

MINUTES

Cascade Charter Township
Downtown Development Authority
June 17, 2025, at 5:30pm
Cascade Library Wisner Center
2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE

ARTICLE 1. Chair Kleyla called the meeting to order at 5:31pm.
Members Present: Kleyla, Vogel, Preston, Bingham, Stephan
Late: Carlson, Makkar
Absent: Lesperance
Others Present: Township Manager Jade Smith, Executive Assistant Jessica Stine,
Downtown Development Manager Eric Ensey

ARTICLE 2. Approval of the Agenda

Motion was made by Member Stephan to approve the agenda. Supported by Member Vogel. Motion carried 5 to 0.

ARTICLE 3. Approval of the Minutes of the May 20, 2025 Meeting

Motion was made by Member Bingham to approve the minutes as written. Supported by Member Preston. Motion carried 5 to 0.

ARTICLE 4. DDA Manager Introduction

The new Downtown Development Manager Eric Ensey was introduced to the DDA Board.

ARTICLE 5. Landscape Discussion

Manager Smith discussed the possible ways to remedy the median islands in Centennial Park.

Member Carlson arrived at the meeting at 5:36pm.

Medians are often covered in snow in the winter, and they are a danger to cars when hidden. The potential ways to improve these medians include bricking them in with pavers/cement, filling them with pea gravel and boulders (appx \$45,000), live plantings, or entirely removing the medians (appx \$100,000). Kent County Road Commission prefers that we remove the medians but that would be at the Township's cost. Adding boulders could also become a hazard for cars but paving them in would cause more of a soft curve. They were originally installed to calm traffic. Members asked if the Township would want to post directional signs in the medians and Manager Smith said he would check with the Parks Department and Kent County Road Commission.

Motion was made by Member Preston to install concrete in the Centennial Park Medians. Supported by Member Bingham. Motion carried 6 to 0.

ARTICLE 6. Site Improvement Discussion

Manager Smith suggested suspending the Site Improvement Grant Program until the Zoning Ordinance amendments are passed, which will likely be in August.

Motion was made by Member Carlson to suspend the Site Improvement Grant Program until August of 2025, once the Township Board has approved the pending Zoning Ordinance amendments. Supported by Member Stephan. Motion carried 6 to 0.

ARTICLE 7. Staff Updates

Manager Smith talked about the new concert series that will be taking place at Friendship Park in the summer. There was a decent turnout at the previous concert, but the word had not spread as much as they hoped since the Township newsletter was delayed. The other two concerts currently scheduled will take place on July 17th and August 2nd. Local business owners are interested in participating either at the concert or holding specials on the day of the event.

The library refresh project is scheduled to finish in June, and the Grand Reopening is scheduled for July 23rd at 5:30pm.

The pedestrian bridge over the Thornapple River is complete regarding the pedestrian enlargement portion of the project, other than the light poles, but there are still cones on the bridge because Kent County Road Commission will be redecking the bridge. Members expressed interest in adding information on the bridge to the Township Facebook page and adding it as a banner on the website.

Rishi's International Beverage in Cascade is actively discussing property improvements with Township staff. A new bank may be coming to Centennial Park, but they have a long road to approval.

Member Stephan's Cascade Culver's will be one of ten locations participating in "Share Night" on June 24, 2025, from 5-8pm, to raise money to support farmland preservation. Members were invited to volunteer at the event or bring their families for dinner.

Members will brainstorm regarding Metro Cruise and figure out how to best use the publicity they will receive from it.

A block party at D&W is coming up and the Township hopes to eventually promote those kinds of events.

Manager Smith did not have further information regarding why 28th St construction had not yet begun but said it should be complete for the Independence Day Celebration.

Manager Smith discussed potential uses for the Stone House and developing a fee schedule to make it rentable. CarbonSix, the construction firm currently renovating the Kent District Library, is designing potential interior improvements for the Stone House to make it more attractive for events and other use.

Engineering determined that the old Doctor's Office is structurally sound. RFQ's were due for the Tassell Park Final Design on June 16th, and the Township received eight bids.

Interviews will be conducted in the next week, and a recommendation will be brought to the July meeting.

The Hotel Ordinance has been enacted, and fifteen licenses have been issued. There has been a decrease in Fire Department and Kent County Sherrif's Office calls relating to the hotels since the process began. Member Vogel noted that there have been less unpleasant calls and engagements reported from his employees, at Nothing Bundt Cakes, lately. Some hotels have inquired about redevelopment if the right opportunity was to come along.

Member Makkar arrived at the meeting at 6:10pm.

ARTICLE 8. Any Other Business

There wasn't any other business to discuss at that time.

ARTICLE 9. Acknowledge Visitors & Public Comment

Doug Lee, 8613 52nd St, owner of Jam & Bean, explained his displeasure with the pedestrian bridge project. He said he had to delay opening his business for the year due to the bridge construction. Members stated that they had heard and seen an increase in foot traffic on the bridge. Lee disagreed, stating that there was, "No increase in foot traffic" and said any possible increase wouldn't make up for his losses. Supervisor Lesperance spoke through Zoom, stating that Lee's claims about the bridge were incorrect.

Chuck Vanderwall asked the DDA Board where the snow from the bridge would go. He didn't like the barrier installed to protect pedestrians from vehicular traffic. He believes the bridge is now too narrow to drive on.

ARTICLE 10. Adjournment

Motion was made by Member Makkar to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Member Vogel. Motion carried 7 to 0. The meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Vogel, Secretary