

Casco Township Parks and Recreation Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 11th, 2025

1. **Call to Order & Roll Call:** Meeting called to order at 7:00pm.
Committee members present: Don Kuick, Andy Litts, Paul Macyauski, Mary Campbell, Libby Catt, Kelly Hecker, Matt Super and Debbie Weaver
Committee members absent: none
2. **Approval of Agenda:** Debbie motioned to approve. Kelly support. All in favor
3. **Approval of the February 14th, 2025 Minutes:** Paul motioned to approve. Debbie support. No discussion. All in favor. Minutes approved.
4. **Correspondence received:** Kelly received email from Zachary Jackson, a Casco resident, who is organizing a singer-songwriter series for summer 2025 – Low Light Music Fest – and is requesting to hold a concert in the Casco Nature Preserve one day this summer.
5. **Public Comment:** public present. No comment.
6. **First Street:** The township board denied Mr. Stufflebeam’s request for an easement across township property. Paul says the dogwood looks pretty but the dappled willow is out of control. There was some brief debate about wrapping the arborvitae prior to winter to protect from them from deer.
7. **Maple Grove Property:** The board approved funds for the wetland delineation study. The township is moving forward with hiring LRE (Landscape Resource Engineering, Grand Rapids) to conduct the study, planned to start in April.

Debbie reported that she, Mary, and Allan Overhiser met with Stephanie Calhoun from Allegan County Community Foundation (ACCF) on March 5th. ACCF is able and willing to serve as a fiduciary for the township’s fundraising efforts for establishing beach access. ACCF also has community grants for which we can apply. There is a 1-2% administration fee but the fee can be partially offset by holding funds in an account with a small interest rate. Stephanie recommended keeping the project title general to avoid pigeon-holing into very specific purpose. Mary clarified with her that funds raised cannot be returned to the donors in the future should we fall short of our goal. Stephanie recommended that we talk to Blue Star Trail as they have done a lot of similar work.

ACCF grant applications open 5/19/25. Close 6/23/25. Decision made by 8/1/25.

Mary and Debbie also identified some private foundation grants we can apply to: Perrigo and Delano. Holtech/Palisades perhaps another possibility.

Mary suggested that we apply to local entities to sponsor an open house for the park expansion—WalMart, Meijer, casino, but that we will need to act promptly as applications to the Gun Lake Casino need to be in by the end of this month.

APPROVED

Kelly proposed that we organize a subcommittee for open house planning. Julie Cowie, present in audience, would like to be involved. Libby & Debbie willing to help. Matt suggested inviting Rachel Ridley. Kelly will serve as the lead organizer of the subcommittee.

Blue Star Trail has requested that bike racks be added to the expansion. Committee thinks they should be placed by bathroom/ parking lot. Allegan Tech Center potentially could make bike racks. Andy will inquire through a point of contact.

Education. Where are our interpretative signs? Paul will call Pam Blough to get update on signs. These need to be installed by June. We are holding back \$6000 from Davis Landscaping until sign installation is completed.

Don asked if we are going to do anything with the septic mound. Committee will revisit in future. Currently seeded to grass. Beautification to be developed in future.

8. **Budget Review:** Committee reviewed expenses 1/1 – 2/28/25. Committee would like to review expenses every month. Mary will get report from Rachel for each meeting. Brian Ridley will attend April Park's meeting.
9. **Nature Preserve:** Kelly looked into prescribed burn. Typically conducted in spring or fall and organized by a burn manager. Not yet able to find someone to hire as most of the conservancy organizations in the area train their own staff and volunteers to conduct their own burns. Training is available. SHAES is willing to be on site with a tanker truck. Just call to set up when we have a window of time in mind.

Too late to do this spring. Committee will revisit the topic in July. Plan to do in late winter of 2026 or potentially November 2025.

Andy recommends that the Nature Preserve entrance sign be repainted. Mike Keifer, a local professional sign maker, has repainted some other signs for township. Paul will get a quote from Mike when we is back in town. Would like sign to be repainted before open house.

Need fence fixed along bluff and by road. Put up grilles. Will bring up with Brian at next meeting. All before open house.

Plan for fall bulb planting.

Motion: Matt motioned to recommend that the board spend \$500 on flower bulbs for fall planting. Paul support. All in favor. **Motion passed.**

Discussion of potential shrubs and trees planting.

10. **Township Hall:** Put up pickleball net by June.
11. **Board Update:** the board had a meeting on renovation with architect. Anticipate renovation plans will be presented at board meeting on Monday, March 17th. Waiting on funds from state appropriations.

APPROVED

12. **Round Table:** Don – none. Matt – talk one at a time, please. Paul – none. Mary – need to request \$ for powerwashing/ sweeping at April meeting. Libby – none. Kelly – need to make beach access plan poster; Paul is handling it. Also, will be out of state on April 8th. Debbie – none. Andy – will be gone on April 8th; all members of group agreed to meet on April 1st, although Mary stated she may have a time conflict.

13. **Public Comment:** David Campbell stated that there is too much overtalking in the meeting and that the committee is not being efficient. Also wants to know what our plan is for access to beach; says we are not any closer now than we were in 2021. An additional millage has not been considered. He is requesting a public note from Supervisor addressing the lack of progress on access to the beach.

Julie Cowie asked for clarification that the subcommittee will be applying for funds from casino, WalMart, Meijer for open house sponsorships. The committee's response to this is "yes. The subcommittee has permission to submit applications as some deadlines will come before the next parks meeting.

14. **Adjournment:** Adjourned at 8:23pm.

Next meeting date set for Tuesday, April 1st, 2025 at 7:00pm at Casco Nature Preserve, weather permitting.

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Kelly Hecker