

Properties Committee Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2026 – 3:15 PM

The Properties Committee meeting was called to order at 3:15 PM by Chairwoman Cavanagh. Present at the meeting were Chairwoman Cavanagh, Councilman Canton, Councilwoman Rensel, and Mayor Koons. Also in attendance was visitor Charlotte Brett, who participated primarily in discussions related to landscaping and beautification.

The meeting began with informal discussion before transitioning into committee business. Charlotte Brett explained that she attended to better understand the Committee's direction on landscaping and beautification initiatives so she could share information with others, including Kathy, who had participated in prior discussions.

Landscaping and Beautification of Village Properties

The Committee discussed the overall approach to landscaping village properties, particularly the east and west sides of key intersections. Chairwoman Cavanagh proposed gathering community input by distributing handouts to residents during trash collection days, when there is a "captive audience." The idea included providing visual options and asking residents for feedback.

There was discussion about whether paper handouts or digital tools would be more effective. Some members supported using a QR code linked to a Google Form, allowing residents to submit preferences electronically, while others emphasized that many residents still prefer paper. The Committee generally agreed a hybrid approach—paper handouts with QR codes—would be most effective. It was also agreed that the number of design options should be limited (approximately three or four) to avoid overwhelming residents and complicating decision-making.

The Committee discussed design concepts, including floral displays similar to those in nearby communities, as well as incorporating a focal point such as a clock structure. There was consensus that any designs across corners should be cohesive rather than competing, with consistent materials and themes.

Veterans Memorial Area Improvements

Discussion turned to the Veterans Memorial area. Members suggested relocating existing flags from light poles to dedicated flagpoles, similar to installations in nearby communities. This would allow for cleaner design integration, particularly if decorative flower arrangements are added to light poles. The idea of enhancing the memorial area as a more formal and visually appealing space was supported.

Use of Space and Gathering Areas

The Committee explored ideas for making village spaces more inviting. Suggestions included adding seating areas, picnic tables, and possibly pathways connecting existing features such as

the gazebo to nearby businesses. The idea of creating a small gathering space where residents could sit, eat, or relax was well received.

Landscape Design Services

The Mayor reported that a retired landscaper, Tony Colini, had offered to provide design plans for approximately \$2,500. This was viewed as a reasonable cost compared to hiring a larger firm. However, there was also discussion about obtaining multiple bids to ensure good stewardship of public funds. The Committee agreed to pursue at least three bids before making a decision, though inviting Mr. Colini to present ideas at a future meeting remained a possibility.

Tree and Environmental Concerns

The Committee discussed concerns about certain trees along the roadway, identified as invasive species. While no immediate action was taken, members acknowledged the need for further evaluation.

Attention also turned to the retention basin, which members felt lacked visual appeal. Charlotte Brett recommended planting native species and possibly creating a meadow or rain garden using plants with deep root systems to improve water management and aesthetics. The idea of incorporating seasonal plantings to support pollinators was also discussed positively.

Driveway Access to Route 306

The Committee debated whether to retain a driveway connection to Route 306. Some members felt it created traffic hazards, particularly during events like the farmers market, while others noted it provides important access for police and service vehicles. No final decision was made, and further input from the police and service departments was recommended.

Bike Rack Donation

The Committee discussed a donated bike rack that had not yet been formally accepted. Members agreed the rack would be beneficial for park users and should be refurbished (sandblasted and painted). A motion to formally accept the donation was identified as necessary for future action.

Maintenance Staffing (Cleaning Services)

The Committee discussed the temporary absence of the regular cleaning staff member due to medical issues. Village employees had been filling in, but there was consensus that this was not a sustainable solution. The Committee discussed seeking outside cleaning services, including a potential referral from a local church cleaning team. Background check requirements for after-hours work were noted.

Farmers Market

The Committee reviewed the status of the farmers market and agreed it continues to be successful and well-attended. Members expressed a strong preference to keep the market at its current location. The only anticipated adjustment involves accommodating construction of a salt dome. The annual contract, insurance documentation, and logistics are expected to be finalized in April.

Rarick Cemetery Maintenance

Significant concerns were raised regarding maintenance at Weirik Cemetery. Fallen trees from a neighboring property had caused damage to a fence and created an unsightly condition. The Committee agreed the property owner should be contacted to address the issue.

More broadly, the cemetery was described as needing substantial cleanup and improvement. Suggestions included volunteer involvement, enhanced maintenance, and possibly adding decorative elements such as large planters at the entrance to improve appearance.

Tree City Program

The Mayor introduced the possibility of pursuing Tree City designation, which would require ongoing tree planting and maintenance efforts. This aligns with broader goals of improving green space and environmental stewardship.

Park Improvements and Projects

Several park-related topics were discussed:

- **Pergola Installation:** A proposal to install a small pergola with seating at East Washington Park was considered as a way to provide shade and encourage use during lunchtime hours.
- **Controlled Burns:** The Committee revisited the idea of conducting controlled burns to manage invasive species and improve park health. While supported in principle, implementation has been delayed due to weather constraints. Notification procedures for residents, especially those with respiratory concerns, were emphasized.
- **Scout Recognition Plaque:** The Committee discussed creating a plaque recognizing local Scout achievements, including both Eagle Scouts and Girl Scouts. This has been under consideration for some time and requires formal action.
- **Master Plan Review:** Members noted that the park master plan has not been reviewed in several years and should be revisited by the Park Committee.

Hometown Heroes Banner Program

The Committee discussed a proposal to install “Hometown Heroes” banners recognizing military service members. While some members supported the idea, concerns were raised about criteria, costs, and feedback from veterans who preferred broader recognition rather than individual displays. The Committee agreed more research and community input are needed before moving forward.

Miscellaneous Items

- Seasonal decorations (lights and wreaths) remain in place and will be removed using appropriate equipment.
- The park flag lighting system was discussed, with ongoing challenges related to solar power reliability.
- Future Eagle Scout projects and landscaping initiatives were briefly reviewed.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at approximately 3:56 PM.