

Meeting Minutes
Cascade Charter Township
Pathways Committee
Thursday, July 6, 2023
10:00 am
5920 Tahoe Dr

ARTICLE 1. Chair Rissi called the meeting to order at 10:01 am.

Members Present: John Driscoll, Mike Reese, Scott Rissi, Jeff Coffey, Kris Taylor, Building and Grounds Supervisor Jim MacDonald, Planning Director Brian Hilbrands, Township Engineer Aric Thorne, Parks and Recreation Director Melanie Manion, and Management Office Admin Assistant Jessica Stine

Late: Township Supervisor Grace Lesperance

Absent: Rik Brown

ARTICLE 2. Approve the current Agenda

Motion was made by Member Reese to approve the current Agenda. Supported by Member Driscoll. Motion carried 5 to 0.

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

Resident Taylor shared a list of four areas where the pathway crosses the road that she thinks should be striped and signed.

Supervisor Lesperance arrived at the meeting.

ARTICLE 4. Approve the minutes of the 6.1.23 Meeting.

Motion was made by Member Reese to approve the 6.1.23 meeting minutes as written. Supported by Member Driscoll.

ARTICLE 5. Pathways Construction Update

Engineer Thorne explained that the paths in northeast Cascade and on Burton St have been topped and they are starting on Spalding. Buttrick will be the next section but they are looking at a few spots on the path where water started to puddle when it rained to see if they can reduce that. The ADA accessible concrete landings still need to be installed. Other than the few puddles, drainage has been great and residents were happy the section near the library was completed by the Independence Day celebration.

ARTICLE 6. Cascade Road Bridge Update

Member Reese talked to the Road Commission about options that would add more space on the north side of the bridge, but the railing doesn't allow for very much. They could move all 'extra' room to the north side and increase it from 5ft wide to 6.5ft wide. The railing could be removed and attached to the outside edge of the bridge but there is a cost to removing the railing as well as purchasing and attaching a new one; that would make it possible to increase the width to 7.5ft. The DDA has agreed to fund \$250,000 of the project and there is \$500,000 of ARPA funds earmarked for the project with the potential for more, if necessary. Removing the railing only on one side of the bridge wouldn't be visually appealing, so they would want to remove and replace both railings. The Road Commission plans to engineer the full project and Spalding DeDecker will work with them to package it. The committee will go to the Board of Trustees for approval to use Troyer Group for the overall design. None of the funds are coming from the Pathways millage, they are all from the DDA and ARPA funds. They need a cost estimate

before they go to the board so Engineer Thorne and Member Reese will work together on an estimate.

Member Taylor suggested bringing the design to the residents but Supervisor Lesperance said that these are open meetings and they can hold an open house style public meeting to educate the public.

Motion was made by Member Driscoll to engage Troyer Group for the design of the project. Supported by Member Coffey. Motion carried 5 to 0 with Member Reese abstaining because he works for Troyer Group and his vote could be considered a conflict of interest.

ARTICLE 7. Safe Routes to School Overview

Planning Director Hilbrands explained to the committee how the 'Safe Routes to School' program works and said it needs to be driven by the schools to qualify for grant funding. It would be beneficial to extend the pathways to the local schools and there has been money in the Capital Improvement Plan for years to fund paths to two nearby schools. Supervisor Lesperance mentioned a twice-yearly meeting with local officials and the school superintendents that may be a good opportunity to bring this option to the table. The Township tried to initiate this project a few years prior and there was pushback from residents who would end up with a portion of the sidewalk running through their yard. There is new leadership at the school since then so now may be a good time to bring it back up for discussion.

ARTICLE 8. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak

There weren't any visitors who wished to speak at that time.

ARTICLE 9. Any Other Business

Supervisor Lesperance shared that there is a line item in the state budget to fund the Burton St. pedestrian bridge because Rep. Phil Skaggs, a new State Representative for the area, was able to lobby for a bridge connecting two of his districts: Cascade and Kentwood.

Parks and Recreation Director Manion suggested using tactical urbanism to test striping one of the crossings mentioned by resident Taylor at the beginning of the meeting. This would not be able to be completed until next year due to a staff shortage.

Member Coffee asked about making the other bridges in Cascade more bike friendly. Engineer Thorne shared that there is a grant they could apply for but the minimum request is \$5,000,000 and requires a 20% match. The project would also need to be shovel ready to apply. TAP grants may also be used for this type of project and it could be applied for to connect with the Grand River Greenway expansion. TAP grants are only for paths that cross major roadways. This could be the missing piece to connect Rec Park with the Grand River Greenway, Kentwood, and South Cascade.

Supervisor Lesperance may speak with the Caledonia Township about connecting the two townships with the Thornapple River walkway; there is MDOT land available along the river that could be used for this.

Supervisor Lesperance explained her interest in turning Thornapple River Dr into a one-way from Thornhills to Cascade Rd, at the end of Tassel. Tactical urbanism may be utilized here to close one lane of the road temporarily to see how traffic would be impacted. This would also be a good way to connect Tassel Park to the pathway system.

ARTICLE 10. Adjournment

**Motion was made by Member Rissi to adjourn. Supported by Supervisor Lesperance.
Motion carried 6 to 0. The meeting was adjourned at 11:20am.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Rik Brown, Secretary