

**Minutes**  
Cascade Charter Township  
Parks Committee  
Tuesday, August 15, 2023  
8:00 A.M.  
5920 Tahoe Dr

- ARTICLE 1.** Chair Wanty called the meeting to order at 8:00 A.M.  
Members Present: Chair Ginny Wanty, Mike Reese, Supervisor Grace Lesperance, Joe Engel, Matt Douglas, Bill Otten, Eileen Boekestein  
Members Absent: None  
Others Present: Parks Director Melanie Manion, Interim Manager Ted Andrzejewski, 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 7 to 0.**
- ARTICLE 3. Approval of the minutes of the July 18, 2023 Regular Meeting**  
Member Engel made a correction to the last sentence in Article 7 changing “with” to “will”.  
**Motion was made by Supervisor Lesperance to approve the July 18 meeting minutes with the proposed change. Supported by Member Engel. Motion carried 7 to 0.**
- ARTICLE 4. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak**  
Jeff Hughs (7250 Red Bud Ln) lives close to Burton Park and expressed concern with the deer population. During a previous Township Board meeting, he noted that Parks Director Manion said there was a plan, but he has not seen anything done.  
Parks Director Manion said this issue is much larger than it appears to be and the DNR has been contacted a few times. Additionally, she noted that there is a new manager starting soon and he will be able to assist with this issue.
- ARTICLE 5. Introductions of the new Buildings and Grounds Supervisor, Ryan McCarty**  
Ryan McCarty has been a part of the buildings and Grounds crew for over 8 years.
- ARTICLE 6. Park Director Report, Melanie Manion, Parks & Recreation Director**  
Parks Director Manion introduced the new Volunteer Coordinator, Janine Heibel.  
Updates provided by Parks Director Manion included purchasing and planting trees from Calvin College’s nursery, herbiciding at Burton Park and the Library by Kent Conservation District, and newly planted native trees at Cascade Park. Additionally, there will be a weekly volunteer group that’s led by the township’s Volunteer Coordinator. There will

also be 10 water bars installed at Peace Park this season, and up to 30 planned for next year.

**ARTICLE 7. Old Business**

**a) Wycliffe Trailhead Park update-Melanie Manion, Parks & Recreation Director**

Parks Director Manion said they are developing a park sign that will be located by 30<sup>th</sup> St, so people recognize the space as a park. Access to the park will begin with grading and wood chipping some trails so people can start utilizing the park more. She also mentioned completing much of the work in-house due to the presence of staff and volunteers.

**Motion was made by Member Engel to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Wycliffe Trailhead Park plans including a single vault toilet, a universally accessible trail, and a natural playground up to \$200,000. Supported by Member Boekestein. Motion carried 7 to 0.**

**b) Millage Update, Mike Reese and Melanie Manion**

Parks Director Manion and Member Reese met recently to align plans with township financials and figure out when the parks millage should be put on a ballot.

**ARTICLE 8. New Business**

**a) Tree Removal Policy, Melanie Manion, Parks & Recreation Director**

Parks Director Manion wanted agreement from the committee regarding tree removal. There was a recent request to have a tree removed at one of the parks since it was slightly going over their property. Parks Director Manion suggested that trees should only be removed if it's a safety issue or could cause damage to a structure. If a tree falls, the township will clean it up.

**Motion was made by Member Engel to have Parks Director Manion draft a tree removal policy recommendation to the Cascade Township Board. Supported by Supervisor Lesperance. Motion carried 7 to 0.**

**b) Bench Donation Policy**

This discussion was moved until next meeting.

**c) Budget Discussion**

Parks Director Manion provided an in-depth budget sheet for the committee to analyze and discuss. Some items in the budget included general park updates, park bathrooms, staff salaries and training, land acquisitions, and a program for maintenance planning.

**ARTICLE 9. Park Chair Announcements- Ginny Wanty, Parks Committee Chair**

The Thornapple River Watershed Council is hosting a Jamboree on September 16 at Legacy Park.

**ARTICLE 10. Adjournment**

**Motion was made by Member Engel to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Member Reese. Motion carried 7 to 0. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 A.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Engel, Secretary

DRAFT