

Minutes
Cascade Charter Township
Parks Committee Meeting
Tuesday, November 15, 2022
7:30 A.M.
5920 Tahoe Dr SE

- ARTICLE 1.** Chair Wanty called the meeting to order at 7:33 A.M.
Members Present: Chair Ginny Wanty, Joe Engel, Mike Reese, Windy Korstange, Eileen Boekestein, and Supervisor Grace Lesperance (Arrived at 8:04am)
Members Absent: None
Others Present: Planning Director Brian Hilbrands, Township Manager Ben Swayze, Township Engineer Aric Thorne, Representatives of Spaulding de Decker Engineering firm, Buildings and Grounds Supervisor Jim Macdonald, Planning Administrative Assistant Madi Dodge, and Pathway Committee members Rik Brown and John Driscoll
- ARTICLE 2. Approve the Current Agenda**
Motion was made by Member Engel to approve the current agenda. Supported by Member Reese. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- ARTICLE 3. Approve the minutes of the October 11, 2022 Special Meeting, October 18, 2022 Regular Meeting, and November 4, 2022 Special Meeting**
Motion was made by Member Reese to approve the October 11, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes as written. Supported by Member Korstange. Motion carried 5 to 0.
Motion was made by Member Engel to approve the October 18, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes as written. Supported by Member Reese. Motion carried 5 to 0.
Motion was made by Member Reese to approve the November 4 Special Meeting Minutes as written. Supported by Member Engel. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- ARTICLE 4. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak to non-agenda items**
There was no one that wished to speak.
- ARTICLE 5. Welcome to New Parks Committee Member, Eileen Boekestein**
Member Boekestein currently works for the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy as an Environmental Education Coordinator and has previous experience at the Grand Valley Metro Council.
- ARTICLE 6. Results and Feedback from the Master Plan Open House**
Member Reese provided a summary of comments that were received at the open house
Wycliffe Trailhead Park: Residents seemed to prefer Plan B which included a longer trail with more signage. There was also a comment on wanting multiple restrooms at the park:

Leslie E. Tassel Park: Someone requested more information on the dam.

Cascade Rec Park: Sound barriers/screening, shaded seating by the playground, and field improvements were all discussed.

Burton Park: Improvements to the parking lot, improved signage and wayfinding, and incorporating benches.

Other requests included an aquatics facility, splash pad, and mountain biking area. A future initiative was also mentioned – a joint effort and relationship with Cascade cemeteries. Efforts could include native plantings/control of invasive species. Recognize that the cemeteries are not parks, however cemeteries provide a place for solace and reflection”

Chair Wanty requested to change “Peace Park Drainage” to Peace Park Erosion” on the 2023 goals and objectives list. She also wanted the Thornapple Watershed cleanup to not specify a time of year.

ARTICLE 7. Presentation on Conservation Easements 101

Member Engel provided a presentation on conservation easements. He explained that a conservation easement is a tool used to protect land against development. These allow landowners to limit the development of their property while retaining private ownership of the land. There are benefits to the land owners such as potential cash payments and tax deductions.

Supervisor Lesperance arrived at 8:04 A.M.

Member Boekestein asked if there was a minimum amount of acreage required for a conservation easement. Member Engel responded that The Land Conservancy of West Michigan has objective standards such as the urban area minimum being 10 acres while rural areas require a minimum of 50 acres, though there is some flexibility depending on the quality of the property.

ARTICLE 8. Discussion on Peace Park Erosion Solution

Chair Wanty presented photos at Peace Park showcasing 8 trail markers with erosion issues. Upon having conversations with Kent Conservation District and GEI Consultants of Grand Haven, they both suggested the installation of a water bar. These can come in the form of wood, rocks, or stones and are used to direct water off the trails.

GEI Consultants are willing to teach the Building and Grounds staff how to install water bars. Aric Thorne, Township engineer will follow-up on the installing of waterbar solution. Chair Wanty provided a special shout-out to resident Rik Brown, who has been trying for 3 years to get this solution implemented at Peace Park.

ARTICLE 9. Discussion of Cascade Rec Park Fields and Possible Fixes

Member Reese visited the baseball fields and saw that the infields have a number of maintenance issues, and the outfields have settling issues and also need leveling work. He also mentioned incorporating sidewalks up to the fields.

Member Engel wondered if they should wait to repair the fields until next year, since they will be working on a master plan for Rec Park.

League reservations for the fields will continue to be at no cost until improvements are made, along with a maintenance program for upkeep.

Member Boekestein suggested completing minor fixes to the fields so no one gets injured.

Member Korstange thought there may be drainage issues by the fields that will need to be addressed prior to fixing them.

It was determined that there should be some maintenance done to the fields in the spring to improve safety, but major improvements should be held off until a master plan for Rec Park has been completed.

ARTICLE 10. Park Department Budget Recap

Manager Swayze provided a park's budget update. There was a general budget with all of the park-related expenditures created; as this was heavily discussed item at the last meeting. The budget was completed by combining a list from various departments that had park expenses while also adding projected expenses including capital improvement projects.

There was a consensus between committee members to add a parks director to the draft budget. This will be discussed further and in more detail during the December 6th special Park Committee meeting at 7:30 A.M.

ARTICLE 11. 2023 Parks Committee Meeting Dates

Planning Director Hilbrands said the Parks Committee meetings will continue to be on the third Tuesday of each month and shared the dates. If needed, a calendar invite could be sent out to each committee member.

ARTICLE 12. Oak Wilt at Snow Avenue Cemetery

Chair Wanty said she would email members the PowerPoint from the Oak Wilt consultant about the Snow avenue cemetery oak wilt treatment plan since we were running out of time.

ARTICLE 13. Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

ARTICLE 14. Any Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

Member Korstange left at 9:33 A.M.

ARTICLE 15. Adjournment

Motion was made by Member Engel to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Supervisor Lesperance. Motion carried 5 to 0. The meeting adjourned at 9:35 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Engel, Secretary