

Cascade Township Parks Committee Notes

Tuesday, November 17, 2020; 8:00 am

Virtual Meeting

ARTICLE 1. Community Development Director Steve Peterson called the meeting to order at 8am. Members Present: Dawn McDonald, Alan Rowland, Mike Reese, Ginny Wanty, Joe Engle, and Rob Beahan. Others Present: DDA Director Sandra Korhorn, Planner Brian Hilbrands

ARTICLE 2. Park Discussion Items

1. Update of Various Park Related Issues

Outdoor Gathering Space:

DDA Director Korhorn stated that the community Outdoor Gathering Space is a project that started in 2016 as a result of many public input meetings through the years. It will be located on the existing library property. Proposed features include an amphitheater, a water feature, pathways throughout, a skate park, climbing features, and kids play area.

In 2017 this plan was presented to the Township Board; the Board did not approve the plan at the time due to financial concerns. Fundraising is being discussed and planned as a way to support financing the project along with support from the DDA, Township Board, and library programs. Director Peterson asked Director Korhorn what the estimated cost of this project is, Director Korhorn stated the estimate to be around 3 million dollars.

Discussion was held about the pros and cons of the proposed skate park and its location, and possibly becoming a dual-purpose area to be used with a synthetic ice rink.

Lower Village Plan:

Director Korhorn stated that the Lower Village Plan is a new project that the DDA has been working on, and consists of the properties at Cascade Road and Thornapple River Drive. Proposed features include a plaza area for food truck, artist, or farmers market type events, staggered seating built into the ground, and open space for gathering. This plan has been tabled by the Township Board in an effort to gain more public input.

Member Wanty stated that she would like to see more accessible access to these features for individuals with limited mobility, opportunities for education along the river, and a "welcoming" feature near the road.

Member McDonald asked about additional parking spaces, Director Korhorn stated there are 9 additional spots proposed, however the goal is to have this area accessed by foot as much as possible.

The Tuffy business owner has two, five-year extension options for their current lease. This could lead to a phased plan for this project.

360° Video of Parks:

Director Peterson stated that 360° videos of Township parks has been budgeted for. This would show amenities and features of the parks for people who are interested in visiting. The estimated cost is under \$400.

Rec Park Building:

The maintenance building at the Rec Park needs to be replaced, and has been budgeted for the last few years. The Fire Department will be housing the large generator that is currently stored in the Rec Park maintenance building once they build a new storage facility at Station 2. Once the generator is moved, a new building can be built at the Rec Park, hopefully in early 2022. The proposed building will be in the same location, and slightly bigger than the one there now.

2. West Michigan Trails Magazine Ad

The cost is approximately \$400 annually for an eighth page advertisement in the magazine. This ad has been run for the last few years, with the picture being updated last year. The picture is around the size of a business card.

Member Reese stated that for the price, it is worth supporting the Trails Magazine and trails in Michigan. Member Engel agrees. Member Beahan states that he is in favor of keeping the current photo, maybe changing it every couple of years.

3. Peace Park Trail Maintenance

Director Peterson stated that there has been continuous maintenance issues on the trail nearest Thornapple River Drive. Stormwater runoff has created gully erosion on the trail, and that a pipe was installed a few years ago that does not seem to be helping the issue at hand. A Township Engineer has put together 3 options to present to the Township Board as solutions to this problem.

Director Peterson stated that he likes the third option as it is the most permanent, although it is the most invasive and expensive.

Member Reese stated that he is hesitant to take out trees and put in dams as it ruins the aesthetic of a natural area.

Member Wanty asked if it is possible to gain input from other companies, Director Peterson stated that it is possible, however it would need to be contracted and paid for. Member Reese offers to look at the area and provide a professional recommendation as he is a landscape architect and does drainage work frequently.

Member Beahan is in favor of option two and "band aiding" the area every few years in order to keep as many trees as possible. Member McDonald agrees.

Member Beahan and Member McDonald both state that the erosion is significant enough currently that they believe gravel needs to be laid to fill in holes as soon as possible.

Member Beahan states that he believes it is important to keep the area as natural as possible since it is near the entrance to the park.

Member Reese is also in favor of option two, with further analysis for a more permanent option in the future. Member Beahan and Member McDonald second this motion.

Member Wanty suggests looking for a natural solution such as a rain garden or something similar.

Director Peterson took a vote, all Members were in favor of option two.

Discussion was held about hunting permits for Peace Park.

Member Beahan stated that around 90 new trail markers have been added to Peace Park trails to aid in rescue efforts and navigation. These will be added to Burton Park as well, and have been added to the areas on the riverfront.

Member Beahan stated that Wi-Fi is being added to the Rec Park, Museum Gardens Park, and Tassell Park with CARES fund money.

Member Wanty asked how often the park plan is updated. Director Peterson stated that to be eligible for DNR funding, it needs to be updated every five years. The current park plan is older than that, Director Peterson stated that he and Planner Brian Hilbrands have discussed updating the plan in-house

ARTICLE 3. ADJOURNMENT