

Minutes
Cascade Charter Township
Parks Committee Special Meeting
Tuesday, January 17, 2022
7:30 A.M.
5920 Tahoe Dr SE

- ARTICLE 1.** Chair Wanty called the meeting to order at 8:02 A.M.
Members Present: Chair Ginny Wanty, Joe Engel, Mike Reese, and Eileen Boekestein,
Supervisor Grace Lesperance, Matt Douglas
Absent: Windy Korstange (excused)
Others Present: Planning Director Brian Hilbrands, Township Manager Ben Swayze, and
those listed on the sign-in sheet.
- ARTICLE 2.** **Welcome to New Parks Committee Member Matt Douglas.**
- ARTICLE 3.** **Approve the Current Agenda**
Motion was made by Supervisor Lesperance to approve the current agenda.
Supported by Member Douglas. Motion carried 6 to 0.
- ARTICLE 4.** **Approve the minutes of the November 15, 2022 Regular Meeting, December 6, 2022
Special Meeting, and December 27, 2022 Subcommittee Meeting**
**Member Engel recommended the correction of the spelling of Member Reese’s name
in article two and, also in article two, clarify that Member Engel was referencing a new
master plan that is specifically for Rec Park. Motion was made by Supervisor
Lesperance to approve the November 15, 2022 meeting minutes with the
aforementioned changes. Supported by Member Engel. Motion carried 6 to 0.**
**Motion was made by Member Engel to approve the December 6, 2022 meeting
minutes as written. Supported by Member Boekestein. Motion carried 6 to 0.**
**Motion was made by Member Engel to approve the December 27, 2022 meeting
minutes as written. Supported by Supervisor Lesperance. Motion carried 6 to 0.**
- ARTICLE 5.** **Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak to non-agenda items**
John Giddens, neighbor to the Wycliffe property, attended to keep up-to-date on the
property’s development.
- ARTICLE 6.** **Developing a Millage Campaign**
Sabo PR attended to present on the millage campaign they just completed in Kentwood
and made suggestions on how Cascade can run a successful parks millage campaign.
They believe nine months is an ideal timeframe to promote a millage campaign. Key
messaging tactics were highlighted including consistent messaging, driving traffic to a
millage website, and creating FAQ’s. Additionally, continuing to update the website so
residents know what the millage is being used for will enhance transparency.

There was discussion on a non-township based yes-vote campaign that elected officials can advocate for but township funds can not be used for.

Suggested tools were infographics as they are extremely helpful to simplify complex information, creation of a 'Friends of Cascade Parks' group like the library's 'Friends of Kent District Library' group, and advertisement through typical channels. This type of advertisement will include paid ads, advertisement on the Township's social media and newsletters, and press releases.

Member Engel asked if it would be better to promote the millage as funding a parks director or would it be better to hire the parks director first and use them to promote the millage. Snow-Buckner said that residents typically prefer to fund projects rather than staff. The campaign should be focused on projects and acquisitions or recreation, but it will need to match what the residents have expressed as a priority.

TM Swayze said that the next step would be choosing which voting cycles the parks, fire department, and library millages will take place during. Next, a subcommittee will look into the millage parameters including amount requested, number of years, timeline, and what the millage will be used for. The subcommittee will be Members Reese and Douglas and Supervisor Lesperance. They will make a recommendation to the full Parks Committee at the February Parks Committee meeting.

ARTICLE 7. Parks Director Job Description

Member Engel recommended moving some items around on the position description as well as rewording the 'essential functions' in number ten.

Motion was made by Member Engel to approve the Parks Director position description, with the aforementioned amendments, to the Township Board. Supported by Member Douglas. Motion carried 6 to 0.

TM Swayze recommended the committee decide who they want involved in the interviews for the Parks Director at the next meeting.

ARTICLE 8. Election of Officers

Motion was made by Supervisor Lesperance to re-elect Chair Wanty as Parks Committee Chair and Member Engel as Vice Chair and Secretary. Supported by Member Douglas. Motion carried 6 to 0.

Member Engel requested a list of committee members with their dates of appointment and expiration of terms be provided at the next meeting.

ARTICLE 9. Updates from Township Manager

TM Swayze explained that Dr. Keys has taken all of the cameras down from Burton Park and, when the students returned from winter break, they would begin compiling and analyzing the data. Once the results have been analyzed, Dr. Keys will present at a Township Board meeting.

TM Swayze and Supervisor Lesperance met with the newly elected Representative Skaggs to discuss Cascade's priorities.

Chair Wanty talked about Sparks Grants and asked Member Reese to present about potential plans at a future meeting. Grants due early in 2023 aren't solid options because the committee needs to decide what they are including in the millage first. The Spark Grants will still have two additional rounds but they are currently focused on disadvantaged communities and Cascade doesn't fit into that category.

Cascade was awarded a tree grant from Consumers Energy. The trees will be planted between the soccer field and expressway at Rec Park; planting must be completed by the end of September. Part of the funding the township requested will go to ReLeaf Michigan to help the township decide which type of trees to get, set up barriers to deer browsing, and determine their exact placement.

Member Boekestein left the meeting at 9:31 A.M.

There have been two recent smash-and-grab incidents at Rec Park so the township has purchased two more cameras to post at the park. This type of crime has been prevalent in surrounding communities recently. B&G Supervisor MacDonald is creating signs to hang at the parks that alert residents to the cameras. In the future, the township may create a security plan for all of the township parks.

Manager Swayze and Supervisor Lesperance are looking into getting nametags for the Parks Committee members and will bring information to a future meeting.

The Garlic Mustard dumpster will be permanently moved to Fire Station 2 because the new Fire Station 1 building won't have a proper space for it.

ARTICLE 10. Updates and Announcements from Chair

Oak wilt at Burton Park has been dealt with and the work was done extremely well.

Members Engel and Boekestein are working on an article for the Spring newsletter.

ARTICLE 11. Old Business

Member Reese handed out copies of the Parks plan and included the information about Wycliff Park that was not included in the packet sent to the DNR.

Planning Director Hilbrands mentioned a parcel of land that had been put up for sale. A resident left him a voicemail suggesting this plot of land be purchased to create a park.

ARTICLE 12. Any Other Business

There wasn't any other business to discuss.

ARTICLE 13. Adjournment

Motion was made by Member Douglas to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Member Reese. Motion carried 5 to 0. The meeting adjourned at 10:02 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Joe Engel, Secretary

DRAFT