

Cascade Connections



2025 | EDITION 2
Cascade Charter Township Newsletter



from the **Supervisor**

Springing into the Season

As we inch toward spring, I want to highlight several current and ongoing Township projects and initiatives – all of which further our goal of preserving Cascade’s unique character and enhancing residents’ quality of life:

ENHANCING COMMUNITY SPACES

Cascade Road Pedestrian Bridge over the Thornapple River: Reconstruction/widening of the pedestrian portions of the bridge will resume in the coming weeks as weather permits, with completion scheduled for May. The pathway on the north side of the bridge will be widened and include a physical barrier between traffic lanes. Higher exterior railing and lighting will be added to both sides, and traffic lanes will be restriped.

Tuffy/Tassel Park Design Concept: Initial plans for improving the village area, including the Tuffy site, remain on our website and subject to additional review and feedback. More detailed design plans, including a preliminary engineering proposal, are underway and will be shared as they become available. This exciting project will be funded by Cascade’s Downtown Development Authority (DDA).

Cascade Library Interior Refresh: Interior updates to the library are underway, with completion expected in June. This update, the first since the library was built twenty years ago, is being funded by savings from the library millage over time.

Tree Restoration along Cascade Road Pathway: The Board of Trustees recently approved planting 39 trees along Cascade Road between Wycliffe and Cahoon Drive this spring. The planting of these trees is meant to restore some of the natural buffer that was removed and not replaced during the 2020 pathway extension project.

Burton Street Pedestrian Bridge over I-96: Construction of the pedestrian bridge over I-96 remains on track for fall 2025. Based on engineering work to date, the \$3.5 million appropriation of state funding will cover the entire project with no cost to Cascade residents.

PROACTIVE GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Zoning Ordinance Update: Growth is inevitable, but through proactive planning, Township leadership is ensuring the right kind happens in the right places – growth that enhances our residents’ quality of life and property values. Township-elected leadership and staff have been comprehensively reviewing and updating our zoning ordinance to ensure it furthers residents’ desires and reflects best practices.

Priorities include preserving residential property values, conserving natural areas throughout the entire Township, addressing development concerns (such as subpar private roads), and creating a more walkable village area between 28th Street and Cascade Road and the Thornapple River. The updated Zoning Ordinance is scheduled for public review and Board approval later this spring.

FISCAL OVERSIGHT & ACCOUNTABILITY

In preparation for the annual audit, the Finance Department is closing out the accounting records for Fiscal Year 2024. This one short sentence equates to roughly two hundred hours of staff effort, culminating in four external auditors working on-site the last week of March. The audit process includes examining Cascade’s financial records, accounting practices, and internal controls to ensure that all public funds received and expended are accounted for. The completed audit will be available for public review in July.

CASCADE’S FIRST ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT

Lastly, I hope you will join me for Cascade’s inaugural Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 19, at 10 am at Cascade Rec Park.

It is an honor to serve as your Supervisor. Your thoughts, comments, and suggestions are welcome and important.

Evening office hours are temporarily suspended due to construction inside the library. However, if you reach out, we can schedule another time to meet.

Grace Lesperance
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Cascade Township Board Meetings

The Cascade Township Board meets on the **second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 7 pm** at the Wisner Center, 2870 Jacksmith Drive. Adjusted dates due to holidays or elections are listed on the Township website.

Meetings can be attended in-person, are live-streamed via Zoom with the link available at the top of the meeting agenda, and recordings are posted on our YouTube channel afterward.

The Township Board encourages participation in all of our public meetings!

For a full schedule of public meetings, visit bit.ly/CascadeMeetings

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Supervisor Grace Lesperance
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MEET YOUR TOWNSHIP BOARD
Front row, from left: Treasurer Windy Korstange; Township Supervisor Grace Lesperance; and Clerk Sue Slater. Back row, from left: Trustee John Shipley, Trustee Timmy Noordhoek, Trustee Chris Noordyke, and Trustee Scott Rissi.



We Want Your Input!

We’re gathering feedback from Cascade Township residents on the best ways to keep you informed about news, events, and updates. This **quick 1-minute survey** will help shape our communication strategy moving forward.

Scan the QR code, visit bit.ly/CommunicationsSurvey or stop by the Township Office to ask for a printed survey to complete.



Scan to Take the Survey



from the **Clerk**

Spring is a great time to highlight our passport services! Applications are available **by appointment only** at the Township office. **Appointments are made online only.** Staff are available to answer questions via phone at 616-949-1508 or by emailing our Deputy Clerk, Jennifer Jager at jjager@cascaadetwp.com. **No passports will be processed without an appointment.**



WHAT YOU NEED FOR A TYPICAL PASSPORT

- Completed application
 - You may complete the application online at www.travel.state.gov and print the completed application or obtain one from a Passport Acceptance Agency **before** your appointment. If you print the form, it **must be single-sided**. The U.S. Department of State does not accept double-sided forms.
- Valid Driver’s License or State ID
- Certified Birth Certificate with raised seal or Naturalization Certificate
- If there has been a name change, bring original name

change documents (court documents signed by a Judge or a document with a raised seal, such as a certified marriage license)

- Passport Picture
- Two separate payments
 - One payment to the U.S. Dept of State (**Check or Money Order only**)
 - One payment to Cascade Charter Township (Cash, Check, or Money Order)

More information, including up-to-date pricing, passport photo requirements and our online appointment booking system, is available on our website.

IMPORTANT VOTING UPDATE:

Caledonia Schools and Forest Hills Public Schools have called a special election that will be held on **May 6, 2025**.

Precinct 1 Polling Location is Moving to Fire Station 1 located at 2865 Thornhills Ave SE. All precinct 1 voters will be sent an updated voter ID card.

Parks & Facilities is Gearing Up for Spring & Summer

With warmer weather on the horizon, our Parks & Facilities team is preparing for another busy season of improvements and maintenance. This year, the team is focusing on enhancing recreational spaces to ensure they remain safe, accessible, and enjoyable for all residents.

A major priority is renovating the softball and soccer fields at Cascade Recreation Park. The infields will be resurfaced, outfield turf will receive much-needed care, and efforts will be made to level the soccer fields. These upgrades will create better conditions for athletes and families who use the facilities throughout the season.

Beyond the athletic fields, staff will also be working on landscaping, pathway upkeep, and general park maintenance to keep Cascade's public spaces looking their best. Routine inspections and repairs will ensure that picnic areas, playgrounds, and trails are ready for visitors as the weather warms up.

No matter how you enjoy Cascade's parks, these efforts will keep them vibrant and welcoming all year.

JOIN OUR CREW
Looking for a fun, active summer job?
Join our Parks & Facilities team!

FLEXIBLE FOR RETIREES!

FULL-TIME SEASONAL & VARIABLE
PART-TIME POSITIONS AVAILABLE

HANDS-ON TRAINING LEARN AS YOU WORK

SPEND THE SUMMER OUTDOORS & GET PAID

\$16.50 PER HOUR

PERFECT FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS!

Read the full job description and apply today at
cascadetwp.com/opportunities

Helping Hands Volunteering In Parks

Cascade Township is organizing VIP (Volunteers In Parks) workdays at Burton Park to combat invasive garlic mustard. Mark your calendars **every Saturday from April 5 through May 31** to meet at Burton Park's Windcrest entrance off Thornapple River Drive from 1–3 pm. Up-to-date information can be found on our facebook.com/CascadeTownship events page.

Workdays include a brief presentation with all supplies, water, and snacks provided. These are great outings for scouts and families!

GARLIC MUSTARD IS A HIGHLY INVASIVE PLANT. It spreads rapidly, outcompeting native plants and disrupting ecosystems. Volunteers are essential in removing this invasive species before it can take over our woodlands.



If you'd like to remove garlic mustard on your own property, bagged plants can be dropped off at the dumpster behind Cascade Township Fire Station #2 (2990 Buttrick SE) from April 14 through June 1. Be sure to place pulled plants in garbage bags, as garlic mustard seeds can remain viable for up to 10 years. **DO NOT COMPOST.** Please note that garlic mustard will have its own dumpster, separate from the yard waste dumpsters available for residents.

For more information or to sign up, contact volunteer@cascadetwp.com.

Growing Greener Restoring Trees in Cascade

In conjunction with Earth Day, the Township is planting 39 new trees along Cascade Road—between Wycliff and Cahoon Drive. This initiative will restore some of the natural buffer between busy Cascade Road and residents' homes that was removed as part of the 2020 pathway extension project.

In addition to the obvious benefits trees provide—shade, privacy, better air quality, and habitat for wildlife—curbside trees have been shown to calm traffic and reduce vehicle speeds by appearing to narrow the width of the roadway.

Planting will begin this spring, with continued care over the next two years to ensure the trees' survival.

Cascade Library REFRESH

Construction is officially underway at the Cascade Township Branch of Kent District Library, bringing exciting updates to one of our community's most cherished spaces. This refresh is a collaboration between Cascade Township and KDL to modernize the library while maintaining its welcoming atmosphere. During renovations, library services remain available in the Wisner Center's Good and Skutt Rooms. Patrons can browse a limited collection of popular books, pick up holds, return items, and attend select programs. Curbside service also continues at its current location.

“By modernizing the library, we aim to enhance the learning environment, support local programs, and create a welcoming space for all ages to gather, learn, and grow.”

—TOWNSHIP MANAGER JADE SMITH

Planned improvements include:

- New carpet, furniture, lighting, and artwork inspired by the surrounding landscape.
- A new Family Restroom near the Children's Play Area.
- Additional private study spaces for individuals
- Improved separation between the activity-focused children's area and quieter adult reading and study spaces.
- Enhanced accessibility throughout the building.

Construction is expected to be complete by June 2025. In the meantime, visit cascadetwp.com/projects for the latest updates.



▲ **A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE**

This rendering from C2AE showcases the refreshed front desk design, bringing a modern yet welcoming update to the Cascade Township Branch of KDL. Visit cascadetwp.com/projects to find more renderings and construction progress photos.

Spring Cleaning

with Cascade Township

YARD WASTE DUMPSTERS

From April 14 through May 12, dumpsters will be available behind **Fire Station 2 at 2990 Buttrick Ave. SE**. The dumpsters are top-load, and yard waste must be carried up a small set of stairs to be dumped. Employees are not available to help dump yard waste.

Garlic mustard will have its own dumpster and will be available through June 1.

BAGGED YARD WASTE PICKUP

Collection takes place **every Monday** from April 14 through May 12. Please place bags near the curb by Sunday at midnight.

This service is only available to residents in the restricted burn area, generally west of Buttrick Ave. and north of I-96. View map: bit.ly/CT-burn-area.

IMPORTANT UPDATE: Yard waste tags will be a **different color** this year. Orange tags from last year will **NOT** be accepted. **If you still have orange tags, you must exchange them** at the Township Office for the new color tags. **Only the new tags will be picked up.**

Bags of yard waste and bundles of branches **MUST** be tagged for collection. Bags and bundles must weigh less than 30 pounds each to be picked up. Please do **NOT** include grass clippings, dirt, sod, cement, sand, rocks, or pet waste.

Branches and stumps cannot exceed one inch in diameter and four feet in length.

Tags are available at the Township Office reception desk during office hours. Residents are limited to 20 tags. For more information, call the Township at 616-949-1500.

BURN PERMITS AVAILABLE ONLINE

All open burns require a permit, and you can quickly apply online at cascadetwp.com or scan the QR code and view Cascade's burn ordinance.

Open burning is generally allowed year-round east of Buttrick Ave and south of I-96. In restricted areas, burning is allowed on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays from December 1 to August 31. View the map at bit.ly/CT-burn-area.

If a burn ban is in effect, online applications will be unavailable.



Permits can be requested up to three days in advance.

Scan to apply for a permit or visit bit.ly/cascadetwpburnpermit

As the season changes, residents are encouraged to take advantage of Cascade's spring cleaning programs.

Cleanup Day is Saturday, May 3

AVAILABLE TO CASCADE TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS ONLY

8 am–12 pm | Ada Bible Church | 8899 Cascade Road SE

Gates close at noon, so please arrive early. Residents should enter the Ada Bible Church parking lot off Cascade Road and exit on Quiggle Road. Follow signage on site.

This event is for nonhazardous household waste only.

Proof of Cascade Township residency is required. (ID or bill)

No yard or hazardous waste will be accepted.

ITEMS ACCEPTED:

- Appliances (*refrigerators, dryers, microwaves*)
- Electronics (*TVs, computers, CD players, etc.*)
- Paint (*opened and dried*)
- Paper documents for shredding
- Scrap metal

ITEMS NOT ACCEPTED:

- Yard waste
- Batteries (*household, car, etc.*)
- Tires
- Hazardous waste (*pesticides, engine oil*)

Arrowaste Services will be on-site to collect general trash and junk, large appliances and scrap metal.

Valley City Electronic Recycling will be on-site for computers, televisions, small appliances, cell phones, and other electronics.

Shred-It will be on-site to securely destroy and recycle paper documents.

For more information on hazardous waste disposal, please visit www.reimaginetrash.org.

All services are subject to availability, so be sure to visit cascadetwp.com or call the Township Office at 616-949-1500 for up-to-date information.

ISO Rating for Cascade Township Improves



What This Means for You

The latest Insurance Services Office (ISO) inspection results are in, and Cascade Township's **fire protection rating has improved**. Effective April 1, 2025, the Township's split rating of 04/10 will be replaced with a 03/10, in recognition of multiple improvements to the Township's fire and emergency services.

WHAT LED TO THE IMPROVED RATING?

Key improvements include the addition of a Deputy Fire Chief and a Fire Inspector, increased firefighter training, and enhancements in policies and procedures. Cascade Fire also strengthened mutual aid agreements with neighboring fire departments and demonstrated an improved ability to quickly shuttle water to areas lacking fire hydrants.

Upgraded software, live fire training, officer development programs, and an expanded municipal water supply also helped improve the rating. These improvements help enhance overall fire protection, benefiting both residents and businesses.

HOW DOES THIS IMPACT INSURANCE RATES?

Insurance companies use ISO ratings to determine premiums, and a better rating may result in lower insurance costs. However, reductions are not automatic, so residents are encouraged to contact their insurance providers after April 1 to see if they qualify for a lower rate.

WHAT DO THE NUMBERS MEAN?

The new Class 3 rating applies to 95% of the Township, reflecting fire protection and emergency response improvements. A Class 10 rating remains for two small areas in the southeast portion of the Township that are more than five road miles from a fire station.

WHEN IS THE NEXT ISO INSPECTION?

Cascade Township is scheduled for its next ISO evaluation in Fall 2029. These inspections occur approximately every five years and assess fire department operations, emergency communication systems, and water supply.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR CASCADE TOWNSHIP?

Looking ahead, Cascade Township will continue making improvements to further enhance fire protection. Future initiatives may include adding a third fire station, increasing staffing levels, maintaining reserve apparatus, and expanding municipal water supply connections.

"The improved ISO score was possible because of the continued support from Cascade residents, including their renewal of the fire millage last fall. Cascade really is a unique community in that way. The entire department takes great pride in providing top notch protection to all of our residents." said Fire Chief Adam Majors.





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Cascade Charter Township

5920 Tahoe Drive SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
616-949-1500
cascadetwp.com

Township Office Hours

Monday through Thursday: 7 am–4 pm
Friday: 8 am–12 pm

**FREE
FAMILY
EVENT**

Easter

EGG HUNT

APRIL 19

STARTS AT 10 AM

- **CASCADE REC PARK**
- **3810 Thornapple River Dr. SE**
- **Grand Rapids, MI 49546**

HOP ON OVER TO CASCADETWP.COM FOR FULL DETAILS

