

MINUTES

Cascade Charter Township
Planning Commission
Monday, March 18, 2019
7:00 P.M.

ARTICLE 1. Chairman Sperla called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.
Members Present: Lewis, Johnson, Noordyke, Pennington, Rissi, Moxley, and Sperla
Members Absent: Katsma, Kreiter
Others Present: Community Development Director Steve Peterson and those listed on the sign in sheet.

ARTICLE 2. Pledge of Allegiance.

ARTICLE 3. Approve the current Agenda.

Motion was made by Member Rissi to approve the Agenda. Supported by Member Lewis. Motion carried 7 to 0.

ARTICLE 4. Approve the Minutes of the March 4th, 2019 meeting.

Motion was made by Member Johnson to approve the minutes of March 4th, 2019 (with noted corrections). Supported by Member Rissi. Motion carried 7 to 0.

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

None wish to speak.

ARTICLE 6. Cascade Township

Requested Action: Presentation of Draft Master Plan

Director Peterson starts by introducing Lynee Wells from Williams & Works, the Project Manager of the Townships Master Plan Update. Ms. Wells states that along with township staff and appointed and elected officials, she and her team worked with MKSK, Brad Straiter, Barnes and Thornburg, and Well Design. Ms. Wells then continues on to the community outreach summary, stating that there was extensive community engagement in part due to robust social media exposure, with over 37,000 people reached via Facebook posts alone. Ms. Wells states that one of the ways existing conditions are analyzed and the future is framed is by looking at the assets, opportunities, and concerns. Assets include the character of the community, wooded nature of the community, the river, housing, different events that are held, and amenities like parks and trails. Concerns include the desire to protect natural open spaces and farmland, water quality, and pedestrian safety (crosswalks, lighting), and traffic speeds, signals, and volume. Opportunities include the underutilized properties and lack of place in Cascade Village. Green spaces and land that the Township owns are viewed as potential amenities moving forward. Linking, connecting, and expanding the pathway and trail systems is favored, along with improving Township parks, and creating a gathering space.

Ms. Wells says that with the help of public input via census data, survey results, input from the community design day, and more, they have been able to organize this plan and new website into four themes. Neighborhoods and partnerships, sustainability and environment, economy and innovation, and transportation and mobility.

Neighborhoods and partnerships will have a focus on having a diverse selection of quality housing for a diverse population of young and old citizens that will continue to meet the needs of ever-changing demographics. Safe, compact, and connected walkable patterns, and options that are able to support healthy and active lifestyles are also a priority of survey recipients. Discussion of ease of access of public meetings to keep Citizens informed and involved will also be discussed.

Sustainability and environment will focus on protecting natural resources like woodlands and wetlands, and ensuring that ground water and the river can continue to be a safe and enjoyable natural resource. 83% of respondents are concerned about water quality, so intensity and density of development will be clustered and contained where utilities are planned. Solar energy and green infrastructure will also be focused on.

Economy and innovation will focus on economic opportunities including retail and new technology industries. Focus will be on keeping 28th Street a thriving commercial corridor while maintaining residential properties nearby to support those businesses, Cascade Village Area continuing to be unique gathering space, and space near the airport to support the growing our regional technology and innovation field.

Transportation and mobility will focus on having a robust network of motorized and nonmotorized pathways. Continuing the pilot bus system trial in the Township, extending The Rapid route to access 60th and Broadmoor, and adding a park and ride location near 36th and 196 will all be focused on. Work towards a long-range commuter railway system will also be discussed, along with continuing freight rail service near the airport, and specified truck route corridors throughout the Township. Trails and pathways connecting the Township parks, and expanding to the SE quadrant of the Township are all highly favored by survey recipients, along with improving walkability and bike ability throughout the Township.

Ms. Wells showed a map for future land use, and explained the color-coded categories of farmland preservation, desired uses, corresponding zoning districts, density, utilities, and special features. The purple colored area near for future land use near the will be impacted by what the market decides is in demand through an area deemed transitional mixed use. Attached residential, warehouse, light industrial, office, and hotel sites could all be combined. The turquoise area would be community mixed use area, flexible use for attached residential, service, retail, office, and mixed-use buildings.

Ms. Wells then showed a map of Cascade Village, and stated that there is a desire to have a more village like environment, to slow traffic and connect the north, south, east, and west. She then stated that the yellow on the map represents new buildings, or spots of in fill potential. Recommendations to this area include a gateway feature, a new connection from old 28th to Cascade Road, upgrading open/green spaces, expanding

Tassel Park, having an adjacent pedestrian bridge, and connecting under the bridge from east to west, sidewalk along Thornapple River Drive, and additional shared parking spaces. She then shared a couple of options for Cascade Road if it were reimagined with narrower drive lanes and more landscaping, a center median, adding spike lanes and keep the center turn lane with one lane in each direction; and then images of a potential pedestrian bridge, and bike lanes. Ms. Wells then showed reimagined images of the shopping development on Cascade Road, with a slip street connecting Old 28th St. to Cascade Road.

Tactical Urbanism is a term Ms. Wells referenced to suggest that a temporary pedestrian walkway be built on the bridge, counting the number of people that walk across on a Saturday, for example, and then again with added lighting, maybe surveying them once they walk across. Ms. Wells suggests that tests may help ease the hesitation of the Road Commission to try something new. She also suggests building temporary structures to see how the community reacts to having simulated towers at the gateways, a simulated amphitheater stage, and other temporary traffic simulations.

Ms. Wells reiterates that the appendices have links to all of the maps, survey results, reports produced as part of the plan, and states that every page will be available to download or print from the website.

Chairman Sperla asked Ms. Wells if they were meeting with other groups besides the Planning Commission. She stated that the Downtown Development Association was invited, and they proceeded to discuss what the next steps will be.

Ms. Wells stated that the Township Board has to authorize the plan to go out for public comment for 63 days. Letters will be sent to adjacent communities and entities operating in the area to let them know about the draft, and that they have 63 days to reply with comment to the Township. The Board will have that on the Agenda Wednesday, March 27th. The Board will also be asked to assert their right to adopt the Master Plan. During the 63 days, a public hearing will be held, and then the Planning Commission will schedule a public hearing after the 63 days has expired. The Planning Commission can then recommend adoption, adoption with changes, the plan can be held back for adjustments, and then resubmitted.

Chairman Sperla thanks Ms. Wells, stating that information and data in the Plan is very helpful as far as concerns of the citizens.

Article 7. Any Other Business

Director Peterson stated that the next planned meeting is April 15th.

ARTICLE 8. Adjournment

**Motion was made by Member Rissi to adjourn. Supported by Member Moxley.
Motion carried 7 to 0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,
Phil Johnson, Secretary