

Minutes

Cascade Charter Township
Parks Committee
Tuesday, August 16, 2022
8:30 am
5920 Tahoe Dr

ARTICLE 1. Chair Wanty called the meeting to order at 8:30 A.M.
Members Present: Chair Ginny Wanty, Joe Engel, Mike Reese, Windy Korstange,
Supervisor Grace Lesperance
Members Absent: None

Others Present: Planning Director Brian Hilbrands, Building and Grounds Supervisor Jim MacDonald, Planning Administrative Assistant Madi Dodge, Rachel Walsh with Troyer Group, and those listed on the sign-in sheet.

ARTICLE 2. Approve the current Agenda

Motion was made by Member Engel to approve the current agenda. Supported by Member Korstange. Motion carried 4 to 0.

Member Reese arrived at 8:32 A.M.

ARTICLE 3. Presentation- Dr. David Warners, Plaster Creek Stewards Program

Plaster Creek Stewards Program, led by Dr. David Warners, aims to restore health to the Plaster Creek watershed that runs through a portion of Cascade Township. Due to excessive runoff from rain, snow, and pollution, the water quality of the Plaster Creek Watershed has drastically decreased and is now considered a public health hazard. The Thornapple River, like Plaster Creek, has a River Management Plan approved by the state which makes water improvements eligible for state funding.

Many steps have been taken to improve the water quality and biodiversity surrounding Plaster Creek and these improvements are transferable to other rivers that run through Cascade. With community and volunteer assistance, bioswales, rain gardens, curb-cut rain gardens, and flood plains are being constructed. Chair Wanty mentioned a neighborhood in Holland that was re-doing their roads and residents were able to add curb-cut rain gardens.

Member Reese asked who had been maintaining these projects. Dr. Warners said they are working with Kent County Parks volunteer coordinator and student volunteers. Cascade Township can also seek assistance from these volunteers.

Dr. Warners stated that many of the projects are funded by partnerships and grants; he and his team would be happy to partner with Cascade.

ARTICLE 4. Approve the Minutes of the July 19, 2022 Meeting.

Motion was made by Supervisor Lesperance to approve the July 19, 2022 meeting minutes as written. Supported by Member Reese. Motion carried 5 to 0.

ARTICLE 5. Acknowledge any visitors wishing to speak to non-agenda items

There was no one that wished to speak.

ARTICLE 6. Review Bylaws

Revision suggestions:

- Section 1: Remove the word “purpose”.
- Section 3.5: Remove the entire phrase in number 3 to instead read, “Any other conflict of interest perceived by the Committee not listed above” and switch the order of numbers 3 and 4.
- Section 4.8: Remove the gap after “New Business”.
- Section 6.4: Restructure the sentence to say “in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, a person shall not be excluded from a meeting of the Committee except for a breach of peace”.

These revisions will be shown to the attorney to ensure clarity.

Motion was made by Member Engel to approve the bylaws in the packet with the revisions listed above-pending attorney review. Supported by Supervisor Lesperance. Motion carried 5 to 0.

ARTICLE 7. Wycliffe Property

Member Engel recommended naming the park “Wycliffe Trailhead Park” and the Committee agreed on the condition that the spelling matches the street name.

Motion was made by Member Engel to recommend the name “Wycliffe Trailhead Park” to the Township Board. Supported by Supervisor Lesperance. Motion carried 5 to 0.

ARTICLE 8. Troyer Group Amendment to Contract

Member Reese presented the proposal to create a final master plan for the Wycliffe property. As part of the agreement, they will visit the site, analyze existing conditions, meet with Cascade Township and representatives of the church to discuss the property, and develop options to review with the Parks Committee. Upon plan agreement, the draft master plan will be prepared along with preliminary estimates and costs. Materials will also be prepared for public review of the master plan. Based on the public review, a final master plan will be created for this property. The total contract amount, inclusive of amendments, equated to \$24,230.

B&G Supervisor MacDonald brought up the clogged drain that runs under Wycliffe Trailhead Park. He said that it floods the park and a neighboring resident’s yard. He

suggested fixing the clog could be a good opportunity to potentially incorporate a rain garden.

Neighboring residents have removed property line stakes between their property and the Wycliffe Trailhead Park causing encroachment. The township will have to resurvey the land to determine legal boundaries.

Member Reese and Rachel Walsh with Troyer Group exited the meeting.

Motion was made by Member Engel to recommend approval of the proposed amendment to the Township Board. Supported by Supervisor Lesperance. Motion carried 4 to 0.

Member Reese and Rachel Walsh with Troyer Group re-entered the meeting.

Member Korstange left the meeting at 10:10 A.M.

ARTICLE 7. Chair Wanty returned to Article 7, asking if there was any progress on an agreement with the church to construct a pathway from the parking lot to Wycliffe Trailhead Park. Planning Director Hilbrands stated nothing has been settled on. Amendments could be made to the existing easement to allow egress and ingress from their property to the township's.

Motion was made by Member Engel to recommend to the Township Board that the existing easement with Unity Church be amended to include a 10' pedestrian egress and ingress from the parking lot directly to the Township's property. Supported by Chair Wanty. Motion carried 4 to 0.

Chair Wanty mentioned that they used the drill and fill technique to treat tree of heaven, and this seems to be working.

ARTICLE 9. Strategic Plan Update

Priorities and responsibilities for parks and trails were discussed. Hiring additional Township Staff, such as a Parks Director, may be needed to implement Parks Committee ideas.

ARTICLE 10. Openings on Parks Committee

Chair Wanty wanted to make the community aware that there is an opening on the Parks Committee. Staff was directed to put this announcement in the e-newsletter for September and on the website.

ARTICLE 11. Updates and Announcements from Chair

Chair Wanty put an article in both the e-News and paper newsletter, requesting interested businesses wanting to volunteer contact Kent Conservation District directly.

Calvin University is volunteering at Burton Park on August 27th for Street Fest.

Kent Conservation District is hosting workdays on August 25th and September 3rd.

Oak Wilt was discovered at the Snow Ave Cemetery; next steps to control the disease are underway.

There is a property off of 30th St that has a few dead Oak Trees in the right-of-way. Planning Director Hilbrands will be reaching out to the Road Commission on this issue and on the previously mentioned clogged drain at Wycliffe.

The next Parks Committee meeting will be on September 20th at 7:00 A.M. to discuss action items for the parks plan update.

Chair Wanty would like to see more financial incentives for the work and dedication Parks Committee members put in. Members of other township boards and commissions receive payment for attending meetings and she did not believe it was fair that Parks Committee Members aren't paid. Member Engel recommended that Chairs receive a minimum payment of \$100 per meeting.

ARTICLE 12. Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

ARTICLE 13. Any Other Business

There was not any other business to discuss.

ARTICLE 14. Adjournment

Motion was made by Member Engel to adjourn. Supported by Member Reese. Motion carried 4 to 0. The meeting adjourned at 10:38 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Engel, Secretary