

AGENDA
Cascade Charter Township Parks Committee
Tuesday, November 15, 2022
7:30 am
5920 Tahoe Dr

- ARTICLE 1. Call the meeting to order
Record the attendance**
- ARTICLE 2. Approve the current Agenda**
- ARTICLE 3. Approve the minutes of the October 11, 2022 Special Meeting, October 18, 2022
Regular Meeting, and November 4 Special Meeting.**
- ARTICLE 4. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak to non-agenda items.
(Comments are limited to three minutes per speaker.)**
- ARTICLE 5. Welcome to New Parks Committee Member, Eileen Boeckstein**
- ARTICLE 6. Results and Feedback from Master Plan Open House
Update from Member Reese.**
- ARTICLE 7. Presentation on Conservation Easements 101
Presentation from Member Engel and introductions of Pathway members.**
- ARTICLE 8. Discussion on Peace Park Erosion Solution
Update from Chair Wanty and B&G Supervisor MacDonald.**
- ARTICLE 9. Discussion of Cascade Rec Park Fields and Possible Fixes
Open Discussion of current state of fields and possible solutions.**
- ARTICLE 10. Park Department Budget Recap
Update from Manager Swayze.**
- ARTICLE 11. 2023 Parks Committee Meeting Dates
List of Potential 2023 Parks Committee Meeting Dates.**
- ARTICLE 12. Oak Wilt at Snow Avenue Cemetery
Update from Chair Wanty.**
- ARTICLE 13. Old Business**
- ARTICLE 14. Any Other Business**
- ARTICLE 15. Adjournment**

Meeting format

- 1. Staff Presentation**
- 2. Project presentation-**

a. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- i. Open Public Hearing. Comments are limited to five minutes per speaker; exception may be granted by the chair for representative speakers and applicants**
- ii. Close public hearing**

Staff report and recommendation
Applicant presentation and explanation of project

3. **Committee discussion** – *May ask for clarification from applicant, staff or public*
4. **Committee decision - Options**
 - a. *Table the decision*
 - b. *Deny*
 - c. *Approve*
 - d. *Approve with conditions*
 - e. *Recommendation to Township Board*

Meeting Minutes

Cascade Charter Township
Parks Committee Special Meeting
Tuesday, October 11, 2022
7:30 AM
5920 Tahoe Dr

ARTICLE 1. Chair Wanty called the meeting to order at 7:32 am.
Members Present: Chair Ginny Wanty, Joe Engel, Mike Reese, Windy Korstange, and Supervisor Grace Lesperance
Members Absent: None

Others Present: Planning Director Brian Hilbrands.

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.

ARTICLE 3. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak to non-agenda items.

There was no one who wished to speak.

Supervisor Lesperance arrived at 7:35am

ARTICLE 4. Discussion of Recommendation for Naming of the Wycliffe Property

Chair Wanty discussed the memo that Planning Director Hilbrands drafted to name the property Wycliffe Trailhead Park, which Chair Wanty will present at a Township Board meeting.

Committee members had no additional comments.

ARTICLE 5. Review the Draft Parks and Recreation Plan and Wycliffe Concepts

Member Reese discussed the plan and the process, with a focus on the action plan as well as the concepts for the Wycliffe property, as well as any other comments that members had.

Chair Wanty mentioned that it was difficult to read the light blue text on the blue background in the Goals and Strategies section, and that it might be helpful to have an Executive Summary added.

Member Engel commented that he would like to see some revisions made and things cleaned up before the plan was put out to the public. It was decided that Members Engel and Korstange would both go through the plan to compile edits. The edited version will then be reviewed again by the Parks Committee.

Member Reese presented Concepts A and B for the Wycliffe property. Concept A had a smaller trail and fewer amenities, while Concept B included a longer trail with more natural features.

Member Reese will plan on providing an update on the Parks Master Plan at the upcoming October 18 Parks Committee meeting.

ARTICLE 6. Adjournment

Motion was made by Supervisor Lesperance to adjourn. Supported by Member Engel. Motion carried 5 to 0. The Meeting adjourned at 8:56 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Engel, Secretary

DRAFT

Minutes
Cascade Charter Township
Parks Committee Meeting
Monday, October 18, 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, Supervisor Grace Lesperance
Members Absent: Windy Korstange (excused)

Others Present: Planning Director Brian Hilbrands, Planning Administrative Assistant Madi Dodge, Management Administrative Assistant Jessica Stine, 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 Supervisor Lesperance. Motion carried 4 to 0.

ARTICLE 3. Presentation by David Marquardt – Director of Grand Rapids Parks and Rec

David Marquardt has been the Grand Rapids Parks and Rec Director for almost 8 years and gave a brief presentation and answered questions from the parks committee. He stated that establishing a mission and vision for Grand Rapids Parks and Rec has contributed significantly to developing a more meaningful parks and rec plan for the residents. This plan has assisted the Parks and Rec Department to qualify for grants and pass a 1.25 mills park's millage in perpetuity. Their general fund and millage fund are the two sources that keep the Parks and Rec Department moving forward with programming and updating park properties; the millage is approximately 25% of the total departmental budget. Other sources of funding are the City of Grand Rapids and private donations. Volunteer efforts have also impacted the success and development of the parks greatly.

Some recreation programs, through the Grand Rapids Parks and Rec department, are free for residents while others require a fee to participate. Youth and family programs are free of charge and these programs are funded through tax dollars and/or millage funding dedicated to the department. They have three full-time recreation staff members whose salaries come from the city's general fund. Since they have numerous parks and different areas that require maintenance, they have assigned a letter grade to each park, separating ones that will take a lot of time to upgrade/maintain contrasted with spaces needing less work. The cemeteries are also incorporated under the Parks and Rec department and are funded by the general fund.

ARTICLE 4. Approve the Minutes of September 20, 2022, Regular Meeting and Special Meeting

Motion was made by Member Engel to approve the September 20, 2022 Meeting Minutes as written. Supported by Supervisor Lesperance. Motion carried 4 to 0.

Motion was made by Supervisor Lesperance to approve the September 20, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes as written. Supported by Member Engel. Motion carried 4 to 0.

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

Ken VanDerKohk, a 30-year resident of Cascade Township, is retired and would like opportunities to volunteer within the community.

ARTICLE 6. Update on Parks Master Plan

Members Reece, Korstange, and Engel previously met to make edits to the draft Parks Master Plan. Some edits include color scheme changes and incorporating an executive summary. The 30-day public comment period will begin on October 27th with an open house for discussion potentially being held on November 10th.

Motion was made by Member Engel for the Parks Committee to recommend to the board that they open public comment from October 27 through November 25th. Supported by Supervisor Lesperance. Motion carried 4 to 0.

ARTICLE 7. Review of New Park Reservations System and Current Reservation Pricing

Administrative Assistant Stine gave an overview of current and potential new software that is used for managing Parks and Wisner Center reservations. The current system allows renters to circumvent township rules, such as letting them cancel the day of reservations, no follow up on unpaid rental fees, and does not allow renters to pay online. The new software, RecPro, eliminates these problems and has a broader capacity to be user-friendly for both staff and residents. For the first year, the total price for RecPro will be \$4,500, which is inclusive of staff training. The following two years will total \$3,500 since the training fee will no longer apply. After the first three years, the price will increase by no more than 10% every three years.

New reservation prices and timeslot recommendations are included in the packet. Seasonally, there are leagues that utilize both the soccer and baseball fields free of charge. Creating a price for individual leagues would help fund field maintenance and upkeep.

Member Engel wanted to ensure there is proper communication with residents on the change in systems.

Motion was made by Member Engel to recommend the purchase of RecPro software. Supported by Supervisor Lesperance. Motion carried 4 to 0.

ARTICLE 8. Park Committee Openings

Supervisor Lesperance said that Member Engel recommended candidate, Eileen Boekestein for the opening. Supervisor Lesperance has placed Eileen Boekestein's name

on the Board of Trustees agenda on November 2 for their approval. Member Boekestein has been invited to attend the Park Committee meeting on November 15.

ARTICLE 9. Grand River Greenway and Pathway Committee Update

Member Reese gave an update on maintenance of the pathway system. The Pathway Committee is looking to move forward with bid documents for improving/updating the pathways along Cascade Road and Buttrick Ave.

ARTICLE 10. Updates and Announcements from Chair

-Boy Scouts and Eagle Scouts will be at Burton Park on Saturday and Sunday working on Oriental Bittersweet.

-Snow Ave Cemetery has oak wilt and will require trenching and tree removal. There is a potential for impacts on neighboring properties. The township's Oak Wilt consultant will be exploring the properties further to evaluate any damaged or infected Red Oak trees. Once the trenching line has been determined, neighbors will be contacted.

-The budget follow-up meeting will be on November 4th from 8:00-9:30 A.M.

-A special meeting to discuss the draft park's plan is tentatively scheduled for December 6th.

-There was a dog bite reported to animal control that occurred at Cascade Park. More signage will be posted so residents are aware.

-The township received the DTE Tree Grant and will have the trees planted next year.

ARTICLE 11. Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

ARTICLE 12. Any Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

ARTICLE 13. Adjournment

Motion was made by Member Engel to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Member Reese. Motion carried 4 to 0. The meeting adjourned at 9:39 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Engel, Secretary

Minutes
Cascade Charter Township
Park Committee Special Meeting
Friday, November 4, 2022
8:00 A.M.
5920 Tahoe Dr SE

- ARTICLE 1.** Chair Wanty called the meeting to order at 8:05 A.M.
Members Present: Chair Ginny Wanty, Joe Engel, Mike Reese, Windy Korstange, and Supervisor Grace Lesperance
Members Absent: Eileen Boekestein (excused)
- Others Present: Planning Director Hilbrands, Township Manager Swayze, Township Engineer Aric Thorne, Planning Administrator Madi Dodge, and Buildings and Grounds Supervisor Jim Macdonald.
- 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. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak**
- There was no one that wished to speak.
- ARTICLE 4. Review and Discussion of Parks Budget**
- Manager Swayze attended the meeting to discuss the Parks Committee budget. For budget approval, there needs to be a capital improvement plan that goes to staff and committees followed by a review from the Board of Trustees. The four main items to discuss consisted of items that needed to be included in the 2023 budget, items in the budget that can be taken out, evaluating the CIP through 2028, and obtaining feedback on the illustrative budget.
- The committee liked the general format of the budget with the understanding that it will be a living document.
- Some items the committee would like added to the budget included funds to prepare for a millage (\$50,000), a Master Plan for Rec Park (\$25,000), parking improvements at Burton Park, invasives species work, erosion controls at Peace Park, deer management at Burton Park, Wycliff Improvements (\$300,000), replacement of signage and map improvements for parks and trails, and tree plantings in the open space budget for Burton Park
- Manager Swayze, Planning Director Hilbrands, and B&G Supervisor MacDonald will have a meeting to discuss CIPs.
- Manager Swayze will request the Board to allocate funds toward future acquisitions.

ARTICLE 5. Adjournment

Motion was made by Member Engel to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Member Korstange. Motion carried 5 to 0. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Engel, Secretary

DRAFT

Conservation Easements 101: A Quick Q & A

Q: What is a conservation easement (CE)?

A: A voluntary agreement and legal document, between a private property owner and a land trust, to permanently protect the owner's land from future degradation or development.

Q: Does property subject to a CE remain private?

A: Yes. To confirm CE compliance, a land trust member will walk the property once a year, typically with the landowner and at their convenience.

Q: Does a CE bind future owners of the property?

A: Yes. It runs with the land, in perpetuity.

Q: Can the owner of land subject to a CE sell or transfer the property?

A: Yes.

Q: Why would I want to put a CE on my property?

A: The two principal reasons would be to preserve the land's conservation value and, to provide the owner with a potentially significant tax benefit.

Q: How would I know if my property would be a good candidate for a CE?

A: At the invitation of the landowner, a land trust staff member will evaluate a property to determine if it meets the criteria for a CE.

Q: What are the criteria?

A: To qualify for federal and state tax incentives a CE must be voluntarily created by and "donated" to a qualified 501C3 land trust (such as the Land Conservancy of West Michigan), and the easement must be of significant conservation value as defined by the federal government. Easements that meet this "conservation purposes" test will do one or more of the following:

- protect natural habitat for wildlife (typically, with acreage minimums)

- **preserve open space that contributes to the goals of a government program**
- **preserve recognized scenic views for the public**
- **preserve important farmland or forestland**
- **preserve public land for outdoor recreation and education.**

Q: What are the tax benefits?

A: When a CE is put in place, it limits the types of future uses for the land. This will, typically, result in a decreased fair market value (FMV). This decrease in FMV – also described as the “value of the CE donation” - may then be applied as an offset to the landowner’s adjusted gross income (AGI). To determine the value of the CE donation, the CE process requires certified appraisals before, and after, the CE is put in place. The difference between the two numbers becomes the value of the donated CE and represents the amount a landowner can take against (up to) 50% of their AGI. This may be spread over 15 years. Note, this is not a tax credit, but rather a reduction in AGI.

Depending on the township, this decrease in FMV may also translate into a significant reduction in annual property taxes and/or provide an argument regarding a revised, assessed value. State law also prohibits the application of the “pop up tax” to land held subject to a CE. Finally, The Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 greatly increased the estate tax benefits of a CE, allowing the exclusion of 40% of the value of land subject to a CE, up to \$500,000 per estate.

Q: Are there other benefits to a CE?

A: While the financial benefits are attractive, the fact that CE’s help protect our rapidly disappearing natural lands from the risk of development or degradation is perhaps a donor’s greatest gift to future generations.

CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP 2023 MEETING SCHEDULE

	TOWNSHIP BOARD	TOWNSHIP BOARD	PLANNING COMMISSION	PLANNING COMMISSION	ZONING BD. OF APPEALS	PARKS	DDA	HISTORICAL COMMITTEE	INFRASTR. COMMITTEE	FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE	PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE	GOVERN. COMMITTEE
JANUARY	12	26	3	17	11	17	18	6	5	12	19	26
FEBRUARY	9	23	7	28*	8	21	15	3	2	9	16	23
MARCH	9	23	7	21	8	21	15	3	2	9	16	23
APRIL	13	27	-	18	12	18	19	7	6	13	20	27
MAY	11	25	9*	16	10	16	17	5	4	11	18	25
JUNE	8	22	6	20	14	20	21	2	1	8	15	22
JULY	13	27	11*	18	12	18	19	-	6	13	20	27
AUGUST	10	24	8*	15	9	15	16	4	3	10	17	24
SEPTEMBER	14	28	12*	19	13	19	20	1	7	14	21	28
OCTOBER	12	26	3	17	11	17	18	6	5	12	19	26
NOVEMBER	2*	16*	14*	21	15*	21	15	3	2	9	16	23
DECEMBER	14	-	5	19	13	-	20	1	7	14	21	28

* indicates a change in the regular meeting date

- ◆ **Township Board:** 2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month, or as indicated above
- ◆ **Planning Commission:** 1st & 3rd Monday of each month, or as indicated above
- ◆ **Zoning Board of Appeals:** 2nd Tuesday of each month, or as indicated above
- ◆ **Parks Committee:** 3rd Tuesday of the month, or as indicated above
- ◆ **DDA:** 3rd Tuesday of the month, or as indicated above

- ◆ **Infrastructure Committee:** 1st Wednesday of the month, or as indicated above
- ◆ **Finance & Personnel Committee:** 2nd Wednesday of the month, or as indicated above
- ◆ **Public Safety Advisory Committee:** 3rd Wednesday of the month, or as indicated above
- ◆ **Governance Committee:** 4th Wednesday of the month, or as indicated above
- ◆ **Historical Society:** 1st Thursday of each month, or as indicated above.

- ◆ Special meetings are on the call of the Chairperson.
- ◆ All regular meetings which fall on an official legal holiday are usually held on the next business day or as rescheduled by the Chairperson.
- ◆ All Parks Committee meetings are held at the Township Offices, located at 5920 Tahoe Drive SE at 8:00 a.m.
- ◆ All Planning Commission meetings are held at the Cascade Public Library – Wisner Center, located at 2870 Jacksmith Drive at 7:00 p.m.
- ◆ All Zoning Board of Appeals meetings are held at the Cascade Public Library – Wisner Center, located at 2870 Jacksmith Drive at 5:30 p.m.
- ◆ All DDA meetings are held at the Cascade Public Library – Wisner Center, located at 2870 Jacksmith Drive at 5:30 p.m.
- ◆ All Township Board meetings are held at the Cascade Public Library – Wisner Center, located at 2870 Jacksmith Drive at 7:00 p.m.
- ◆ All Township Board Committee meetings are held at Township Hall, located at 5920 Tahoe Drive SE at 9:00a.m.
- ◆ All Historical Society meetings are held at the Township Museum Building, located at 2839 Thornapple River Drive at 9:30 a.m.
- ◆ Any meeting changes to the above schedule (time/date/location, etc) will be posted at the Township Hall at least 18 hours prior to the meeting.