

# Cascade Connections



Winter 2008

A Newsletter from Cascade Charter Township

## SUPERVISOR'S MESSAGE

### Promises Made, Promises Kept 2007

January, 2008

Dear Fellow Members of the Cascade Community:

Each year your Township Board sets goals for your community's government. And each year I report on our achievement of those goals. But, first, special recognition of a member of our community's government is warranted.

When a vacancy occurred in our township manager position early in the year, trustee Rob Beahan interrupted his business to serve as our interim township manager. When I and Rob's other colleagues on our township board extended the search process from three months to six, Rob continued to serve, and serve very well, as our interim manager. Rob Beahan's six months of special service to our community reflects his love for our community that is obvious to all who know him. Thank you, Rob, for being there when your community needed you.

#### **1. Hold semi-annual "Meet Your Township Board" open houses to encourage open dialog between Board members and residents regarding Township issues.**

Partially done. The first open house was held in October and the second open house will be scheduled for February or early March.

#### **2. Determine the skills and qualifications we are seeking in a new Township manager and develop a process for interviewing and selection of candidates. Hire a new Township manager by July 1.**

Done. New Township Manager Bill Cousins was introduced to our community at the October open house with the board.

#### **3. Continue to explore and develop opportunities for cooperative services with other area communities and consider outsourcing of certain Township functions and responsibilities where appropriate.**

In process. We met throughout the spring and summer with representatives from Grand Rapids Township and Ada Township to discuss the service improvements and efficiencies that could be gained by an operational merger of the three townships' fire departments. Since GR Township and Cascade provide 24/7 fire protection and Ada Township does not, the fire department merger talks are on hiatus while Ada considers the benefits, costs and affordability of 24/7 fire protection.

We continue our long-standing practice of providing building inspection services to some seven different customer communities. We have outsourced our fire inspection service to Grand Rapids Township. We also continue to cooperate with Ada and Grand Rapids townships to jointly fund the East Precinct sheriffs department. These cooperative efforts reduce the cost of providing basic governmental services in Cascade and the other communities.

...Continued on Page 2



Mike Julien

## OFFICE HOURS

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

### Department Phone Numbers:

Assessing:

949-6176

Building / Inspections:

949-3765

Clerk:

949-1508

Fire:

949-1320

Manager:

949-1500

Planning:

949-0224

Treasurer:

949-6944

Sheriff:

336-3113





# Cascade

#### **4. Implement the recommendations of the Classification, Compensation, & Staffing Study regarding job titles, descriptions and salary and develop a Board process for an annual review of the Township Manager's performance.**

Done. Our first evaluation of new Township Manager Bill Cousins will be done as of July 1.

#### **5. Assess the need for additional bus service lines in Cascade.**

Done in part and also deferred to 2008—the Township Board studied with The Rapid the expected ridership and cost of extending their 28th Street bus line to Cascade Road. The board determined that given expected levels of ridership to Cascade Road the added cost was not yet warranted. The Grand Valley Metro Council has proposed a 2008 cooperative study of demand for mass transit county-wide. Federal and state grants are being sought for this study. To the extent necessary, we will consider participation to see if bus lines beyond the current 33rd/36th Street service to our industrial area are needed.

We continue The Rapid's GOBUS door-to-door service in Cascade for senior citizens (age 65+) and disabled persons.

#### **6. Review and determine the feasibility of efficiently expanding water and sewer within the township.**

Done—the Water and Sewer Committee of the township board studied the need, the costs and the benefits of additional water and sewer lines. We concluded that due to the construction slowdown no additional major water or sewer lines will be constructed for at least several years. At this time the only project on the long term plan is another water line river crossing in about 2015.

We will continue to work with the residents of individual neighborhoods or streets that wish to extend water or sewer service down their street(s) through the special assessment process.

#### **7. Investigate the placement of on-site metal and glass recycling programs at both the Buttrick and Thornhills sites.**

Done. We learned that recycling containers could be placed at either site at the township's expense and that it would further be our expense to transport the materials to a collection site near downtown Grand Rapids. Because of the cost of providing this service and because private sector waste haulers already provide curbside recycling service, we chose not to go forward with on-site recycling at either township facility.

#### **8. Investigate a health and wellness initiative for all township employees.**

Deferred to 2008. In 2007 we made a transition to a Health Savings Account plan for our township employees with a reduction in the overall cost of our health care plans.

#### **9. Continue to explore options to fund new pathways throughout the township and potential connection to other pathway systems.**

Done. Planning was completed for a sidewalk on 28th Street which will be financed by our Downtown Development Authority and constructed summer, 2008. In addition, due to the long-awaited expansion of Ada's pathway system, our Thornapple River Drive and Buttrick Avenue pathways now connect to the Ada Township pathways system. Finally, Township Clerk Ron Goodyke has been engaged with the West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition in planning for the eventual connection of our pathway system to the Fred Meijer West Michigan Trailways system which runs through some eight counties.

#### **10. Explore the placement of unobtrusive pedestrian scale lighting for limited sections of our pathway system.**

No action was taken on this goal. The township board will meet soon to discuss setting the 2008 goals and this will again be considered.

#### **11. Continue to explore options for wireless Internet access within the Township.**

This goal, a carryover from 2006, has been dropped. Your township board determined that with increasing competition for high speed internet service, this service is best provided by the private sector.

#### **12. Successfully complete the Burton Street sewer line.**

Done. Water and sewer lines are never easy, and this one was certainly no exception. As was well-reported by the media, an engineering error caused the first six weeks of pipe laid to be dug up and reinstalled somewhat deeper. I am very happy to report that the surface construction was still completed by its deadline of December 1 and the line will be activated in the spring when the repaving of Burton Street is completed.

I am also happy to report that the cost of the rework was 100% paid by the engineering firm and its insurance company, at no cost to the township government or Cascade residents. But, the inconvenience to the Burton Street residents at the east end of the project was considerable. I thank them for their cooperation and sacrifice.

I would like to thank the entire Cascade team, led during the year by former township manager Jay Cravens, interim manager Rob Beahan and new township manager Bill Cousins, for the great job they did, again, for our community. I would also like to thank all my colleagues on the township board who worked very cooperatively together to find a new township manager and to achieve success in reaching our goals for the year.

Best wishes for a prosperous and fun 2008. I hope to see many of you at the summer concerts at Leslie E, Tassell Park or at our fun-filled 4th of July parade and celebration.

**Michael R. Julien**



# Connections

## From the desk of your Assessor...

**Assessment Change Notices** will be mailed on or before February 25, 2008. 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 2007;
- if there is a Principal Residence Exemption (formerly known as homestead exemption) on your property for 2008.

**Board of Review** will hear assessment appeals on March 10 and 11, 2008.

- 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 10, 2008. 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 2007.

### Principal Residence (Homestead) Exemptions...

**Filing deadline** for new exemptions is May 1, 2008. Exemptions in effect January 1, 2008, stay in effect for the calendar year.

You must rescind your exemption within 90 days of the date you no longer either 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 2007, any new construction, field work, reappraisal changes or any other omitted real property. If there was a transfer of ownership on your property in 2007, your assessed value and taxable value will be the same in 2008 because the taxable value was uncapped.

**2.3% is the inflation rate established by the State for 2008.**

**A special note those who have purchased property in Cascade Township during the last year...** 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.
- › 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.
- › **The assessor is not permitted by State Law to automatically set your new assessment at one half of your purchase price.**

## BOARD OF REVIEW MEMBERS

Barbara Manus Averil  
John Meyer  
Sara Fazio





# Cascade

## Election News

### Precinct Location Change

Clerk Ron Goodyke announces a change in location for those voters in Precinct 1 who currently vote at the **Forest Hills Public School Administration Building**. Since this location is no longer large enough to meet our needs, those voters will vote in the Family Life Center at the **Cascade Fellowship Church**, located at 6655 Cascade Road SE. beginning with the May 2008 School Election. The church is located around the corner from the FHPS Administration Building. There will be signs posted to direct voters to the correct location (Precinct 7 currently votes in the upper level). You can expect new registration cards prior to the May 6 School Election. This is a permanent change for Precinct 1 voters.

### Voter Cards and Registration

The National Voter Registration Act also allows voter registration at any of the following locations:

- (1) **Secretary of State Branch Office**
- (2) **Secretary of State "Renewal by Mail" when you renew your driver license**
- (3) **Cascade Township Office or the Kent County Office**
- (4) **State or federal mail-in registration form**
- (5) **Michigan Department of Social Services, which administer benefits for ADFC, Medicaid, and Food Stamp programs. Also county health department offices, which administer benefits for the Women, Infants and Children program (WIC)**
- (6) **Armed Forces Recruitment offices**
- (7) **Federal Post Card Application procedure. (FPCA)**
- (8) **Direct delivery of registration applications by persons associated with voter registration drives. Usually they use the state and federal registration forms developed to implement the Mail Registration Program**

### Vote May 6

The next date for an election is May 6. The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) also requires consolidation of elections, resulting in no separate school elections. Voters will consistently use the same polling place for all elections-- you will continue to vote in the same place you voted since 2005. **The only exception is the permanent change of location for Precinct 1 from the Forest School Administration Building to the Cascade Fellowship Church.** The last day to register to vote in the May 6 election is **April 7**.

### August 5 Primary Election

The August Primary Election will be held on **August 5**. Of local interest in this election will be the decision as to who will be on the ballot in November for the Cascade Township Board, including the Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer and four Trustees. The filing deadline for Nominating

Petitions/filing fees and Affidavits of Identity is **May 13**. There will be candidates for some State offices and perhaps other matters to be decided. The last day to register for the August Primary is July 7.

### November 4 General Election

This is the Presidential election. We expect a large turnout and an extensive Ballot. The last day to register to vote for this election is October 6.

### I.D. Requirement

Please remember that beginning in 2008 the requirement for picture identification must be enforced by precinct workers. If you do not have a piece of current I.D. with your picture, you will be required to fill out an affidavit, which we will provide at the precinct, attesting to your identity before you can vote.

### January 15 Presidential Primary

#### Thank you Poll Workers, Voters and Precinct Locations

The Presidential Primary election held on January 15 brought a great turnout from Cascade residents. It was good to see that so many of us participated in an election that was confusing and controversial.

To the faithful poll workers, we again send our hearty thanks for a job well done. With two separate ballots, new requirements for I.D. checks, and a lot of questions by voters, the poll workers performed exceptionally well. Thank you all for keeping your good humor during a 15 hour day!

To the places who donate their space to the community for the two day period from set-up on Monday through tear down late Tuesday, we also say thank you. The polling places who generously host voters are Thornapple Evangelical Covenant Church, Cascade Christian Church, Thornapple Community Reformed Church, Cascade Fellowship Church, Forest Hills Public School Administration Building and the Wisner Center at the Cascade Library. We know it is an imposition and really appreciate the friendly manner you welcome us. Thank you.

To the conscientious voters who came out to cast a ballot, we are always proud to see our community turnout well above the county average. That speaks volumes about the kind of community we enjoy here in Cascade.

We voted with the County and State trend on the Republican slate giving Romney 1447 votes while McCain got 1085 and Huckabee 368. On the Democratic ticket, we reversed the County and State trend by giving Clinton 319 votes to Uncommitted's 330.

### Poll Workers Needed

Due to the anticipated large turnout for the August Primary and the November General Elections, Cascade Township is looking for persons interested in working as poll workers at these elections. Please contact Ron Goodyke, Clerk or Denise Biegalle, Deputy Clerk at 949-1508 for more information.

# Connections

## Cascade Historical Museum

The quaint little white building on the northwest corner of Thornapple River Drive and Cascade Road is the Cascade Historical Museum. This building was built in 1898 as the first Township Hall. It was furnished with straight-backed benches and heated by two stoves, which were piped through a single chimney.

The Museum building has served as a variety of uses throughout the years. From 1973 to 1981 it was used as Cascade's Branch of the Kent County Library. When the library moved to the township complex on Thornhills Avenue it was used as the Cascade Historical Museum for period of time until the Township needed the building to hold public meetings. In 2007, when the Wisner Center was built the Township meetings were moved to that location.

Many other uses throughout the years range from voting precinct, teen center, ice cream social location, garage sales, and the Thornapple River Artists group used the building as their display hall for a while.

In 1996, the Michigan Historical Commission listed this building on the Michigan Register of Historic Sites. The historical marker is located in front of the building. Also the township planted and maintains a large flower garden adjacent to the building.

Today the building is used as the meeting place for the Cascade Historical Society and other township small groups. One of this year projects for the Historical Society is to plan displays and exhibits for the education and enjoyment of our community in this building. If you are interested in helping with this project please contact Mary J Carpenter at 949-6944 or come to the CHS meeting the first Thursday of every month at 10 am.

After many years of service this building is truly a part of Cascade Township history and hopefully it will continue to be recognized as the center of our village.



## PIONEER REMEMBRANCE

I was ten years old in 1926 when my parents moved from Grand Rapids to a farm (now Cascade Meijer) on 28th Street. One noticeable landmark that was a half mile from our place and obvious to me and all who traveled Laraway Road (east 28th Street), down its dusty gravel and washboard, teeth jarring, auto rattling surface, was this old and neglected pioneer cemetery about two miles west of the village of Cascade.

According to an old 1876 township map, on which the cemetery is marked by a small cross, it was located at that time on the large 160 acre L. Cook farm. His place was bounded on the north by Burton; on the west by Patterson Avenue; on the east by neighbor M. Howe's sandy 60 acres; and on the south by Laraway Road (east 28th Street). Close by to the north and west - still there in the 1920's - was a wooded swamp which cuts off easy access to the rest of Cook's cultivated fields. This isolated the far southeast corner of his farm, a sandy knoll, making it an ideal resting place for deceased family members or neighbors.

The graveyard was a small parcel of 6/10ths of an acre ascending a few feet higher than the adjacent roadbed and known as Cook Cemetery. Approximately 20 to 25 graves were there, but not all the stone markers.

Some of those best preserved were made from bronze rather than granite. The broken or deteriorated tombstones were mostly made of sandstone, but the wooden demarcations were long gone. Since the building of the I-96 freeway over 28th Street these have all been moved, with the iron fence, to the township cemetery south and east of Cascade village on 30th Street.

Burials at the Cook Cemetery were from 1850 to 1905. It is surprising how many pioneers died young.

*Written by William H. Mulder in 1995*

Be a part and learn more about the history of Cascade by joining and donating photos, letters or other historical information to the Cascade Historical Society. For more information, please call Mary at 949-6944.

# Cascade



## Eastern Townships of Kent County Open Space Council 2008 Photography Contest and Exhibit Entry Form and Rules *“Wetlands and Water”*



The event theme “Wetlands and Water” is intended to expand public awareness and understanding of the abundant water and wetland resources found in the Eastern Townships of Kent County, and enhance public stewardship of these resources.

### CONTEST RULES

1. All images submitted must be of sites located within one of the six participating Townships of Ada, Cannon, Cascade, Grattan, Lowell and Vergennes.
2. Entries must be submitted by delivery to one of the 6 Township offices in Ada, Cannon, Cascade, Grattan, Lowell or Vergennes Township, between Monday, September 22 and Friday, September 26, 2008. Township office hours vary among the six communities, so check with the Township you select regarding the hours at that location.
3. Two completed copies of the entry form must accompany each contest entry. One copy must be taped to the back of the entry, and the other to the front. The entry form must include your signature agreeing to the terms of participation.
4. Participants may submit a maximum of three (3) entries. To be considered for use in a calendar that may be published by the Council, include a digital file of the image on a compact disk (CD). For best printing results, the image should have a resolution of 1600 x 2000 pixels or greater; 2400 x 3000 pixels is preferred. Use the maximum resolution available on your camera or scanner.
5. Entries must be in print form, with a maximum displayed image size of 16 inches by 20 inches.
6. Entries must be framed, and securely fitted with a wire for hanging. **Entries determined by the Council to be improperly or inadequately prepared for hanging during the duration of the exhibit will not be accepted.**
7. Entries may be offered for sale. Sale transactions are the sole responsibility of the buyer and seller.
8. Cash and/or merchandise prizes and certificates will be awarded to the best work in each age group. Additional awards may be established and given at the discretion of the contest judges.
9. Open Space Council members, employees and officials of the six townships and their immediate family members may submit entries, but will be ineligible for judging and prizes, other than selection of entry for display.
10. All entries will be evaluated for display and awards by a panel of qualified judges. Judging criteria will include, but not necessarily be limited to, the technical merit, artistic merit and visual impact of the image, as well as its relationship to the contest and exhibit theme – “Wetlands and Water.”
11. Prize announcements will be made at the exhibit opening and artists’ reception, to be held on Tuesday, September 30, 2008, from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm, at the Cascade Township Library’s Wisner Center, 2870 Jack Smith Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546.
12. Following the reception, the entries will be distributed for display at Township offices in each of the six participating communities, from Monday, September 29, through Friday, October 17. All entries must be permitted to be displayed through the duration of the exhibit.
13. Participants must pick up their entries between Monday, October 20 and Friday, October 24, at the Township office where the entry is displayed. Participants will be told the display and pick-up location of their entries. Township office hours vary, so be sure check office hours before picking up your entry.

These rules, entry form, Township office hours and contact information are available on the following Township web sites: [www.ada.mi.us](http://www.ada.mi.us), [www.cannontwp.org](http://www.cannontwp.org), [www.cascadetwp.com](http://www.cascadetwp.com), [home.comcast.net/~grattantownship](http://home.comcast.net/~grattantownship), [www.twp.lowell.mi.us](http://www.twp.lowell.mi.us) and [www.vergennestwp.org](http://www.vergennestwp.org)

# Connections

## Become Involved in the Comprehensive Plan Update

The Cascade Charter Township Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 1999. Almost a decade has passed since that time, and undoubtedly, the community has changed in many ways. There are new businesses and redevelopment of existing areas is also occurring. The Township has grown and is continuing to grow at a steady pace. Staying in front of the growth is necessary to ensure that it is compatible with the community's vision.

In December, the Township hired Williams & Works to update the Comprehensive Plan with guidance from Staff, the Planning Commission and the Board of Trustees. The project will involve residents, business owners, and others through different participatory activities. Those activities include an advisory committee, a community-wide survey, focus groups, visioning meetings, and public hearings. There are many opportunities for you to become involved during the 18-month process. Some key topics which will be studied in the Comprehensive Plan include: land use and zoning, industrial development, utilities, Cascade Village and Cascade Road, open space and natural resources, and transportation.

If you'd like to participate in a focus group for any of the key topics listed above, or would like to be added to the email contact list, please contact Steve Peterson, Cascade Township Planning Director at (616) 949-0224 or [speterson@cascadetwp.com](mailto:speterson@cascadetwp.com). As the project proceeds, please look for updates and opportunities for your involvement advertised in this newsletter, the Grand Rapids Press and Cadence newspapers.

### Master Plan Update Focus Group Schedule

Please join us at the Cascade Library – Wisner Center from 7:00-8:30 pm on the following dates to provide your input on the following subjects.

- Feb 21. Utilities
- March 4. Transportation
- March 19. Natural Resources/Open Space/Sustainability
- March 20. Cascade Road Development
- March 25. Cascade Village
- March 31. Infrastructure
- April 1. Commercial Office Development /28th St/ Centennial Park

CASCADE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

# MOVIE NIGHT

**Monday, February 18; 6 p.m.**  
Kent District Library—Cascade Branch—Wisner Center  
2870 Jacksmith Avenue SE

**FREE!!**



**POPCORNS  
JUICE**



**KDL**  
Kent District Library  
[www.kdl.org](http://www.kdl.org)



# Cascade Connections

## Get Involved!

Cascade Township currently has two (2) vacancies on the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission meets the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. If you are interested in serving on this commission, please send a letter explaining your interest, any municipal, planning or building experience along with your resume. Send this information to the attention of the Township Supervisor at 2865 Thornhills Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546. For more information, please contact the Township office at 949-1500.



## Cascade Charter Township

2865 Thornhills Ave SE  
Grand Rapids MI 49546  
phone: 616.949.1500  
fax: 616.949.3918  
[www.cascadetwp.com](http://www.cascadetwp.com)

## Fire Department

### Paid On Call Firefighters Needed

Cascade Township Fire Department is looking for men or women to join the fire department as paid on call firefighters. Interested people must be at least 18 years old, possess valid Michigan Drivers License with less than 4 points, high school diploma or equivalent and pass a physical agility test and department physical.

If you are interested in giving back to your community and would like to join the department, stop by the main station at 2865 Thornhills Ave. for an application or call 949-1320 for further information.

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GRAND RAPIDS MI