

Minutes
Cascade Charter Township
Zoning Board of Appeals
Tuesday, May 12, 2026
5:30 pm
2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE

ARTICLE 1. Chair Mead called the Cascade Charter Township Zoning Board of Appeals meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Members Present: Mead, Milliken, Berra, Potter, Noordhoek

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Kyle Mucha, McKenna Associates (Interim Planner), and others listed on the sign-in sheet.

ARTICLE 2. Pledge of Allegiance

ARTICLE 3. Approve the current Agenda

Motion was made by Trustee Noordhoek to approve the current Agenda. Supported by Member Potter. Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 4. Disclose any Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest disclosed.

ARTICLE 5. Approve the Minutes of the September 9, 2025 meeting.

Motion was made by Member Milliken to approve the Minutes of the September 9, 2025 meeting. Supported by Trustee Noordhoek. Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 6. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak.

There was no one wishing to speak.

ARTICLE 7. Appointment of 2026 Zoning Board of Appeals Officers

Chair Mead opened the floor for nominations for the 2026 Zoning Board of Appeals officers.

Member Potter nominated Aaron Mead to serve as Chair. No additional nominations were made.

Motion was made by Member Potter to appoint Aaron Mead as Chair of the 2026 Zoning Board of Appeals. Supported by Member Milliken. Motion carried unanimously.

Member Milliken expressed her willingness to serve as Vice Chair. No additional nominations were made.

Motion was made by Chair Mead to appoint Member Milliken as Vice Chair of the 2026 Zoning Board of Appeals. Supported by Trustee Noordhoek. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Mead recommended that Member Berra serve as Secretary. No additional nominations were made.

Motion was made by Trustee Noordhoek to appoint Member Berra as Secretary of the 2026 Zoning Board of Appeals. Supported by Member Milliken. Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 8. Case #26-3920 – Public Hearing

Applicants: Pioneer Construction; Tyler Bartis; Owner Christina Keller

Property Address: 4950 37th Street SE

Parcel Number: 41-19-100-033

Requested Action: Dimensional variance to reduce the front yard setback along the north property line from 100 feet to 10.7 feet.

Kyle Mucha of McKenna Associates, Interim Planner for the Township, presented the application. He noted the request was for a dimensional variance to reduce the required front yard setback along the north property line from 100 feet to 10.7 feet at 4950 37th Street SE. He explained the property is zoned Industrial and is located at the end of the 37th Street cul-de-sac, measuring approximately 7.31 acres. The existing facility contains approximately 51,000 square feet of manufacturing and warehousing space, as well as just under 5,500 square feet of single-story office space, and currently houses plastic injection molding operations. The proposed building addition would be located on the east portion of the site, 10.7 feet south of the 66-foot wide shared access easement running along the north property line. The required front yard setback in the Industrial zoning district is 100 feet, necessitating the variance.

Mr. Mucha noted the property has 375 feet of frontage along 37th Street and that the applicant proposed to add additional manufacturing space to allow for the consolidation and expansion of production at the site. He then addressed the six standards of approval under Section 23.05.2(c) of the Zoning Ordinance.

Regarding Standard 1, Mr. Mucha stated that the property has exceptional conditions due to its location at the end of a private street and, more notably, the 66-foot wide access easement on the north side of the site. He noted that very few, if any, properties in the Township at the end of a cul-de-sac have a full-width easement running through them, and staff found this standard to be satisfied.

Regarding Standard 2, he explained the location of the site and the aforementioned easement are not circumstances created by the actions of the applicant, and staff found this standard to be satisfied.

Regarding Standard 3, he indicated that based on documentation provided by the applicant, staff found the requested variance to be the minimum variance necessary to make possible the reasonable use of the land, and that the applicant would be asked to speak further to that finding.

Regarding Standard 4, he noted that area businesses had provided letters of support for the variance, and staff found this standard to be satisfied.

Regarding Standard 5, he stated that the unique combination of the cul-de-sac location and the rare access easement give the property characteristics that make a variance more appropriate than an amendment to the zoning ordinance, and staff found this standard to be satisfied.

Regarding Standard 6, he explained that complying with the ordinance would require reducing the size of the proposed building addition to a point that would not provide sufficient space for the equipment needed for the facility's manufacturing operations,

presenting a practical difficulty. He noted the applicant would be asked to speak further to this finding.

Chair Mead asked whether the easement on the north side of the property was separate from the 37th Street easement or a continuation of it. Mr. Mucha indicated he would need to review that further and did not want to misspeak on the matter.

Chair Mead asked whether the detention basin shown within the easement area could conflict with Township requirements if the easement were ever utilized for its legal purpose. He raised the concern that future use of the easement for ingress and egress could result in the loss of the detention basin, creating a potential compliance issue from either a drain commission or planning standpoint. Mr. Mucha responded that those concerns would be reviewed in greater detail during the site plan review process and that he would consult the Township engineer regarding the catch basin, adding that he believed the issue would be addressable.

Tyler Bartis of Pioneer Construction, 550 Kirtland Street SW, presented on behalf of Cascade Engineering. He explained the purpose of the expansion was to consolidate multiple manufacturing locations into one facility to improve operational efficiencies for a specific product line. He noted the project layout was designed to keep the new construction within the existing concrete footprint already established on site. He stated the proposed addition would be approximately 61,000 square feet of industrial space, consistent with the existing manufacturing use, and represented a continuation of current operations.

Chair Mead asked whether the proposed addition would increase impervious surface on the site. Mr. Bartis confirmed that based on the applicant's calculations, the addition would not increase impervious surface.

Chair Mead asked who benefited from the shared access easement on the north side of the property. Mike Bouman, the applicant's engineer, responded that the easement serves the Kawasaki property to the east, and that Kawasaki had provided a letter approving the plan.

Chair Mead asked whether the applicant had explored vacating the easement as an alternative to pursuing the variance. Mr. Bouman indicated the applicant had considered vacating the easement but determined that pursuing the variance would allow the project to proceed more efficiently. Mr. Bartis added that the applicant was simultaneously working through the first site plan approval process, where that path could also be explored.

Trustee Noordhoek expressed that he was generally opposed to placing buildings in proximity to an easement held by another party and would prefer to see the easement vacated before proceeding. Chair Mead clarified that the building would not encroach into the easement itself, but would be located 10.7 feet from the edge of the easement. He explained that because the easement functions as a form of frontage for the lot, it triggers the 100-foot front yard setback requirement, making the easement the cause of the setback issue rather than the building's proximity to the street. Trustee Noordhoek acknowledged this clarification.

Motion was made by Trustee Noordhoek to open the public hearing for Case #26-3920. Supported by Member Potter. Motion carried unanimously.

There was no one wishing to speak.

Motion was made by Trustee Noordhoek to close the public hearing for Case #26-3920. Supported by Member Potter. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Mead noted that while the easement is not currently in use, the legal right of whoever holds access to the easement remains intact. He raised the concern that if Kawasaki were to exercise that right and install a paved road within the 66-foot easement, any existing detention infrastructure within that area could be impacted, creating compliance questions under either the drain commission or the Township's planning requirements.

Mr. Bouman clarified that a new fire lane was proposed along the east side of the property within the easement area. He confirmed that all stormwater detention for the development drains to a common pond to the north, and that there was no on-site detention currently, nor would there be with the proposed addition.

Chair Mead asked whether the applicant had discussed with Kawasaki the possibility of extending the new fire lane pavement to improve circulation around that property as well. Mr. Bouman responded there was nothing precluding that in the future. Mr. Bartis confirmed the fire department had reviewed and approved the fire lane at a pre-site plan meeting. Chair Mead noted that because the addition does not increase impervious surface, water runoff would not be worsened. Member Potter confirmed the areas on either side of the proposed fire lane were grassed.

Chair Mead noted the Board had four options before it: postpone, deny, approve, or approve with conditions, and invited a motion. Member Potter indicated he would make a motion to approve and asked staff for guidance on appropriate motion language. Mr. Mucha requested that the Board cite the applicable findings of fact within the motion, noting whether criteria had been met and the reasons supporting that determination.

Motion was made by Member Potter to APPROVE Case #26-3920, a dimensional variance to reduce the front yard setback along the north property line from 100 feet to 10.7 feet at 4950 37th Street SE, Parcel Number 41-19-100-033, based on the following findings:

1. The location at the end of a private drive as well as the easement located on the northern portion of the property demonstrates exceptional and extraordinary conditions that are inherent to the property in question and are not the result of actions taken by the applicant.
2. Compliance with the ordinance presents practical difficulties due to its location at the end of a private drive, the easement, and lack of space therefore.
3. Based on the findings of fact, the variance requested is the minimal variance possible, as the practical difficulties prevent the additional structure from being located farther than 10.7 ft from the north property line.

Supported by Trustee Noordhoek. Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak.

Chair Mead noted that Article 9 was repetitive due to Article 6 and was skipped subsequently.

ARTICLE 10. Other Business

Mr. Mucha noted there were no additional matters currently pending before the Zoning Board of Appeals.

ARTICLE 11. Adjourn

Motion was made by Trustee Noordhoek to adjourn. Supported by Member Milliken. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lou Berra, Zoning Board of Appeals Secretary

DRAFT