

Cascade Connections



Winter 2005

A Newsletter from Cascade Charter Township

Office Hours
Monday
through Friday
8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Department phone numbers:

- Manager 949-1500
- Clerk 949-1508
- Treasurer 949-6944
- Assessing 949-6176
- Planning 949-0224
- Building / Inspections 949-3765
- Fire 949-1320
- Sheriff 336-3113



Buttrick Station – Construction is complete and, as of January 24, is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Please watch our website and the newsletter for more information on an open house this spring.

A GENEROUS HEART

This past holiday season, Cascade Township employees along with the Firefighter's Association were able to purchase needed items for the St. John's Home Kids First Program. Through the generosity of our employee's donations, approximately \$900.00 was collected to purchase holiday gifts for the children. The Kids First Program is an emergency shelter for Kent County children from birth through age 17 who are unable to remain in their own homes due to suspected abuse and neglect.

Our holiday shoppers took advantage of holiday discounts and a number of items on the Kids First Program wish list, not only for the children, but also for the home, were purchased. The Kids First Program asked for games, books, art supplies, movie gift certificates, hair dryers, curling irons, clothing items and toys for the children, as well as a couple of items for the house, such as a VCR, arts and crafts supplies, a label maker, etc.

It was a wonderful feeling bringing joy to the faces and hearts of those who really need the extra help. We thank everyone involved for their generosity.





Cascade



FROM THE DESK OF YOUR ASSESSOR

Assessment Change Notices will be mailed on or before February 25, 2005.

If you are a new homeowner and do not receive your notice by March 1st, please call our office. Registration of deeds and taxpayer name changes at the county level can take up to eight weeks.

In addition to change of assessment, the notice will indicate:

- if there was a transfer of ownership in 2004;
- if there is a Principal Residence Exemption (formerly known as homestead exemption) on your property for 2005.

The Board of Review will hear assessment appeals on March 14 and 15, 2005.

- Appointments will be made beginning on February 28. An appeal application and instructions will be mailed to you when you make an appointment.
- Sales data and comparative information will be available in the Assessor's Office and in the Cascade Township Library beginning February 28.
- Letter appeals are acceptable if you are unable to attend a Board of Review hearing. Four copies of your letter and supporting documents must be received no later than March 15, 2005. Please send them to:

Cascade Township Board of Review
2865 Thornhills Ave. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

- An appeal to the Board of Review, either in person or by letter, is a prerequisite for an appeal to the Michigan Tax Tribunal.

PROPOSAL A Reminders...

Property Transfer Affidavits must be filed with the assessor for any transfer of ownership that occurred in 2004.

Principal Residence (Homestead) Exemptions ...

Filing deadline for new exemptions is May 1, 2005. Exemptions in effect January 1, 2005, stay in effect for the calendar year.

You must rescind your exemption within 90 days of the date you no longer own or occupy the property as your principal residence. Exemptions expire on December 31st of the year you move out.

Taxable Value Cap ...

It is the taxable value that is capped by Proposal A – not the assessed value. The taxable value is used to calculate your taxes and is capped at 5% or rate of inflation unless there was a transfer of ownership in 2004, any new construction, field work, reappraisal changes or any other omitted real property. If there was a transfer of ownership on your property in 2004, your assessed value and taxable value will be the same in 2005 because the taxable value was uncapped.

2.3% is the inflation rate established by the State for 2005.

A special note to those who have purchased property in Cascade Township during the last year ... Please be aware that Proposal A does not authorize the assessor to automatically set the assessed value of a property which has sold at one half of the sale price. An individual sale price may or may not be a good indicator of the true cash value of the property for a variety of reasons. Section 27(5) of the General Property Tax Act states that "the purchase price paid in a transfer of property is not the presumptive true cash value of the property transferred."

Did you know?

- Annual changes of assessment are based on sales in the neighborhood. We have at least 75 sales neighborhoods in Cascade. Your neighborhood rarely consists of just the homes on your street.
- Your taxable value can never exceed your assessed value.
- The May 1st filing deadline for Principal Residence Exemptions applies to new applications only. You do not need to reapply each year.
- The assessor is not permitted by State Law to set your new assessment at one half of your purchase price.
- It is your responsibility as a taxpayer to review your property record card periodically to be sure you agree with all the information that is currently of record.
- The assessing staff is available Monday thru Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Feel free to come in or call 949-6176 if you have any questions on your property. The assessing system is quite complex, and we are always willing to help our taxpayers understand how the system works.

BOARD OF REVIEW MEMBERS

Barbara Manus Averil
Phyllis Daniels Gillie
Bruce Poppen

Connections

Publication Notes.....
2865 Thornhills Ave. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
(616) 949-1500
www.cascadetwp.com

Township Board
Michael R. Julien, Supervisor
Ron Goodyke, Clerk
Mary J. Carpenter, Treasurer
Robert Beahan, Trustee
Brian Currier, Trustee
Sandra Frost Parrish, Trustee
Jim Koessel, Trustee

Zoning Board of Appeals
Rob Beahan
Jack Lewis
Mel Casey
Gary Crawley
Jack Neal
Richard Vaughn
Eric Richards

Planning Commission
Fred Goldberg
Jim Koessel
Diane Richards
Jack Lewis
Lorissa MacAllister
Brian Logue
Tom McDonald
Claude Robinson
Gary Postma

Community Foundation
Claude Robinson
Susan Roeder
Jack Lewis
Mary Carpenter
Sandra Frost Parrish
Pat Vredevoogd
Michael Julien
Rob Beahan
Carl Kerekes
Bill Green
Michelle Bottrall

ATTENTION NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

The Township would appreciate your most up to date contact list of your association officers. We use these lists to relay information that may be of specific interest to your neighborhood. We also share these lists with our sheriff deputies at the East Precinct. Please send your list to Jay Cravens at 2865 Thornhills Avenue SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546 or jcravens@cascadetwp.com.

The Township will hold its annual meeting with neighborhood association officers on Tuesday, March 29, 2005. The meeting will be held at the Township Museum Building, located at 2839 Thornapple River Drive SE at 7:00 p.m. More details regarding this meeting will be sent out to association officers as this date approaches.

ATTENTION: DOG OWNERS

Please remember that despite these wintry conditions, there is an ordinance regarding leashes and cleaning up after your dog. The ordinance states that all dogs on public or private property other than their own shall be controlled and on a leash not exceeding twenty (20) feet in length at all times. It goes on to state that any person shall not permit a dog to commit a nuisance within the Township by defecating upon any public or private property without the consent of the owner or person in lawful occupation of such property. Remember to clean up after your dog. These ordinance violations are a misdemeanor and could result in a fine. If you would like to read this ordinance in its entirety, feel free to visit our website at www.cascadetwp.com.

PLAN AHEAD!

Michigan Public Act 357 of 2004 changed the collection schedule for the County General Operating Property Tax collection.

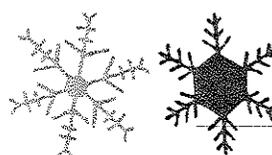
Beginning with the 2005 summer tax levy, one-third of the County operating property tax levy will be collected as a summer tax. In 2006, two-thirds of the operating tax levy will be collected in the summer. In 2007 (and thereafter), the entire operating tax levy will be collected in the summer. Winter tax bills will be reduced each year by the same amount.

CHANGES COMING IN YOUR SUMMER TAX BILL!

The tax bill you receive in July 2005 will be increased by at least one-third of the amount of County operating tax as shown on this bill. The tax bill you receive in December 2005 will be reduced by this amount. The exact amount of change may vary due to your assessment or a voted tax levy.

This shift is a result of a change in law by the State Legislature, and not by action of the County Board of Commissioners or your local city, village or township.

For more information on the law or to obtain a copy, visit www.accesskent.com and click on the link to the State of Michigan Legislature change to the General Property Tax Act.



Cascade



SUPERVISOR'S MESSAGE



Promises Made, Promises Kept—2004

Dear Fellow Cascade Resident:

Goals set, goals worked, goals made. Most of us deal with goals in our work lives, for our families and in our community involvement. Your community's government does the same. Each year your Township Board renews its commitment to good government with a set of goals to serve our community's needs. I am happy to report that we saw success in 2004.

Propose and Pass a Millage to Continue 24/7 Fire Department Protection in the Future

Done. With the help of an active and selfless citizens committee, personal support from our firefighters and broad-based support in our community, a 0.58 mill increase was approved by over 1300 votes to not only continue 24-hour fire protection from our Main Fire Station on Thornhills, but to add it from Buttrick Station as well. As promised during the millage campaign, we have hired 6 new firefighters and Buttrick Station is now operational 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. This will greatly decrease response times to the eastern half of our community. Another part of the millage is to pay for a tanker truck, which has been ordered and will arrive in the fall. Thank you for your support of our Fire Department.

Monitor Kent District Library Events to Determine Whether to Proceed with an Expansion of the Cascade Public Library and Complete Construction Plans If Needed

Plans done—construction begins 2005. The District Library passed a 10-year renewal of its operating millage during 2004. With long term financial stability of the District Library system finally in place, your community can now look at constructing a much-needed community learning center at the Cascade Public Library. An active citizens committee has worked with the Township's engineers to create construction plans for the library addition. The new learning center will be used for children's programs, authors' workshops, community group meetings, etc. Best of all, it will be constructed by a combination of existing dedicated library fund revenues and charitable contributions without (yes, without) any new taxes.

Complete the Sale of the 2501 Thornapple Drive Property

Done. This home, dam, pond and historical cabin were purchased by our Pedestrian Pathways Dedicated Fund as part of right of way acquisition for the Thornapple River Drive pathway, with the intention of selling the property when the pathway was completed. In June, 2004 we successfully completed the sale of the property with an agreement by the purchaser to maintain the dam and pond and restore the historical cabin.

Complete the Cascade Transmission Water Main Crossing Under the Thornapple River

Done! I have added the exclamation point because this was the most difficult public works project we have tried in Cascade and successful completion of it is a very happy success for our community. Grave construction problems caused the first drilling under the Thornapple to be abandoned in 1999. With new engineers and a new contractor, the drilling and pulling of pipe under the river was successful, and since June, 2004 the water pressure problems on the east side of the Thornapple have been eliminated.

Expand Communication Opportunities to Residents and Neighborhood Associations

Done. Our Township Manager, Jay Cravens, has met with nearly all the neighborhood associations in what will become annual meetings. Secondly, we have continually expanded the amount of information available at www.cascadetwp.com. This includes township board, planning commission and other agenda packets and minutes. Finally, in late 2004 we took advantage of an Aquinas College program designed to foster communications between local governments and their citizens. The first such "National Issues Forum" meeting will be held on February 3.

Study the Feasibility of Installing Signs at Significant Entry Points to Cascade

Done (and in process). The sign locations have been determined and appropriate government approvals have been obtained. Four locations have been determined (Cascade Rd at both east and west boundaries, 60th Street near M-6, and 28th St near Patterson). The next step is for the township board to approve the specific sign design early this year.

Encourage the Michigan Dept of Transportation and the Kent County Road Commission to Support the Extension of M-50 along Snow Avenue from I-96 to M-21

Ongoing. Our region needs a major north-south artery to support the growth that continues to take place in Ada, Cascade and Lowell townships. We also need another freeway interchange on I-96 between the Alden Nash Ave/Lowell exit and 28th St.

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This proposal includes both. During the year we met with MDOT officials to urge their support of this important initiative. Due to MDOT's recent large expenditures for the Southbelt freeway, they are not interested in supporting additional new road construction in Kent County at the present time.

We are disappointed, of course, but the Southbelt itself took 20+ years and we first proposed the 36th Street extension in 1993 and after much planning it will open to traffic later this year. The old saying that good things take time is especially true in new road construction. We will continue the effort for the new freeway interchange and connection of M-50 to M-21.

Complete the Camelback Bridge/Thornapple River Drive Pedestrian Pathway. Design and Install Landscaping for the New Causeway

Done. This final phase of our award-winning pathway is complete. To mark this successful cooperative project with the Kent County Road Commission, we held a joint ribbon-cutting ceremony on November 9. A special thank you is in order to the Thornapple River Association for their gift for landscaping the area. Additional landscaping will be installed in the Spring.

Success usually comes from team effort, which is true in government too. The Cascade team is led by Township Manager Jay Cravens and on behalf of our community I would like to thank all of the township staff for a successful year serving our community. I would also like to thank former Deputy Clerk Jeanie Neve, who was editor of this newsletter for several years, who left Cascade to become Clerk for the Village of Douglas. I would like to offer a special thank you to three recently-retired township board members who were instrumental in the success of the board in 2004 and the years before. Thank you Mickie Kleinheksel, Bob Timmons and Dick Jones for the very fine job you did for Cascade.

Best wishes for a happy and prosperous 2005.

Michael R. Julien

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW CLERK AND DEPUTY CLERK

Following the November election, Ron Goodyke was sworn in as Clerk of Cascade Charter Township. This position follows a thirty-four year career as a high school teacher, a camp director at two resident camps for children and a six year stint as a territory manager for a national school supply company. His involvement with Cascade Government began with two terms as Planning Commissioner and two terms as an elected Trustee. Ron enjoys swimming, jogging and is often seen biking our recreational trails on a tandem with his wife of forty-two years, Sherry. They have four grown children and two grandsons, with a third baby due soon. Ron anticipates the challenge of his new position and looks forward to keeping the Clerk's Office one which will be attentive to the needs of the community, and anticipates continually finding ways to make Cascade the best community for individuals, families, and business.

Denise M Biegalle was hired October 18, 2004 as Deputy Clerk. Denise comes to this position with a wealth of valuable experience from her work as Deputy Clerk for the City of Rockford for 13 years to Human Resource Director for a local company. She was elected and served on the Rockford City Council for twelve years. Denise and her husband, Jeff, can be found relaxing on the golf course. They have three grown children. Cascade Township is fortunate to have this dedicated, hardworking, talented Deputy Clerk.

HAVA

The Help America Vote Act resulted in legislation early in 2004 which requires the consolidation of elections. The goal of this legislation is to eliminate confusion as to where voters go to vote. The result is now all elections, including school elections, are administered by the Clerk in that municipality. For the voter it means having the same polling place for every election. The legislation takes effect immediately. Cascade Township's first election date under this new procedure begins with the school election on May 3rd. There are no precinct changes in Cascade Township; the place you voted in the general and primary election is where you now also will vote on school issues.

Within Cascade Township there are three school districts: Forest Hills, Lowell, and Caledonia. Ballots will be prepared and poll workers will be trained so that you can vote at the same precinct polling place for the school issues which affect you.

All registered voters will receive new voter registration cards indicating the precinct and polling place for all future elections. You are welcome to call the Clerk's Office or stop in if you have questions or concerns.



CASCADE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

You can help preserve the Heritage of Cascade.

A membership in the Cascade Historical Society is more than a great idea. When you purchase a membership, or purchase a gift membership for someone you know, you are also giving an important gift to the Community. With your membership, you help support the CASCADE HISTORICAL SOCIETY as well as a variety of projects aimed at preserving a rich and lasting heritage.

In addition, you help ensure that the past is kept alive and that future residents of the Cascade Community can experience the unique continuity that can be found in Cascade.

If you are looking to show your support and help preserve the rich heritage of the Cascade Community, you can choose from Senior, Student, Individual, or Family Memberships. We also have Friends, Business, and Corporate Membership levels.

Cascade Historical Society is dedicated to ensure that present and future generations will not only know the significance of traditions of the area, but also will learn from the past and recognize the need to preserve the historical heritage which has been bestowed upon them.

CASCADE HISTORICAL SOCIETY meets at 10:00 a.m. on the 1st Thursday of each month at 2839 Thornapple River Drive.

PLEASE SUPPORT US BY BECOMING A MEMBER OR GIVING A GIFT MEMBERSHIP.

NAME _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone (Home) _____ (Business) _____

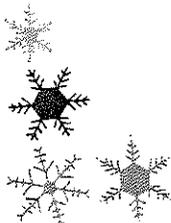
Annual Membership

Corporate	\$100	Business	\$50	Friends	\$25	Family	\$15
Individual	\$10	Student	\$5	Senior	\$5		

Mail your application to:
CASCADE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2865 Thornhills Ave. SE
Grand Rapids MI 49546

Make checks payable to:
CASCADE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Please use separate piece of paper
for additional names.



Connections

LAST PRECINCT NEWS

It has been brought to my attention that there have been many solicitors in Cascade Township over the past several months. This is not only a problem for our township, but for most in the Kent County area.

All solicitors in Cascade Township are required to register with the Township and are issued identification badges. If a solicitor comes to your residence, ask to see their identification badge from the township. If they are not able to produce one, please contact the Kent County Sheriff's Department dispatch at 632-6357. Please try to provide our dispatchers with a description of the subject, a description of a vehicle (if driving), and which direction they are traveling. If the subjects are traveling by car, please try to obtain a license plate number. This will help the responding officers contact them if they are not able to be located in your area.

There have been several instances of door to door meat sales persons. The majority of these people are legitimate, but do not have permits. However, there have been a few of these

persons in the south end of Kent County that are not actually solicitors, but they are looking for homes to break into. All of the people I have come into contact with in Cascade Township are solicitors, although are not necessarily registered and have not been provided photo identification badges from the Township.

If you have ongoing problems with one person or group of people, please feel free to contact me with any questions or information you might have.

Deputy Ryan Coil
East Precinct Community Services
632-6435
Ryan.Coil@kentcounty.org

FIRE PROTECTION UPDATE

In August 2004 Cascade Township residents voted overwhelmingly to increase fire protection. Since that time, the fire department has been busy working to ensure that the promises made are being fulfilled. Here are updates on our progress:

- Complete construction of Station 2: The interior of the station has been completed, and is furnished and now staffed with full-time fire coverage. All township residents will be invited to an open house on May 14th; watch the newsletter for more details.
- New medical unit: The new medical unit has been ordered and will be delivered by March 30.
- Tanker truck: The details are being finalized with plans to order the truck by January 26. Due to the complexities of this truck it will take the manufacturer a full 9 months to complete the truck from the time we place the order. We expect delivery by October 30.
- Fulltime firefighters: Offers have been made to six individuals for our full-time firefighter positions. The new firefighters began working the week of January 24th.

We are proud to serve Cascade Township, and hope that you will continue to be proud of the work we do for you. If you ever have any questions about fire service in our community, please contact Chief John Sigg at 616.949.1320.





Cascade Connections

LIFESTORY WRITING WORKSHOPS

The Cascade Township Historical Society is sponsoring a Lifestory Writing Workshop, facilitated by Cascade resident Pam Daugavietis, to be held Thursday, March 10, 2005 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The workshop will be held at the Cascade Museum and are open to the public. In lieu of a workshop fee, a free-will offering will support the Cascade Library history room addition.

No reservations are necessary, but participants are asked to arrive on time so the workshop can begin promptly at 7:00 p.m. Please bring a spiral-bound, three-ring notebook, 10.5 x 8.5 inches in size and a good writing pen.

The Workshop will begin with a brief review of materials covered from the last workshop; how to go about doing research, how to create an outline of your lifestory and how to organize your materials for the actual lifestory writing.

On March 10 we will cover the basics of good story writing. You do not need to be a writer or have writing

experience to participate in this workshop. All that is required is a desire to preserve the stories of your life for your own enjoyment today or for future generations.

Pam Daugavietis is a free-lance writer for the Blodgett Butterworth Health Care Foundation and the DeVos Children's Hospital Foundation and is a certified Turning Memories Into Memoirs® workshop leader, editor and coach. She is a graduate of The Ohio State University of Journalism and is a member of the Association of Personal Historians.

Cascade Charter Township

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