

Minutes
Cascade Charter Township
Pathways Committee
Thursday, December 7, 2023
10:00 am
5920 Tahoe Dr

- ARTICLE 1.** Chair Rissi called the meeting to order at 10:02 am.
Members Present: John Driscoll, Mike Reese, Scott Rissi, Jeff Coffey, and Kris Taylor
Members Absent: Township Supervisor Grace Lesperance and Rik Brown (excused)
- Others Present: Township Engineer Aric Thorne, Parks and Recreation Director Melanie Manion, and Planning Administrative Assistant Madi Dodge.
- ARTICLE 2. Approve the current Agenda**
- Motion was made by Member Driscoll to approve the current agenda. Supported by Member Reese. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- ARTICLE 3. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak**
- Scot Vansolkema asked whether there is a minimum amount of snowfall needed to operate snowplows on weekends. Director Manion stated that any amount of snowfall would require B&G staff to plow the sidewalks.
- Kathy Taylor wondered if any measures would be taken to control the deer population. Director Manion stated the deer problem is very complicated, but is hopeful to start educational campaigns and create a deer management consortium with various townships.
- ARTICLE 4. Approve the Minutes of the October 5, 2023 meeting**
- Motion was made by Member Driscoll to approve the October 5, 2023 meeting minutes as written. Supported by Member Reese. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- ARTICLE 5. Pathway Maintenance**
- Director Manion noticed a reoccurring issue with residents wanting their portion of the sidewalk mowed by township staff. Currently, there are no guidelines for maintaining pathways, leading township staff to mow certain private-owned properties. She recommended the continuation of maintenance to select properties owned by Kent County and to only mow 4ft on each side of pathways.
- Chair Rissi proposed to only mow a 4ft perimeter on sidewalks currently maintained by township staff to avoid overgrowth.
- Member Reese believed that property owners should be responsible for maintaining their property.

Director Manion mentioned that an educational campaign would be conducted if there was a decision to stop maintaining certain areas.

Motion was made by Member Reese directing staff to establish a policy for mowing 4ft on each side of sidewalks once a month for current township-maintained areas with exclusion to string trimming around objects. Supported by Member Coffey. Motion carried 4 to 1.

Member Taylor was hesitant to support this decision because he wanted more assurance that property owners would tend to fallen branches and dead trees on their property. Chair Rissi was certain the proposed policy would give Staff more time to prune trees and clear the pathways.

ARTICLE 6. Wycliffe Trailhead Park Update

Director Manion said the trail system has been marked and a vault toilet will be constructed in the spring. Included in the park will be two playgrounds for different age groups.

ARTICLE 7. Grand River Greenway Update

Director Manion and Chair Rissi recently attended a meeting with Kent County Parks. Some upcoming construction included a connection between Ionia County and Ottawa County pathways. Connection through Cascade to Lowell is estimated to cost 52 million dollars.

Chair Rissi explained that the stretch along Grand River Drive to Snow Ave in Cascade Township has an estimated cost of 11 million dollars. The project faces some challenges, including wetlands, driveway crossings, and hills. A proposal was made to build a pathway along the railroad; however, the railroad company owns a 100ft easement, and they were not willing to permit the construction of a sidewalk within the easement. Kent County Parks is planning to negotiate with the railroad company to reach a deal.

ARTICLE 8. 2024 Calendar

Chair Rissi suggested that the committee should convene every other month with special meetings as needed. Members thought this was reasonable.

Director Manion would like to hold a joint meeting with the Parks Committee and Ada Township.

Motion was made by Member Taylor recommending that the Pathways Committee meet every other month with special meetings as needed. Supported by Member Coffey. Motion carried 5 to 0.

ARTICLE 9. Any Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

ARTICLE 10. Adjournment

Motion was made by Member Taylor to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Member Driscoll. Motion carried 5 to 0. The meeting adjourned at 11:04 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Rik Brown, Secretary