

## Minutes

Cascade Charter Township  
Parks Committee Meeting  
Tuesday, February 21, 2023  
8:00 A.M.  
5920 Tahoe Dr SE

**ARTICLE 1.** Chair Wanty called the meeting to order at 8:03 A.M.  
Members Present: Chair Ginny Wanty, Mike Reese, Eileen Boekestein, Windy Korstange, Supervisor Grace Lesperance  
Absent: Joe Engel, Matt Douglas  
Others Present: Building and Grounds Supervisor Jim MacDonald, Township Manager Ben Swayze, Director of Human Resources Katie Murawski, and those listed on the sign-in sheet.

**ARTICLE 2. Approve the Current Agenda**  
**Motion was made by Member Reese to approve the current agenda. Supported by Member Korstange. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 3. Approve the minutes of the January 21, 2023 Regular Meeting**  
**Motion was made by Member Reese to approve the January 21, 2023 meeting minutes as written. Supported by Supervisor Lesperance. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 4. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak to non-agenda items**  
There were not any visitors who wished to speak.

Member Boekestein arrived at 8:07 A.M.

**ARTICLE 5. Developing a Millage Campaign**  
Member Reese explained that the millage subcommittee talked through the different projects/improvements they would like to make and calculated that they needed to set the millage to collect \$1.6 million. This would be a rate of 0.9831 mils. They discussed blending the parks and open space millages but decided not to combine them. The open space millage will expire after the park's millage would begin and this would either increase the perceived cost to residents or they would have to decrease the amount of money they ask for, both of which would be unfavorable. This will go to the Township Board at an April meeting. The Millage subcommittee will meet to discuss the final language and budget. They will then present at the next Parks Committee meeting to request a recommendation from the committee and then take the millage request to the board.

**ARTICLE 6. Parks Director Job Search**  
Cascade Township Director of Human Resources Murawski let the committee know that they had currently received 15 Parks Director applications and that the position would

be posted until Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup> at 4:00pm. The position description was posted on MParks, National Park Association, MML, Indeed, Facebook, City Park Alliance, and available for those who walked into the office. She thought they would have a good selection of applicants to review. There will be a set question list for interviews but there will also be questions that arise naturally.

The first round of interviews are set to occur the second week of March and then the selected applicant will be approved at the Township Board meeting following their acceptance. Chair Wanty will be the Parks Committee representative on the interview panel along with Manager Swayze, Supervisor Lesperance and Director of Human Resources Murawski. Members Engel and Reese will be on the panel if there is a need for a final interview with top candidates.

**ARTICLE 7. Cascade Recreation Park Master Plan Process**

Member Reese will bring grant ideas to the next meeting, including DNR grants. Chair Wanty said that Building and Grounds Supervisor MacDonald has an ongoing list of resident complaints he can bring to the committee meeting as ideas for improvements. Park Committee members are to bring improvement ideas for Rec Park upgrades to the April 18 meeting. Management Office Administrative Assistant Stine will bring park recreation statistics to the April meeting.

**ARTICLE 8. Potential Projects for State Funding Request**

TM Swayze and Supervisor Lesperance met with Representative Skaggs who is newly elected and is on the House Appropriations Committee. Supervisor Lesperance sent him a wish list of projects to fund for the township and he requested more details. He was most interested in three of the projects: the Grand River Parkway Land Acquisition Project, a Thornapple River Watershed Preservation & Protection project, and an Urban/Suburban Recreation Pathway Interlink Project.

The Burton St Bridge project is shovel ready and would cost around \$3.5 million. Representative Skaggs represents Kentwood, Cascade, and a small part of East Grand Rapids. This project would connect two of the communities he represents. Supervisor Lesperance and Member Wanty both recently heard from the Friends of Grand Rapids Parks that there was local interest in a mountain bike 'Grand Loop' that would include the Cascade area.

The Thornapple River Watershed Preservation and Protection project is the most difficult to request money for because there is not data available to back up what changes need to take place to protect and preserve the river. Large amounts of research and time have been put into the upper portion of the river, but not the lower portion that runs through Cascade. The township could consider requesting funds for testing and create a preservation and protection plan since Cascade's portion of the watershed has not previously had a dedicated plan.

TM Swayze will collect more information on the Burton St Bridge and Grand River Greenway projects to send to Representative Skaggs.

**ARTICLE 9. Updates from Township Manager**

Dr Keys will be meeting with Supervisor Lesperance and TM Swayze later in the week to discuss the deer study. They will ask him to attend a Township Board meeting in March to provide the study results.

TM Swayze stated that Treasurer Peirce is retiring and explained the process of appointing a new Treasurer.

The lessee of the property who owns Tuffy is looking to assign their lease to another tire company, Mavis Tire, and this means the Township Board has the ability to review the transfer of the lease. This will be discussed at the February 22, 2023 Township Board meeting.

The GVMC Airport Access Study has pulled back on some of their proposed expressway ramps. A representative from the Michigan Department of Transportation said that ‘the on/off ramps follow development.’ The ramps are only likely to be built if the area becomes developed enough to necessitate them. The Planning Commission has been examining zoning on the backside of the airport and they will be presenting their findings at the next Township Board meeting.

The garlic mustard dumpster will be permanently moved to Fire Station 2 as there isn’t space to host it behind the new Fire Station 1.

Member Boekestein left the meeting at 9:44 A.M.

**ARTICLE 10. Updates and Announcements from Chair**

Chair Wanty shared that the Parks and Pathways Committees will hold a joint meeting once the new Parks Director is hired.

KDL Regional Manager II, Lulu Brown, will be attending the April Parks meeting to further discuss the library’s plans for their outdoor space enhancement project.

Residents and the Township’s Oak Wilt Consultant have complimented the Parks Committee as well as Building and Grounds on all the work towards Oak Wilt elimination in the 3 different sites in the township. Snow Cemetery has eradicated it but Burton Park might need more work. Fungicide has been applied to the stumps of the infected trees and the area will be monitored to see if new oak wilt starts up.

Planning Director Hilbrands will bring a completed list of the Parks Committee members and their current terms of service to the next meeting.

The March parks meeting will take place in the Good and Skutt rooms at the Wisner Center.

**ARTICLE 11. Old Business**

There was not any old business to discuss.

**ARTICLE 12. Any Other Business**

A visitor, Ken Van DerKolk, asked why Cascade Township does not have a County Park and requested the committee investigate adding one. He said he spoke with the new Kent County Commissioner and a new county park is coming to Caledonia in the next few years. He believes that Cascade should be looking to add a county park as well. Chair Wanty said that it may be a good way to acquire land for use as part of the Grand River Greenway.

Member Korstange left the meeting at 9:54 A.M.

**ARTICLE 13. Adjournment**

**Motion was made by Member Reese to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Chair Wanty. Motion carried 3 to 0. The meeting adjourned at 9:55 A.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Engel, Secretary