



CASCADE Winter CONNECTIONS 2017

A NEWSLETTER FROM CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP

Office Hours:

Monday through Friday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Township Board:

Supervisor:

Rob Beahan; 949-1500
rbeahan@cascadetwp.com

Clerk:

Sue Slater; 949-1508
sslater@cascadetwp.com

Treasurer:

Ken Peirce; 949-6944
kpeirce@cascadetwp.com

Trustees:

Jim Koessel
jkoessel@cascadetwp.com

Jack Lewis

jlewis@cascadetwp.com

Tom McDonald

tmcdonald@cascadetwp.com

John Shipley

jshipley@cascadetwp.com

Department Phone Numbers:

Manager:

Ben Swayze; 949-1500
bswayze@cascadetwp.com

Assessing:

Roger McCarty; 949-6176
roger@cascadetwp.com

Building Inspections:

Brian Wilson; 949-3765
bwilson@cascadetwp.com

Community Development

Steve Peterson; 949-0224
speterson@cascadetwp.com

Fire:

John Sigg; 949-1320
jsigg@cascadetwp.com

Sheriff/Non-Emergency:

632-6100

Happy Holidays!

from your
Township Board, Commissions & Staff

TOYS FOR TOTS

The Cascade Township Fire Department is accepting toys for the Toys for Tots program. You may drop off new, unwrapped toys at the Fire Station, located at 2865 Thornhills Ave. from November 7 through December 16.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS:

The Cascade Township Office will be closed Friday, December 23rd, Monday, December 26th and Monday, January 2nd.

CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING

Bring your used Christmas tree to the parking lot behind the Buttrick Fire Station (Buttrick & 30th Street) from December 26 – January 8. Please remember to remove all ornaments, lights, tinsel and tree stands.



ANGEL TREE

Cascade Township is proud to participate in the Angel Tree program. The Angel Tree program allows a person to select a tag from the tree that represents a child in need.

After the gift is purchased, place the tag on the unwrapped gift and return it to Cascade Township or any Angel Tree site. All toys collected will be delivered in time for the children to have a happy holiday.

If you would like to participate in the Angel Tree program, please stop at the Cascade Township office, located at 2865 Thornhills Ave. to select a tag. Gifts must be returned by December 15.



THE U.S. MAIL IS SLOWING DOWN

In January 2015, the Postal Service eliminated overnight delivery for local first-class letters that used to arrive the next day. As a consequence, 20 to 50 percent of the first-class mail sent every day now takes an extra business day to be delivered.

We want to remind you that Cascade Township does not accept postmarks as proof of timeliness. All payments, assessment forms, and property tax statements must be submitted to our office by 5 PM on the date they are due.

Businesses need to be aware that Personal Property Exemptions and Industrial Personal Property Exemptions have firm deadlines that must be met. Late submissions will have significant consequences in terms of additional taxes over what would otherwise be owed.

We understand that life's circumstances keep most of us very busy. You can make your last minute tax payments on line: <http://www.cascadetwp.com/Services/Treasurer/Taxes.asp>

We will honor them if they are made by 11:59 PM on due date.

For your convenience, we also have a Drop Box at the township office entrance. All items are considered posted as of the previous day if they are in the box before opening time.

FROM THE SUPERVISOR...



FROM THE SUPERVISOR
ROB BEAHAN

With the November elections behind us, it's time to go forward on the national, state and local levels. I'll be returning as Supervisor and Ken Peirce will return as our Treasurer along with the current Trustees, Jim Koessel, Jack Lewis, and Tom MacDonald. Two new faces on the Board are Sue Slater and John Shipley.

Sue Slater is the new Cascade Township Clerk and replaces Clem Bell who stepped in and filled the position when long-time Clerk, Ron Goodyke retired in February, 2016. Clem is also a paid on call fireman for the Township and is planning on continuing his Fire Department duties.

Sue is a long time resident of Cascade and is the registrar for Forest Hills Public Schools at Central Middle School. She is very familiar with the local election process having been an election worker for 24 years and the last 12 years as one of the Precinct Chairs. The new Trustee position is filled by another long-time resident, John Shipley, who also serves as a paid on call member of our Fire Department. Fred Goldberg is vacating the Trustee position after ten years on the Board. In addition to his career as an attorney at Mika, Meyers, Beckett, and Jones, he served the residents of Cascade for 10 years on the Planning Commission and 5 years on the Zoning Board of Appeals. His expertise and wise counsel was invaluable to the Board and the decisions that had to be made during his years of service.

I would like to thank the outgoing Board members for their dedication and selfless service. It is often a thankless job but their professionalism was always evident in their service to the residents of Cascade. I would also like to welcome our new Board members and look forward to working with the entire Board in the upcoming year. Finally, I would like to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

FROM THE TREASURES'S OFFICE...

Winter 2016 Tax Information

Winter 2016 tax bills and informational notices were mailed December 1, 2016. Winter taxes are due on or before Tuesday February 14, 2017. If you do not receive a tax statement during December, please check the township's website: www.cascadetwp.com or call the Treasurer's office at 616-949-6944.

Payments are receipted on the same business day they are received. We recommend that you allow 7 days to ensure a timely delivery. An informational letter is enclosed with the bill for alternative payment instructions and E-Z pay application.

Your tax bill information is available 24 hours a day at www.cascade-twp.com; Quick links; Property / Parcel Lookup; Search using address, name, or parcel number; Click the tax information tab to view the property tax history along with the current taxes.

March 1, 2017, all unpaid real property taxes will be forwarded to the Kent County Treasurer for collection. **Postmarks are not accepted.**

DOG LICENSES

Kent County dog licenses are available in our office year-round. A current rabies certificate and proof of neuter/spay should be provided at the time you apply for the license. You may also have a renewal form from the Kent County Animal Shelter.

CASCADE TOWNSHIP RECOGNIZED AS 5-STAR COMMUNITY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Cascade Township has been recognized for its work to foster entrepreneurial growth and economic development in the annual eCities study conducted by researchers at iLabs, University of Michigan-Dearborn's Center for Innovation Research. The Township was honored as a five-star community, the highest possible ranking, along with 22 other communities across the state.

"Being recognized for our Economic Development efforts in the Township is certainly an honor" said Cascade Township Manager Ben Swayze. "We strive to provide the best economic climate for our businesses and residents, and the recognition affirms that our program is having a positive effect for the entire Cascade community." Among the attributes of the Cascade Township economic development program that led to the five-star ranking:

- Offering existing and prospective businesses competitive tax rates for public services and utilizing financial tools to create investment opportunities for commercial development.
- Connecting businesses with community resources, offering funding and incentives to improve business properties and having dedicated staff to focus on economic development activities.
- Investing in new infrastructure and equipment to add value to the community.
- Large concentrations of new commercial and industrial activity
- Fostering an environment that serves as a home to concentrations of an educated and skilled workforce to fill businesses' need for knowledge based labor.

"The eCities project highlights how local governments from across the state of Michigan are cultivating and supporting economic development. These communities show how local governments can work in distinct and strategic ways to energize public spaces, while investing in businesses and job development," said Tim Davis, director, iLabs.

The annual eCities research project, which began in 2007, uses data supplied by the participants, as well as other public records to assemble a six-factor, 32-item index of entrepreneurial activity, looking at such factors as clustering, incentives, growth, policies, community and education. The study focuses on entrepreneurship because of its importance to expansion and diversification of Michigan's regional economies and the impact small businesses have on job creation.



2017 ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Prior to Proposal A, property taxes were based upon State Equalized Value (SEV). Property taxes are now based upon Taxable Value. Each year, the Assessing Office must calculate the SEV for every property based upon the study period mandated by the State Tax Commission. A property's taxable status is determined as of December 31, which is called Tax Day.

Additionally, each property has a Capped Value. Capped Value is calculated by multiplying the prior year's Taxable Value, with adjustments for additions and losses, by the CPI as calculated by the State of Michigan and cannot increase by more than 5%. **For 2017, the CPI has been calculated at .9% or (1.009).** Taxable Value (TV), which property taxes are based on, is defined as the lower of State Equalized Value or Capped Value. Generally speaking, this means that unless the current year's SEV is less than the previous year's Taxable Value multiplied by the CPI, the current year's Taxable Value will increase by the CPI.

- **SEV** = 50% of True Cash Value
- **Capped Value** = (Prior TV-Losses) x (1+ CPI*) + Additions
- * **CPI** = Percent of change in the rate of inflation or 5%, which ever is less, expressed as a multiplier

Taxable Value = The lesser of State Equalized Value or Capped Value unless there is a transfer of ownership.

The Equalization Timetable

During the downturn in the economy the State Tax Commission mandated local assessors use a 12-month sales study to determine values. For the last couple years and again this year, the Commission has ordered assessors go back to a 24 month study.

For 2017 assessments, the 24-month sales study begins October 1, 2014 and ends September 30, 2016.

Actual Sale Price is not True Cash Value

The law defines True Cash Value as the usual selling price of a property. The Legislature and the Courts have very clearly stated that the actual selling price of a property is not a controlling factor in the True Cash Value or State Equalized Value as calculated by the Assessor. For this reason, when analyzing sales for determining assessment changes, the Assessing Office

will review all sales but exclude non-representative sales from the assessment analysis.

Foreclosure Sales

Inherent in the definition of usual selling price is the assumption that the sale does not involve any element of distress from either party.

Distressed sales, such as sales involving **mortgage foreclosure** or sales involving transfers to or from relocation companies, are usually not considered as typical sales in the valuation of property for assessment purposes nor are they necessarily reliable indicators of value when making market comparisons for current assessed values or appeals.

- **So what does it all mean?**
- **How can I expect my assessment to change in 2017?**

As stated in the Equalization Timetable, for 2017 the time period of the sales study for assessment review is October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2016. Sales occurring after September 30, 2016 will not be reviewed until the 2018 assessment cycle.

The residential market has been strong over the past few years and the sales studies will reflect that. The larger study period and greater market activity will provide a larger sample to base the new assessments on. Areas with limited sales data may still require assessment adjustments be based on market activity in the surrounding neighborhoods and general market trends. With the larger sales study period, you may find that your 2017 assessment may not go up as much as you think it should.

- **What does it mean if my Assessment goes up more than my Taxable Value?**

Taxable Value is used to calculate your tax bill. If the taxable value increase is less than the assessment increase, your tax increase will be limited and will not reflect the total increase in value of your property.

Remember that in the year following a transfer of ownership, the property uncaps and the Taxable Value becomes whatever the Assessed Value is for that year.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS REGARDING PERSONAL PROPERTY

The legislature made changes to the Personal Property tax law which first impacted small businesses in 2014. **Starting in 2014, personal property owned, leased or controlled by an owner or related entity in a jurisdiction with a true cash value of less than \$80,000 is exempt from property taxes.**

For 2017 and beyond, there are several important points the property owner must be aware of:

1. **The property owner must file an affidavit EACH YEAR** with the Assessor office by February 10th. Failure to file the affidavit on time means you will not receive the exemption – even if you would otherwise be eligible.

THE FORM MUST BE IN OUR OFFICE BY FEBRUARY 10.

2. Personal property owners who file the affidavit are not required to file a personal property statement. They are required to maintain records documenting their property value and make those records available to the Assessor upon request in order to confirm qualification for exemption. The Assessor may deny the exemption and go back up to 3 years if he or she believes the equipment is not eligible.

3. There is no provision for the exemption to be addressed by the March, July or December Boards of Review. This means **we can not add an exemption submitted after the deadline.**
4. The law does not allow a property owner to divide up his property among separate entities to avoid taxes. Additionally, leased equipment is included in the calculation of total value. We will send out personal property statements this year. The affidavit will be available at our office and on the Township or State of Michigan websites.

<http://www.cascadetwp.com/ReferenceDesk/Forms.asp>

Exemption Affidavit:

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/treasury/5076f_493854_7.pdf



**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS CALL US.
Don't miss an exemption you might be eligible for!
CASCADE TOWNSHIP ASSESSORS OFFICE**

AIRPORT MASTER PLAN UPDATE PROCESS BEGINS

As is the case with all major airports in the United States, airports must formulate master plans to prepare for future growth. Since the Gerald R. Ford International Airport's original plan in 1959 it has been necessary to update the plan several times to accommodate airport growth. After several years of unprecedented growth, along with the Airport having started or completed most of the previous Master Plan's recommended development program, the Authority recognized the need for an additional master plan update. Therefore, the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority (GFIAA) is embarking on a comprehensive Airport Master Plan Update (MPU) study. This process will take approximately two years to complete.

To facilitate the master planning effort GFIAA has solicited stakeholder involvement through a Master Plan Advisory Committee that includes GFIAA Staff; airport users; economic development groups; and Federal, State, and local agencies. This advisory committee includes the participation of community planners and/or elected officials from Cascade Township, Caledonia Township, City of Kentwood, and Gaines Township.



It has been said that no development at this airport happens by accident. The GFIAA and the study team will be looking through a "Regional Lens" throughout this MPU process. The very nature of the study mandates a process which is

visionary and inclusive of all modes of transportation. To that extent, the MPU team will be looking carefully at all opportunities, technologies, and potentials that would cement GFIA's place as the premier airport in West Michigan. Updates on the MPU process and notices of public meetings will be available on the Airport's website at: FlyFord.org/environment-zoning.php.

SAVE THE DATE...

Grand Rapids Triathlon 2017

• June 11, 2017

ONE-DAY CLEARANCE SALE OF USED BOOKS

Friends of the Library of the Cascade branch of the KDL

Saturday January 14, 2017

10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
(Members only can get in at 9 a.m.)



We will be selling \$1 music CDs at this sale also – we have quite a few.

Cozy up to a good book, and bring all of your friends to this incredible sale!

Cascade Library
2870 Jacksmith Ave.
Cascade, MI 49546
(616) 784-2007

SPRING USED BOOK SALE

Sponsored by the Friends of the Cascade Library

Saturday, March 4, 2017
9-10 am Pre-sale for members only

Saturday, March 4, 2017
10 am - 4 pm

Sunday, March 5, 2017
1 pm - 3:30pm

\$10.00 a bag of books
Or \$1 for a hard-cover book
\$.50 paperback books

At the Cascade Branch of the Kent District Library

2870 Jacksmith Ave. S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
www.cascadefriends.org

Cozy up with a good book and bring all your friends!!!!

All proceeds benefit the Cascade Branch



CASCADE COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC LIBRARY GATHERING SPACE.

For years, Cascade Township residents have shared with officials their desire for a community gathering space. During public input for the 2009 Master Plan, the 2011 Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Plan, and the 2014 Parks and Recreation Plan, residents shared a desire for more gathering spaces in the community.

With several acres of Township property in the vicinity of the library along, including property along Jacksmith Drive and 28th Street, community members have stated an interest in beautifying the space, and for finding ways to integrate the green space into the library facility, so patrons and residents have more opportunities for outdoor enjoyment.

Based on comments received from the community over the years, the Cascade Downtown Development Authority (DDA) moved forward with hiring a consultant (Viridis Design Group) to put together a design for the library property.

This past summer the Cascade community was invited to complete a survey, attend public meetings and submit comments to help create a design for the gathering space. Based on the survey responses and public meeting comments, Viridis completed a design, which was presented to the public at a July project meeting, a September DDA meeting and Township Board meeting.

While we received great feedback from the survey and public meetings, the Township Board feels that an additional public meeting should be held. The design will again be presented at a public open house on January 24, 2017. The purpose of the open house is to gather community comments on whether the proposed design is a good use of the property and whether the Township Board should proceed in adopting the design. If adopted, the DDA will have an option (with Township Board approval) to construct the design at a future date.

Should the DDA and Township Board make the decision to move forward with construction, the project would be paid for by the Cascade Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The funding source of the DDA is Tax Increment Financing (TIF). TIF Authorities capture the year-to-year growth in property values, on an annual basis from parcels located only within the district, and reinvest those dollars in public facilities located within the DDA TIF district.

If approved, there are a couple options for construction of the site. The design work was estimated as work being done in its entirety or as work being phased, potentially over 5 years. The preliminary cost estimates came in as follows:

**PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE WILL BE HELD
JANUARY 24, 2017
FROM 5:30 – 7:00 P.M.
AT THE WISNER CENTER**

- Construct the entire project - approximately \$2.1 million.
- Construct the project in phases (construction over 5 year period) - approximately \$2.7 million.

Again, the public open house will be held January 24, 2017 at 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. at the Wisner Center and we encourage you to attend to voice your opinion on the proposed design.

To see further details of the proposed design, please visit the Cascade Township website at www.cascadetwp.com and click on the link under What's Happening.



CASCADE
Transform. Activate. Gather.

COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACE MASTER PLAN

VIRIDIS williams & works
Design Group

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MCCORDS

The quaint little town of McCords located between 52nd and 60th Streets on McCord Road was one of the earliest settlements in Cascade Township. It dates back to 1844 when William and Harmon Clark jointly purchased a farm on 52nd Street at Snow Avenue.

Another early family was the Clinton Woods family in 1863. He had been a farmer in New York State when hearing of wonderful opportunities he headed for Michigan. Mr. Woods was also a veterinary surgeon, something rare at the time.

The coming of the railroad around 1885 had quite an effect on McCords. When the tracks came through and a station was erected, the community quickly grew from hamlet to village size. It was always rumored that McCords pulled strings to get the railroad station, winning over Whitneyville which was already established. McCord's children would taunt the Whitneyville children with words like "We got the railroad station!" Children rushed to take the thrown mail bag from the passing train to collect five cents for their effort. Outgoing mail was snatched from an eight foot high hook as the train roared through town.

The town grew... A general store was built along with a blacksmith shop, bank, barber shop, sawmill, coal yard and feed mill. The railroad had a side track for all of this and later a building was built for processing pickles and potatoes.

In 1917, plans to expand the village were announced by John Rockefeller who owned a farm on the west side of town. The plat contained 30 lots. All the streets and lots were laid out but nothing ever came of it.

The heyday of McCords was past. Time flew by and as farms grew larger, rural villages grew smaller. McCords was left as a quiet, tree shaded community, her mill standing silent and her stores and railroad station closed.

Pictured are the Kleinheksel's Feed Service Store and also Ken Kleinheksel with the store truck.

A more complete McCord's history can be discovered in the Cascade Chronicles which can be purchased at the township office. The price is \$10. This article is presented by the Cascade Historical Society. We meet monthly at 9:30 a.m. on the first Thursday at the old Cascade Township white building located at 2839 Thornapple River Dr. near Cascade Road. You are invited to experience Cascade history with us.

If you would like us to search our records for your family's history, please email your request to cascadehistory@cascaadetwp.com.



AIR SEALING AND INSULATION...

New homes are required to be constructed with a continuous air barrier that prevents the loss of conditioned air from inside the home. In fact, homes are now built so "tight" that mechanical ventilation is required to provide fresh air inside the home.

Existing homes, however, may have significant air leaks that can add up to much higher energy bills. If you were to add up all the leaks in a typical home, it would be the equivalent of having a window open every day of the year!

There are some other benefits to air sealing and insulation:

- Reduced noise from the outside
- Less pollen, dust and insects entering your home
- Better humidity control
- Lower chance for ice dams

Common areas for air leakage include:

- Knee walls
- Porch roofs
- Attic access panels
- Recessed lighting
- Attic fans
- Rim joists
- Windows and doors
- Fireplace walls



Often a few tubes of caulk can have a dramatic effect on air leakage and provide a more comfortable home with lower energy costs.

For more information visit www.energystar.gov or contact the Cascade Township Building Department.

HALLOWEEN PARTY

On Monday October 31st the Cascade Fire Department Station #1 became a gathering place of ghosts, goblins and many other costumed creatures. Over 700 bags of candy were shared with visitors as well as doughnuts, apple cider, and coffee. Later in the evening the costume contest took place with many great prizes being awarded to the winners. Age groups for the contest start with newborns and are broken into various groups up to and including the adults. We greatly appreciate the involvement of the community, sponsors, and volunteers! We look forward to seeing everyone again next year!

Thank you to the Halloween Party Sponsors!

On behalf of Cascade Township and the Cascade Township Fire Department, we would like to send a special thank you to the following businesses and sponsors for their donations and contributions to the 2016 Halloween party. Without the help of these businesses, we would not be able to host this event. Please take notice of these businesses and express your appreciation of their help with the Halloween Party.

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAY



I want to share with the residents of Cascade Township some suggestions to help prevent a break in while you are traveling for the Holidays.

1. A house alarm used properly is a great tool to prevent the loss of items if your home gets broke into. Many insurance companies will reduce your home owner's insurance premiums if you have an alarm system.
2. I recommend using a safe deposit box at a bank or credit union to keep valuable jewelry or family heirlooms stored. This is something that you should consider all the time. I will also suggest a full size safe for valuables at home. The safe should be way too large to carry out the door and it needs to be firmly mounted to the wall and floor.
3. Advise trusted neighbors of your travel dates and times and ask that they keep an eye out for anything suspicious at your home and keep your driveway plowed to appear that the home is still occupied.
4. Have the dead bolts updated and reinforced. There are simple and cheap ways to improve the strength of the lock by simply changing the screws.
5. Use motion lights outside and lights on timers inside. The Idevice plugs into your wi-fi and can be controlled with your smart phone. (Idevicesinc.com)
6. Use cameras, either fake with red lights (that are real in appearance) or real ones that record. Keep them visible and obvious to the bad guys.
7. An item that is popular is the Ring (Ring.com). This item is a door bell and it responds to motion when someone enters the range, and it sends you an alert to your phone. It also alerts you if the subject pushes the doorbell.
8. Go to accesskent.com and sign up for vacation house watch. It is a form you submit and then a volunteer from the Sheriff's Office will check your home while you're away.

Have a happy and safe Holiday season,

Ryan Roe

Kent County Sheriff Department

ryan.roe@kentcountymi.gov



- Branns Steakhouse & Grill
- Carlin, Obrien & Batson
- Cascade Automotive
- Cascade Car Wash
- Cascade Firefighters Association
- Cascade Hospital for Animals
- Costco
- D&W Food Center
- Forest Hills Foods
- Frontline Services
- Funny Business
- Goldfish Swim School
- Gordon Food Service
- Kingsland Hardware
- Koenes Auto Body
- Little Caesars
- Lynne Deering
- Meijer
- Ranir Corporation
- S. Abraham & Sons
- Walgreens



Cascade Charter Township

2865 Thornhills Ave SE.
Grand Rapids MI 49546
phone: 616.949.1500
fax: 616.949.3918
www.cascadetwp.com

PRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
GRAND RAPIDS MI
PERMIT No. 1

PATHWAY NEWS...

It is nearly the end of 2016 and once again time to reflect on another wonderful year of living in Cascade Township. I don't think you could view a finer fall color tour than right in our own neighborhoods. Mother Nature supplied us with beautiful summer weather to enjoy the outdoors in the park-like settings in which we live.

Because of the time of year the deer are on the move in large numbers. If you see a dead deer along our county roads call the Kent County Road Commission at 616-242-6900. They will make arrangements to get someone out to pick up the carcass. The township does not do that.

As of this writing, the new interchange at Cascade Rd. and I-96 appears to be almost completed. My wife thinks it will be a wreck 'em derby. I'm more optimistic.

It has been a great 2016 in Cascade Township. My gratitude is overflowing!

One final piece of business. Styrofoam, yes that material that never goes away. It comes in sheets, blocks, pellets, and fabricated and molded configurations. The holidays are coming up. Many of the gifts you exchange will have Styrofoam as the packing material. Be sure you deposit the Styrofoam in a large trash bag to that it cannot escape into and on to our wonderful streets and trails. It will save all of us that pick up our trail system a lot of grief. As always thank you to those that help keep our trail systems clean. Remember.
KEEP CASCADE BEAUTIFUL!

Kris Taylor
Pathway Coordinator

