

Minutes

Cascade Charter Township
Parks Committee Meeting
Monday, March 21, 2023
8:00 A.M.
2870 Jacksmith Ave SE

ARTICLE 1. Chair Wanty called the meeting to order at 8:04 A.M.
Members Present: Chair Ginny Wanty, Mike Reese, Eileen Boekestein, Windy Korstange, Supervisor Grace Lesperance, Joe Engel, Matt Douglas
Members Absent: None
Others Present: Planning Director Brian Hilbrands, Manager Ben Swayze, and others 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 6 to 0.

Supervisor Lesperance arrived at 8:06 A.M.

ARTICLE 3. Approve the Minutes of the February 21, 2023 Regular Meeting

Motion was made by Member Korstange to approve the February 21, 2023 meeting minutes as written. Supported by Member Reese. Motion carried 7 to 0.

ARTICLE 4. Acknowledge any visitors and those wishing to speak to non-agenda items

There was no one that wished to speak.

ARTICLE 5. Developing a Natural Resource Plan

Brian Majka with GEI Consultants gave a presentation on how to create a Natural Resource Plan with the goal of developing a plan for Burton Park someday. Natural Resource Management Plans are goal-oriented and define specific actions that have measurable results. He explained that understanding the land is the first step followed by creating a vision, goal setting, referencing a target ecosystem, evaluating degradation, and engaging community members on plan details. Monitoring the plan and making recalibrations is a necessary component as well.

In terms of making the plan accessible to community members, Majka mentioned creating a website on plan details. This ensures ease of access to information and could promote community support. Mjaka will provide a copy of his presentation.

Member Engel asked if GEI has dealt with developing plans for ecosystems near airports. Majka said they have not personally developed plans for these areas and that it can be difficult to manage wildlife with restrictions in place near airports.

Chair Wanty asked how much creating a plan would cost. Majka indicated it could cost anywhere between \$5,000-\$100,000 depending on how in-depth the plan is.

Supervisor Lesperance asked if these plans could be funded by grants. Mjaka explained that typically grants fund specific projects and implementation of plans. He mentioned that if funding does go towards development of plans it usually occurs more for aquatic projects.

ARTICLE 6. Update from Township Engineer

Township Engineer Thorne previously reached out to Majka and GEI Consultants regarding water bar installation at Peace Park to solve erosion problems across various trails in the park. Majka described water bars as big logs angled along trails to better direct water off the trails to minimize erosion. GEI Consulting uses a leveling laser to assist with waterbar placement.

Motion was made by Member Engel to recommend retaining GEI Consultants to assist Cascade Township’s staff with water bars installation as described in their proposal. Supported by Member Reese. Motion Carried 7 to 0.

Township Engineer Thorne discussed the drainage issue at Wycliffe Park and recommended installing new inverts to eliminate ponding water. Majka suggested testing the soil in proposed drainage sites to determine the underlying soil.

Motion was made by Member Reese to discuss with the township engineering consultant to obtain the invert elevations and survey information to come up with a drainage solution. Supported by Member Korstange. Motion carried 7 to 0.

Township Engineer Thorne provided recommendations on the Burton Park parking lot. He advised repaving with asphalt since this would align best with the budget of \$50,000. Other options will be considered such as gravel, permeable surface, or pavers. Township Engineer Thorne will come back to the Committee with some cost estimates for the different options. This improvement will be put on hold pending further feasibility discussions on the different options, as well as moving the main park access and parking lot based on a suggestion by Burton Park neighbor Jeanine Heibel.

ARTICLE 7. Update on Parks Director Hiring Process

Manager Swayze gave an update and stated there were 20 applications. After the initial interviews, Staff was very impressed with one candidate in particular who will proceed to a final interview.

ARTICLE 8. Old Business

Manager Swayze gave an update on the Thuele property. The Township has kept in contact with the property owners regarding the 30-acre parcel right next to Peace Park. The price will be set on a per-acre basis. The family wants to keep 10 acres around the house and barn.

Dr. Keys, and his students have finished their deer management study at Burton Park. Dr. Keys will present his findings and recommendations to the Township Board sometime in April.

Chair asked park committee members to use the property acquisition template to score the Theule, Wycliff, FHPS Admin Building, Peace, Burton and Rec Park properties to create a benchmark and a comparison. Committee members are asked to bring their scores to the next Committee meeting or fill out the Excel Spreadsheet which will be sent to them by email.

ARTICLE 9. Any Other Business

Next meeting there will be a discussion regarding the park millage, provided the subcommittee has had the opportunity to meet. Committee members should also come with ideas for Cascade Rec Park improvements. Additionally, there will be a presentation by Lulu Brown about the updates to the Outdoor Gathering Space at the Library.

ARTICLE 10. Adjournment

Motion was made by Member Engel to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Member Douglas. Motion carried 7 to 0. The meeting adjourned at 9:38 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Engel, Secretary