

MINUTES
CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MONDAY, January 6, 2025
5:30 pm
2870 Jacksmith Ave SE

ARTICLE 1. Community Planning and Development Director (CP&D Director) Andrea Hendrick called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm.

Members Present: Bruneau, Korstange, Kraemer, Rowland, Richardson

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Community Planning and Development Director (CP&D Director) Andrea Hendrick, Zoning Administrator Ryan Sennett, Legal Counsel (LC) Leslie Abdo of Foster Swift, Supervisor Grace Lesperance, Township Manager Jade Smith (via Zoom), and Planning Administrative Assistant Nick Govan.

ARTICLE 2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

ARTICLE 3. Approve the current Agenda

Member Bruneau proposed discussion of documented processes for zoning ordinance implementation and procedural process. Following brief deliberation regarding placement within existing agenda items and if the discussion could fit into other business, Member Bruneau withdrew the request.

Motion was made by Member Bruneau to approve the current agenda. Supported by Member Rowland. Motion carried 5 to 0.

ARTICLE 4. Disclose any Conflict of Interest

There were no concerns voiced.

ARTICLE 5. Approve the Minutes of the December 16, 2024 Meeting.

Commissioners provided a list of clarifications and changes that needed addressing:

1. Article 9. Revision to specify the schedule was accepted “as modified” rather than “as presented”.
2. Article 9. Inclusion of Treasurer Korstange comment stating, “The first meeting will be then at 7:00 pm on January, whatever date that is, and at that time, we’ll talk about the date or the time for the meetings.”.
3. Article 9. Inclusion of Treasurer Korstange comments The Zoning re-write will be going to a subcommittee appointed by the board and then it will come to the Planning Commission at least 30 days prior to being on our agenda and that the Planning Commission will have a full 30 days to review the zoning changes along with the current zoning.

Motion was made by Member Bruneau to approve the Minutes of the December 16, 2024 meeting with the edits provided. Supported by Member Richardson. Motion carried 5 to 0.

ARTICLE 6. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak.

Township Supervisor Lesperance initiated discussion by thanking Member Richardson for his contributions to the Commission, particularly highlighting his work on the Township's Master Plan. Supervisor Lesperance presented an overview of the planned Zoning Ordinance review process. She explained that recent Master Plan updates and Zoning Map amendments had revealed the need for a comprehensive review to align with the Township's Strategic Plan and Master Plan.

Member Bruneau expressed concerns about terminology and previous presentations of the draft zoning ordinance during its review, noting inconsistent characterizations of whether the process constituted a rewrite or more limited modifications.

Treasurer Korstange, responding to these concerns, emphasized expectations would be clearly communicated at the first subcommittee meeting. Treasurer Korstange further noted the importance of clearly marking any changes, acknowledging it would be unreasonable to expect commissioners to identify modifications through word-by-word comparison of documents during their 30-day review period.

Supervisor Lesperance outlined the planned subcommittee composition, including CP&D Director Hendrick, Mrs. Bouchard of McKenna, Township Manager Jade Smith, Trustee Scott Rissi, Treasurer Korstange, and herself.

During discussion of the subcommittee composition, Member Rowland expressed concern about adequate Planning Commission representation. He noted the Planning Commission would be the ones having to address any public concerns or discourse that arose from implementing new zoning provisions during application reviews.

Member Bruneau further noted concerns about the Zoning Board of Appeals' practices, observing that despite clear statutory criteria for variances, ZBA decisions often appeared to deviate from the prescribed formulaic process.

Legal Counsel Abdoos furnished clarification regarding statutory requirements and procedural frameworks, particularly addressing Planning Commission authorities under Michigan Planning Enabling Act. The Counsel detailed specific requirements.

In discussing the zoning subcommittee, Member Bruneau offered his resignation if beneficial while maintaining the importance of inclusive participation and shared commitment to township service.

Following discussion about adequate Planning Commission representation, Member Rowland requested that a Planning Commissioner be on the proposed subcommittee.

Motion was made by Korstange to close public hearing to close public comment. Supported by Member Bruneau. Motion carried 5 to 0.

ARTICLE 7.

Appointment of 2025 Planning Commission

Requested Action: Planning Commission to select 2025 Officers.

The Commission commenced discussion of 2025 officer appointments with Treasurer Korstange nominating Member Bruneau for the position of Secretary. Member Bruneau immediately declined the nomination, citing specific concerns regarding previous experiences with minute review processes. Member Bruneau detailed instances where advance review efforts resulted in duplicative work.

Following Secretary position discussion, Treasurer Korstange proceeded to nominate Member Rowland for the position of Chairman and Member Kraemer for Vice Chair. During ensuing deliberation, Commissioner Rowland expressed reservation regarding appointment of a newly seated commissioner to the Vice Chair position, requesting respectful and careful consideration of tenure of sitting planning commissioner experience factors in leadership roles.

Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange to appoint Member Rowland as Chair and Member Kraemer as Vice Chair. Supported by Member Kraemer.

Roll Call Vote:

Korstange: Yea

Richardson: Abstained

Bruneau: Nay

Kraemer: Yea

Rowland: Nay

Motion failed due to lack of support 2 to 2.

Motion made by Member Rowland to nominate Member Rowland as Chair and Member Bruneau as Vice Chair. Supported by Member Bruneau.

Roll Call Vote:

Korstange: Nay

Richardson: Abstained

Bruneau: Yea

Kraemer: Yea

Rowland: Yea

Motion carried 3 to 1.

In the absence of the election of a Secretary, Legal Counsel Abdo provided clarification regarding the Recording Secretary requirements. Secretarial duties may be delegated to the Recording Secretary, CP&D Director Hendrick. The Commission concluded this portion of officer elections with recording secretary duties formally designated to staff, maintaining compliance with bylaws while ensuring efficient administrative operations.

ARTICLE 8. 2025 Planning Commission Meeting Calendar

Requested Action: Approve 2025 Meeting Calendar.

Motion was made by Member Bruneau to accept proposed Planning Commission dates with the exception that September 15, 2025, be changed to September 8, 2025, so that the Planning Commission would have two meetings a month for regularity. Supported by Member Richardson.

Motion carried 5 to 0.

Treasurer Korstange initiated dialogue by advocating for 5:30 pm start time, citing personal schedule requirements beginning at 5:00 am daily. Member Bruneau expressed significant concern regarding this proposal, explaining consulting obligations with West Coast clients would preclude arrival before 7:00 pm due to time zone differentials.

Questions arose regarding the origin of the 5:30 pm time proposal, at which point Township Manager Jade Smith, participating remotely, provided historical context. Manager Smith explained that comprehensive review of meeting times across all boards and commissions had commenced approximately one year prior, emphasizing focus on volunteer availability rather than staff preference. Manager Smith noted similar evaluations conducted with the DDA and other

township bodies.

Motion was made by Member Kraemer to have the Planning Commission meetings at 5:30 pm. Supported by Treasurer Korstange.

Roll Call Vote:

Korstange: Yea

Richardson: Abstained

Bruneau: Nay

Kraemer: Yea

Rowland: Nay

Motion failed due to lack of support 2 to 2.

Motion was made by Member Rowland to have the Planning Commission meeting at 6:15 pm. Supported by Member Richardson.

Roll Call Vote:

Korstange: Nay

Richardson: Yea

Bruneau: Nay

Kraemer: Yea

Rowland: Yea

Motion carried 3 to 2.

Member Richardson made mention that looking at a start time of 6:15 pm would be confusing and look like a clerical error. More discussion ensued on meeting start time.

Motion was made by Member Richardson to have the Planning Commission meetings at 6:00 pm. Supported by Member Kraemer.

Roll Call Vote:

Korstange: Yea

Richardson: Yea

Bruneau: Nay

Kraemer: Yea

Rowland: Yea

Motion carried 4 to 1.

Member Rowland asked if the meeting times could be reviewed in the future and changed if necessary.

Legal Counsel Abdoo provided clarification regarding requirements for meeting time modifications. She emphasized necessity of proper public notice for any schedule changes and confirmed the Commission's authority to modify meeting times through proper procedural channels.

ARTICLE 9. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak.

There was no one wishing to speak.

ARTICLE 10. Other Business

Following the establishment of the 6:00 pm meeting time, Member Bruneau stated that he was going to resign due to his inability to make the meeting. He requested that a new Vice Chair be elected.

Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange to nominate Member Kraemer as Vice Chair. Supported by Richardson.

Motion carried 5 to 0.

Member Richardson initiated discussion regarding public notice requirements

for planning applications. Chairman Rowland also felt that the current 300-foot notification radius fails to adequately inform affected residents, particularly for commercial developments with broader community impact.

Legal Counsel Abdo and CP&D Director Hendrick provided clarification regarding notification requirements, specifically addressing:

1. The current 300-foot requirement represents the statutory minimum under Michigan Zoning Enabling Act
2. The township maintains authority to expand notification requirements beyond statutory minimums
3. Any established notification radius must apply uniformly regardless of municipal boundaries
4. Different radii may be established for varying application types provided clear criteria exist.
5. Changes to noticing requirements is a zoning ordinance amendment and needs to follow the amendment process.

Treasurer Korstange raised the possibility of street-based notification criteria for residential applications, particularly citing concerns about cul-de-sac configurations where proximity-based notification might not adequately serve affected residents. Legal Counsel Abdo advised that while street-based criteria could supplement radius-based requirements, they cannot replace them entirely. Also noting that this would be something that the Zoning subcommittee would address this.

Chairman Rowland requested standardized templates for Planning Commission documents. CP&D Director Hendrick agreed.

ARTICLE 11. Adjourn

Motion was made by Treasurer Korstange to adjourn. Supported by Member Bruneau, Motion carried 5 to 0. The meeting adjourned at 8:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Hendrick, Community Planning and Development Director, Recording Secretary