

**Minutes**  
Cascade Charter Township  
Parks Committee  
Tuesday, September 19, 2023  
8:00 A.M.  
5920 Tahoe Dr

**ARTICLE 1.** Chair Wanty called the meeting to order at 8:02 A.M.  
Members Present: Chair Ginny Wanty, Mike Reese, Supervisor Grace Lesperance, Eileen Boekestein, Joe Engel, Bill Otten, Matt Douglas  
Members Absent: None  
Others Present: Parks Director Melanie Manion, Manager Jade Smith, Planning Director Brian Hilbrands, Communications Specialist Rich Lakeburg, and others listed on the sign-in sheet.

**ARTICLE 2. Approve the current Agenda**  
**Motion was made by Member Engel to approve the agenda. Supported by Member Otten. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

Member Douglas arrived at 8:06 A.M.

**ARTICLE 3. Approve the Minutes of the August 15, 2023 Meeting**  
Members Otten and Douglas were absent during the August 15 meeting.  
**Motion was made by Member Engel to approve the August 15, 2023 meeting minutes with the above correction. Supported by Member Reese. Motion carried 6 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 4. Public Comment**  
John Giddens attended the meeting to get updates and expressed his joy to see progress in the parks department.

**ARTICLE 5. Introduction of New Township Manager, Jade Smith**  
Manager Smith has worked in local government for 20 years and most recently worked for Canton Township. He is excited to see what will be accomplished in Cascade's parks.

Supervisor Lesperance arrived at 8:12 A.M.

**ARTICLE 6. Old Business**

Previously Article 7.

**a) Bench policy – Joe Engel, Parks Committee Secretary**

Member Engel addressed a need for a bench and naming policy for individuals wanting to donate.

Some items noted by Staff and Members included remaining flexible on where benches can be placed, incorporating an ADA compliant concrete pad next to some benches, and rewording the memorial plaque ordinance.

Members agreed upon pricing the benches at \$5,000 which will help cover the cost of the bench, installation, and maintenance. Member Engel will draft policy incorporating committee's suggestions.

**b) 2024 budget – Melanie Manion, Parks & Recreation Director**

Parks Director Manion expressed gratitude for Manager Smith as he will help to create a 2024 Parks budget.

Manager Smith stated that the township is behind on completing the budget process, but progress is being made to meet the end-of-the-year timeline.

Chair Wanty mentioned the need to budget for continued funding of to the Kent Conservation District's efforts and a contingency fund for invasive species.

Supervisor Lesperance said it would be beneficial to establish good relations with Cascade businesses in hopes of more partnerships, millage support, and philanthropy.

**ARTICLE 7. New Business**

Previously Article 6.

**a) Nature play area for Wycliffe Trailhead Park – Evan Cline, ODC Network**

Evan Cline designs and builds nature playscapes and outdoor learning environments at the Outdoor Discovery Center (ODC). More than 25 play structures have been completed for schools, libraries, and parks. All landscaping and structures are built according to playground safety standards, and thorough hazard assessments are always conducted. They sometimes outsource equipment from vendors such as Kompan.

Parks Director Manion said there was discussion on building a hybrid playground by incorporating elements from various vendors, instead of solely constructing a natural playscape.

Cline said they primarily use big osage orange or black trees (locally sourced, if possible) to create their projects, which will last 20 to 30 years. Parks Director Manion preferred to have ODC design and build the structures, but mentioned they are busy until late next year.

Parks Director Manion will be creating an RFP to narrow the scope of work and get the project ready for bids.

**ARTICLE 8. Director's Report**

Parks Director Manion provided an update sheet located in the meeting packet. Some crucial updates included meeting with Plaster Creek Stewards to discuss potential

partnerships, Kent Conservation completed invasive bittersweet training, and the remainder of trees from the DTE grant were planted.

**ARTICLE 10. Park Chair Announcement – Ginny Wanty, Parks Committee Chair**

There will be a future meeting held at the Kent District Library so members can observe the proposed park area.

Manager Smith said there has been difficulty prioritizing the deer management issue in Cascade for this year.

**ARTICLE 13. Adjournment**

**Motion was made by Member Engel to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Member Reese. Motion carried 7 to 0. The meeting adjourned at 9:41 A.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Engel, Secretary