

MINUTES
CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MONDAY, March 16, 2026
6:00 pm
2870 JACKSMITH AVE SE

- ARTICLE 1.** Chair Rowland called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
- Members Present: Korstange, Kraemer, Rowland, Cribbs, Madiol, Kaiser, Lauer
Members Absent: None
- Others Present: Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Manager Ryan Sennett, Building Official Brian Wilson, Legal Counsel Laura Genovich, Planning Administrative Assistant Nick Govan and others listed on the sign-in sheet.
- ARTICLE 2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**
- ARTICLE 3. Approve the current Agenda**
- Motion by Treasurer Korstange to approve the current agenda.**
Supported by Commissioner Madiol.
Motion carried unanimously.
- ARTICLE 4. Disclose any Conflict of Interest**
- There were no conflicts of interest disclosed.
- ARTICLE 5. Approve the Minutes of the March 2, 2026 meeting.**
- Motion by Treasurer Korstange to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2026 meeting.**
Supported by Commissioner Cribbs.
Motion carried unanimously.
- ARTICLE 6. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak.**
- There was no one wishing to speak.
- ARTICLE 7. Case #26-3912 – Public Hearing**
- Applicant:** Costco Wholesale, Josh Beach
Property Address: 5100 28th Street SE
Parcel Number: 41-19-18-100-013
Requested Action: Request for an amendment to the Waterfall Shoppes PUD, Ord. #8 of 2004, to amend a previously approved Site Plan to expand the existing gas station, reconfigure the associated parking and access area, and amend the text to increase the number of allowed signs.
- DDA Manager Ryan Sennett presented the application for a PUD amendment for Costco Wholesale at 5100 28th Street SE. He explained that the applicant sought to expand the existing fuel facility and reconfigure the surrounding site. The fuel station is situated in the northwest portion of the Costco site, adjacent to the main warehouse building.

Sennett noted the purpose of the expansion was to improve Costco members' fuel purchasing experience by increasing processing capacity and reducing queues. The plan included adding six fueling dispensers and a 40,000-gallon premium underground storage tank to accommodate the increased demand. The new tank would be daisy-chained with the existing tanks, which would remain in use.

Regarding access reconfiguration, Sennett explained the current main exit is at the southwest corner and the applicant proposed moving it to the northwest corner of the fuel facility. The Township Engineer had reviewed the plans and raised no concerns over the egress point. He noted the relocation diverts fuel facility traffic away from the primary traffic lane and pedestrian crossings. Following staff feedback, the applicant had also added an additional crosswalk connecting the fuel facility area to the sidewalk to the south. One-way circulation within the fuel facility would be maintained, with a bypass lane between each dispenser and 28 feet of spacing between dispensers.

On parking compliance, Sennett stated the reconfiguration results in a net gain of one parking space, bringing the total to 745 spaces. The zoning ordinance requires a minimum of 584 and a maximum of 752, placing the site in compliance. The fire department reviewed the plans and raised no concerns regarding emergency vehicle access.

Sennett addressed the canopy materials, noting the canopy would continue to use materials similar and compatible with the primary building. Regarding the landscaping plan, he noted 16 trees would be removed for construction and the amended plan proposed replanting all 16 trees at the fuel facility portion of the site. The plans provide a 20-foot perimeter buffer with a three-foot high berm, meeting the requirements of the underlying zoning.

Sennett addressed the signage request, explaining the applicant was also requesting a text amendment to allow four signs on the fuel canopy, one on each elevation, where the current PUD text restricts signage to two. He noted the four signs had existed on site for at least 10 years, with streetscape images from 2016 confirming their presence, though no record of when the four signs were installed could be found. A building permit had been approved in 2025 to replace the existing four signs. In order to reinstall signage on all four elevations going forward, a PUD text amendment was required. Staff did not object to the proposed amendment but noted the Planning Commission should deliberate on whether the existing signage configuration was appropriate for the site.

Sennett concluded that staff had reviewed the request against the standards of Section 16.03 of the Zoning Ordinance and found it consistent. Key items for deliberation included the movement of the egress point, landscape screening and buffering, and the canopy signage. The staff recommendation was to recommend approval of the PUD amendment.

Commissioner Cribbs raised concern about vehicle queuing with the

reconfigured layout, referencing his experience at a Costco fuel facility in Louisville, Kentucky where cars would queue in long lines. He asked where cars would queue once additional pumps were added, expressing concern that vehicles could back out into the main parking lot or onto the internal waterfall shoppes roads, particularly on busy days.

Sennett responded that queueing would likely take place toward the main traffic lane in front of the Costco warehouse building. He added that the exit relocation to the northwest diverts traffic away from the primary pedestrian crossing area, which would be a disadvantage if the layout were reversed.

Commissioner Madiol noted that the additional pumps would allow more vehicles to be served simultaneously, reducing overall queue length.

Vice Chair Kraemer acknowledged Commissioner Cribbs' public safety concern as legitimate but noted the Commission had limited ability to analyze it beyond anecdotal observation. He referenced the staff report's statement that no concerns over the egress were raised by the Township Engineer, and indicated he would not be inclined to require a full redesign without supporting data.

The applicant's representative, Josh Beach of Core States Group (1821 572nd Avenue, Kent, Washington), introduced his team, which included Julie Anderson (Senior Planner, Core States Group), Kayleen Burnett (Costco), and Barbara Mosier (Traffic Engineer, Kittleson and Associates). In response to questions about relocating the egress on the northwest instead of flipping the queuing lanes from the east side to the west side of the fueling station, Beach explained the intent was to expand existing infrastructure rather than tear it out and rebuilding it. He noted that three of the existing pump islands would also be shifted slightly to widen the spacing.

Chair Rowland asked about signage, noting that the allowed signage had one face of the canopy facing the adjacent cemetery and another faced the warehouse itself making those less effective. Beach indicated Costco preferred four signs as a Costco nationwide standard, but that it was not a firm position.

Rowland asked how long the construction project would take. Beach stated that no definitive schedule was set but noted the intent was to keep the facility operational during the day and conduct construction overnight to minimize disruption.

Barbara Mosier of Kittleson and Associates addressed the Commission. She explained that Kittleson had been gathering Costco-specific trip generation and gas queuing data for approximately 25 years, resulting in a far more robust dataset than comparable uses in standard traffic manuals. She stated the existing condition allows approximately five cars of queuing space per pump island. With the expansion from 12 to 24 fueling positions, data consistently showed that queues become shorter even though total

volumes may increase slightly, as more capacity reduces wait times. She confirmed that during the Saturday peak hour, the 24-pump configuration would provide sufficient queuing space for the maximum anticipated queue.

Treasurer Korstange asked whether the traffic data supported this layout as Costco's best solution. Beach confirmed that all options had been considered and this approach, expanding on the existing footprint, was determined to be the most practical.

Motion by Chair Rowland to open public hearing.

Supported by Treasurer Korstange.

Motion carried unanimously.

Josh Jordan (5479 Whispering Timbers Drive) noted he regularly uses the south entrance off 33rd St to Costco due to congestion at the 28th Street entrance and exit. Jordan did not raise substantive concerns regarding the fuel facility expansion.

Motion by Chair Rowland to close public hearing.

Supported by Commissioner Madiol.

Motion carried unanimously.

During deliberation, Commissioner Cribbs reiterated his concern that even with additional pumps, queuing on busy days could extend into the main parking lot and create conflicts with pedestrians. He noted the escape lanes were tight and that parking spaces near the fuel facility were limited. Treasurer Korstange noted the current site already functions without queuing extending onto the street, and that doubling the pump capacity should only improve conditions. Other Commissioners indicated they would defer to the traffic data provided and did not find sufficient grounds to require a full redesign.

The Commission then turned to the signage question. Chair Rowland expressed a preference for returning to two signs, citing a desire not to set a broader precedent for fuel canopy signage. Sennett clarified that the underlying B-1 zoning and sign ordinance did not specifically address canopy signage for fuel facilities and that it would likely be treated as wall signage, which is typically one per building, with the PUD currently permitting two. Treasurer Korstange noted the precedent may already be established given the four signs had been in place for at least 10 years, and that reducing them would require removing what was already there. Commissioner Madiol and Vice Chair Kraemer indicated no strong objection to the four-sign configuration, noting it appeared consistent with other fuel facilities in the township. After discussion, the Commission generally concurred that the existing four-sign configuration was acceptable.

Motion by Vice Chair Kraemer to RECOMMEND APPROVAL of Case #26-3912, for a PUD amendment to the approved Site Plan to allow for site improvements and existing signage at the fuel facility at 5100 28th Street SE, for the following reasons:

- 1. The amendment to the PUD Ordinance satisfies the PUD standards of review and approval outlined in Section 16.03 of the Cascade Township Zoning Ordinance.**

**Supported by Treasurer Korstange.
Motion carried unanimously.**

ARTICLE 8.

Case #25-3905

Applicant: Harvest Health, Mitchell Nol

Property Address: 6807 Cascade Road SE

Parcel Number: 41-19-09-451-062

Requested Action: Request for Site Plan approval for an exterior remodel of an existing building.

Sennett presented the next application for a site plan review for Harvest Health at 6807 Cascade Road SE. He explained the applicant was proposing an exterior renovation of the existing building along with some interior improvements. The property is located on the north side of Cascade Road within the Thornapple Centre PUD. The overall site plan footprint would remain largely the same, with a remodel of the vestibule included. A dumpster enclosure was proposed using wood slat fencing to maintain consistency with the main building, and existing mechanical equipment to the west of the building would be screened.

Sennett described the proposed improvements, including new flooring, fixtures, and asphalt shingles on the roof. The applicant was also adding a new parapet wall on two sides of the building to break up the long, uninterrupted building face and provide architectural variety. Proposed exterior materials included brick veneer, faux wood siding, and fiber cement lap siding. The applicant planned to add five operable windows on the front and five on the rear, allowing views into the store interior where none currently existed due to the building's existing facade construction.

Sennett noted that the proposed plans required departures from Section 8.08 of the Zoning Ordinance regarding the percentage of windows and specific material types. Six standards within Section 8.08 were not met. The Village Design Review Committee (VDRC) had reviewed the elevations and proposed materials and recommended the Planning Commission grant departures from all six standards not met, which included Sections 1, 3, 4, 7, 11, and 12. Sennett noted that the Planning Commission, per the Zoning Ordinance, has authority to grant such departures. Section 8.09 requires the Commission to consider the impact of modifications on future and existing development, the benefit to the community, and the public purpose to be served by permitting the modifications.

The staff recommendation was for approval of the site plan and requested departures as recommended by the VDRC, with two additional conditions requiring the applicant to meet all standard requirements for site lighting and future signage permits.

Chair Rowland asked about the light gray section of the building's exterior. Korstange responded that it was done to break up the visuals of the building.

Treasurer Korstange, who had participated in the VDRC review, provided additional context for the Commission. She noted the applicant had invested significant effort to bring the design closer to the village standards. The existing building was constructed almost entirely as a facade, with windows that appeared real but were not functional openings. As a result, the applicant could not achieve the full window transparency requirements of Section 8.08. The Applicant Mitchel Nol (6807 Cascade Road) mentioned they had gone through considerable expense and effort of cutting in five real operable windows on both the front and rear elevations to allow visible light and activity from Cascade Road. Korstange also noted the parapet addition would replace large unsightly louvers currently on each peak, improving the overall appearance. She described the VDRC's approach as evaluating how much improvement the applicant could reasonably achieve given the limitations of the existing structure, rather than requiring full compliance that would effectively mandate demolition and rebuilding.

Nol noted the building had been in operation since 1957, and that while the building's long, narrow configuration was not ideal for grocery retail, the planned renovation represented a meaningful investment to bring the building in line with the Township's standards. Nol referenced a comparable remodel at the company's Hudsonville store, which had resulted in approximately a 15% increase in sales sustained throughout the year. He and his wife had purchased the company with the intent of making substantial interior and exterior updates to reflect the company's updated branding. He noted the company was also reducing its total signage from 10 signs to two, which was consistent with the Township's vision, though the PUD currently permitted only one sign. Sennett confirmed that a PUD amendment would be required for two signs and that the applicant would need to return through the PUD amendment process separately.

Vice Chair Kraemer raised a broader concern about the design standards. He acknowledged the visible improvement the project represented but questioned whether granting departures from six of the Section 8.08 standards effectively rendered those standards meaningless. He noted the standards existed to guide the area's long-term design vision and expressed concern that if every redesign resulted in exceptions for cost reasons, the vision would never be realized. He highlighted walkability and visible street-facing entrances as particularly important given the building's location on Cascade Road, which is central to the village district.

Treasurer Korstange responded that the VDRC's process was not simply

accommodating cost concerns but was evaluating the practical constraints of the existing building stock. She noted the applicant was moving from meeting virtually none of the standards to meeting approximately 70 to 80 percent of them. She emphasized that requiring full compliance would necessitate a complete tear-down and rebuild, which was not feasible for the type of renovation that was being done.

Chair Rowland noted he would have liked to see a pedestrian sidewalk connection to Cascade Road. Mitchell Nol acknowledged the idea had been explored but explained the elevation change of two to three feet and the presence of utility infrastructure made a sidewalk connection between the building and the adjacent bank extremely difficult. Treasurer Korstange confirmed this had been a point of discussion during the VDRC review, and that while she had advocated for the sidewalk connection, the committee had reached a consensus that it was not feasible at this time. The applicant indicated openness to revisiting the issue in the future.

Commissioner Cribbs asked for clarification on which version of the zoning ordinance applied to this application. Sennett confirmed the review was based on the current Zoning Ordinance standards within Section 8.08, not the newly adopted Zoning Ordinance that is currently on hold due to a petition submitted for a referendum. Chair Rowland and Treasurer Korstange clarified this distinguished the Harvest Health application from others, such as the International Beverage application, which had been processed under proposed future standards and was now in a different status.

Motion by Treasurer Korstange to APPROVE case #25-3905, for Site Plan approval for an exterior remodel of the existing building at 6807 Cascade Road SE, with the following conditions:

- 1. Departure from the requirements of the following subsections of Section 8.08 is granted: Sections 1,3, 4, 7, 11, and 12.**
- 2. The applicant shall meet the sign requirements of the Thornapple Centre PUD Ordinance.**
- 3. Lighting levels shall meet the requirements of Chapter 19 of the Zoning Ordinance.**

Supported by Commissioner Madiol.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9.

Case #26-3917 – Public Hearing

Applicant: Cascade Charter Township

Requested Action: Request to consider amendments to the Township Zoning Ordinance that would allow the Township Board to implement a short-term moratorium for existing and new or emerging land uses.

Legal Counsel Laura Genovich of Foster Swift addressed the Commission, on amendments to the zoning ordinance related to moratoriums. She clarified that a subcommittee had been formed to study potential data center regulations but had not yet met, and that the focus of the evening's discussion was solely the proposed text amendment to establish a moratorium mechanism in the Zoning Ordinance,

not the development of data center-specific regulations.

Genovich provided background on the purpose of moratoriums in zoning law. She explained that municipalities have increasingly encountered new or emerging land uses, including wind energy, solar energy, battery storage, and now data centers, that require time to study and regulate in the zoning ordinance. A moratorium allows a temporary pause on approvals while that study and amendment process takes place. She noted that case law has evolved significantly on the procedural requirements for valid moratoriums, generally indicating that a moratorium should be implemented by ordinance rather than by resolution or motion alone. In some circumstances, however, a resolution may be used if the zoning ordinance specifically authorizes it.

Genovich explained there were two different actions related to moratoriums before or related to the Commission. First, the Township Board had already exercised its police powers to adopt an ordinance placing a moratorium on data center approvals pending regulatory development in the Zoning Ordinance. Second, the text amendment before the Planning Commission that evening proposed a structural change to the Zoning Ordinance itself, which would authorize the Township Board to impose moratoriums by resolution on a forward-going basis for any existing, new, or emerging land uses that needed to be regulated. She emphasized that this mechanism was broader than data centers and was intended to make the township more agile when new land uses arose.

Chair Rowland asked how the mechanism worked procedurally, including whether the board voted to set the duration. Genovich confirmed the board would adopt a resolution and set the time period, which could not initially exceed 12 months. She noted that an additional extension of up to six months could also be granted with public notice.

Commissioner Madiol sought clarification on whether the agenda item included both the moratorium mechanism and data center-specific regulations. Genovich confirmed only the moratorium mechanism was before the Commission that evening. Treasurer Korstange added context, noting the Township Board had already acted under its police powers with a six-month moratorium on data centers with a possible six-month extension.

Chair Rowland raised a question about whether the moratorium mechanism would apply retroactively to existing pending applications. Genovich clarified that the mechanism was intended for emerging land uses in need of zoning regulation and would not affect applications already approved. She also noted the mechanism was not a tool for excluding land uses entirely, but rather for ensuring the zoning ordinance provided adequate regulatory standards before applications were processed.

**Motion by Chair Rowland to open public hearing.
Supported by Treasurer Korstange.
Motion carried unanimously.**

Josh Jordan (5479 Whispering Timbers Drive) noted he regularly uses the south entrance to Costco. He commended Commissioner Cribbs on the correct pronunciation of Louisville. Jordan did not raise substantive concerns

regarding the fuel facility expansion.

Motion was made by Chair Rowland to close public hearing.

Supported by Treasurer Korstange.

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Chair Rowland for Case #26-3917, to RECOMMEND APPROVAL of the ordinance to amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow for imposing a temporary moratorium for any application permits, rezoning, licensing or approval for existing, new or emerging land use in the township of Cascade, the initial moratorium shall not exceed 12 months, with one additional extension of up to six months.

Supported by Treasurer Korstange.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 10. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak.

There was no one wishing to speak.

ARTICLE 11. Other Business

There was no other business.

ARTICLE 12. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Commissioner David Madiol, Planning Commission Secretary