-conforming and set back 30-36 feet from the road.

ZA Sennett stated the application falls under Section 17.03.1.b which allows accessory structures in front yards under certain conditions. He explained that the property meets at least one of the three criteria because topography makes it impossible to construct the building in the rear or side yard due to the stream running through the middle of the property, a pond on the west side, elevation drops near the creek, and seasonal flooding. Sennett noted the area near the creek is also considered wetland soil according to EGLE.

ZA Sennett explained that even if the structure were moved back to meet the front setback from Cascade Road, it would still be considered in the front yard due to Quiggle Avenue frontage, requiring a special use permit regardless. He noted the applicant is also requesting a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals for the setback requirement as the proposed structure would be 36 feet from Cascade Road where 50 feet is required.

Treasurer Korstange asked if the attached garage section of the house was considered part of the living space. Community Planning and Development Director Hendrick clarified that the zoning ordinance considers an attached garage part of the principal structure, and they don't delineate between garage and living space when determining where a front and side yard start.

Applicant Carrie Borchers explained the primary building has an attached two-stall garage, and the current accessory building is a one-stall garage that needs repairs. She stated they want to demolish the existing structure and replace it with a two-stall garage with storage space above that would be further set back and more functional.

Ms. Borchers described the unique topography of their property, noting that the septic drainage field was moved in 2013-2014 by previous owners due to topography constraints because of the creek and pond on the property. Ms. Borchers stated they cannot place the structure in the wooded area due to the location of the drainage field, nor on the west side due to a pond and swamp land.

Co-applicant Dan Wilder explained that the area past the creek is like a glacial wall with old stumps and fencing from former farmers making it difficult to build on. Mr. Wilder also stated when the creek floods, it comes up to the lower deck area located on the house. He also noted building a bridge to access areas across the creek would require significant undertaking and EGLE involvement due to wetlands.

Mr. Wilder explained that the existing structure has significant issues, stating the floor was damaged by a white pine tree behind it, causing four to five inches of height difference at the door and leaks.

Ms. Borchers confirmed that the white pine tree would be removed regardless of the outcome because of its size and proximity to the house, noting they already had a tree fall on their house a couple years ago. She stated they plan to maintain existing landscape buffering between the structure and Cascade Road and will match the materials of the primary dwelling.

Treasurer Korstange asked about plans for the second story. Ms. Borchers responded it would just be used for storage, noting they weren't sure if they would finish it and confirming there would be no water or bathroom facilities.

Treasurer Korstange expressed concern about previous applicants pretending they won't use upper levels as accessory dwelling units, noting the Commission had seen this in the past. She stated when she first saw the plans, her biggest fear was potential rental use since accessory dwelling units are not allowed.

Vice Chair Kraemer asked what would prevent moving the building 14 feet to the north. Ms. Borchers explained septic pumps are located right at that location. Mr. Wilder confirmed that they were relocated in 2014 to comply with EPA requirements.

Vice Chair Kraemer asked how the applicant currently accesses the other side of the creek. Mr. Wilder explained you can't get equipment across the creek, so he accesses that area from the neighbor's property.

Treasurer Korstange questioned whether even moving the structure back 14 feet would still be considered a front yard violation due to Quiggle Avenue. ZA Sennett confirmed that was correct even with a conforming setback from Cascade Road, it would still be considered in the front yard due it being a corner lot Quiggle Avenue.

Vice Chair Kraemer stated he was initially hung up on whether the legal standards were met, specifically whether topography makes it impossible to construct in the rear or side yard. After discussion, he concluded that the creek and associated topography issues do make it impossible to construct elsewhere.

Treasurer Korstange noted her initial concern was about a two-story structure in the front yard, but she noted the proposed structure would actually be more in line with the house rather than further forward like the existing structure. She stated that based on the topographical facts presented, it appeared impossible to locate the structure elsewhere.

**Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange to open public hearing. Supported by Member Cribbs.
Motion carried unanimously.**

There was no one wishing to speak.

**Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange to close public hearing. Supported by Member Cribbs.
Motion carried unanimously.**

Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange to Approve Case Number 25-3893 for a Type I Special Use Permit for a residential accessory structure located in the front yard at 8751 Cascade Road Southeast for the following reasons:

- 1. Constructing an accessory building in the rear or side yard of the proposed development would require grading and extensive fill of wetlands and riparian zone which would significantly change the landscape and views of the neighborhood and be detrimental to the natural features of the property. The topography, EGLE**

requirements, and septic location make it nearly impossible to construct the building in the side or rear yard.

And with the following conditions:

1. The proposed accessory building shall receive a variance to encroach into the 50-foot setback for Cascade Road or revise the plans to meet the setback requirements.
2. The accessory building shall not be used as a home occupation or accessory dwelling unit.
3. Outdoor lighting must adhere to the Cascade Township standards; shielded or downcast, not creating glare for neighbors.

Supported by Vice Chair Kraemer.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 7. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak.

There was no one wishing to speak.

ARTICLE 8. Other Business

Director Hendrick announced that there would be a Board work session to review the draft zoning ordinance on August 5th at 5:00 pm. She invited Planning Commissioners to attend if available, noting the packet for the work session was available online.

Director Hendrick stated that language was added to the proposed zoning ordinance allowing accessory structures in front yards by right for Rural Conservation or Farmland Preservation parcels over six acres, provided the structure is set back more than 200 feet from the property line. This change was based on Planning Commission feedback and research showing the Zoning Board of Appeals had consistently approved similar cases. The objective standards would enable administrative approval instead of requiring special use permits. Director Hendrick confirmed the July 3, 2025 packet remained current with only minor formatting corrections. Changes for the Board meeting were highlighted in the document with substantive changes and scrivener's errors clearly marked in a change table.

Director Hendrick reported receiving 12-20 calls and emails about the proposed ordinance, primarily asking if property owners would need to spend money immediately. She confirmed the answer was no, since existing properties don't require compliance unless redeveloped. Most responses were positive, with the main question being "what is form based code?" They plan to include a definition in the resident newsletter.

Treasurer Korstange stated she expressed hope the presentation to the board would be good and reiterated her opinion that it was beneficial to get board feedback before items come to the Planning Commission to avoid back-and-forth between the two bodies.

Vice Chair Kraemer commented that the changes seemed helpful and appeared to be a good way to adapt and change things.

ARTICLE 9. Adjourn

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Hendrick, Community Planning and Development Director, Recording Secretary