

MINUTES

Cascade Charter Township
Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors
June 15, 2021
5:30 P.M.
Virtual Meeting

ARTICLE 1. Chairman Puplava called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.
Members Present: Kleyla, DeWitt, Stephan, Vogel, Growney, and Puplava.
Members Absent: Lesperance, Siegle, Makkar
Others Present: DDA Director Sandra Korhorn, Manager Ben Swayze, and Matt Dillivan, Representative of The Rapid

ARTICLE 2. Approve the Current Agenda.

Motion was made by Member Stephan to approve the Current Agenda. Supported by Member Growney. Motion carried 5 to 0.

ARTICLE 3. Approval of the Minutes of May 18, 2021 Meeting

Motion was made by Member Stephan to approve the Minutes of the May 18, 2021 Meeting. Supported by Member Kleyla. Motion carried 5 to 0.

ARTICLE 4. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak to non-agenda items.
(Comments are limited to five minutes per speaker)

There were no visitors.

Member Vogel entered meeting.

ARTICLE 5. Discuss and Consider The Rapid Bus Contract – Remove from Table – Pages added 6/14/21

Motion made by Member Kleyla to remove The Rapid Bus Contract consideration from the table. Supported by Member Stephan. Motion carried 6 to 0.

Director Korhorn stated that this is a continuation of discussion regarding the long-term contract for The Rapid Bus service, and at the May meeting, a Rapid representative stated that the contract dates will have to be revised to (tentatively) October 1st, 2021, to May 9th, 2022. Director Korhorn stated that at the same meeting, the DDA Board requested

additional information on how to reduce the cost of the service by shortening the route, shortening hours, etc. and that information is included in tonight's packet. There is also information about the Go Bus and Hope Network bus service as requested. Director Korhorn stated that the reason the DDA is discussing these options is that the Township Board has decided that in order for Rapid Bus service to continue, the DDA must provide 100% of the funding for the 28th Street (29th St) route.

Director Korhorn stated that a decision needs to be made on this tonight so Rapid staff has time to put together a route, if needed.

Manager Swayze stated that this will be a seven-month contract as The Rapid is only committed to this revenue model for a year from when their decision was made, and that expectation is analysis of the route will be over early into 2022. The DDA will need to make another decision to continue with service or not at that point. Manager Swayze stated that shortening the route is not an option as the price difference would go against the policy that allows The Rapid to have this revenue model in place, however changing times that the service is available is a possibility.

Manager Swayze reviewed four possible options with Members.

The current service (option 1) and option 4 (the biggest reduction in service) have a price difference of about \$30,000 per the October to May service period, or just short of \$50,000 annually.

Manager Swayze reviewed questions asked of him by Chairwoman Puplava about the cost of both The Rapid Go Bus, and the Hope Network Bus. The questions were as follows:

1. It's understood that The Go Bus is provided at no additional cost to the Township for ADA eligible riders. Is there an additional cost to the riders, and if so, what is the charge, and does the Township cover any of that cost? Manager Swayze stated that there is an additional cost of \$3.50 if a rider is ADA eligible, or \$8 if they are over the age of 65 (not ADA eligible). The Township does not cover any of these costs.

Hope Network riders pay a \$5 fee per ride; however, the Township covers \$1 of that to get the cost closer to The Go Bus fee.

2. Assuming the DDA executes the Rapid Bus contract, is there any savings to the Township that can be leveraged by using

The Go Bus transportation over Hope Network transportation? Manager Swayze stated that there is CDGB (Community Development Block Grant) funding of \$144,000 available for Kent County Townships to tap into to cover the cost of rides, and that Cascade Township is then responsible for any rides over 20 rides per person per month. Manager Swayze stated that is typically only 1 or 2 Go Bus riders a month.

3. Can part of the Go Bus cost be covered by the Kent County CDBG dollars? Manager Swayze stated that is not an eligible expense.

Chairwoman Puplava invited Members to ask questions.

Member Growney asked if ridership numbers have been figured out. Manager Swayze stated that data from 2018-current is included in the packet for tonight, and reviewed 2021 first-quarter ridership data with Members, noting that these numbers are still affected by Covid-19. First-quarter 2021 there was an average weekday ridership of 153 riders per day, Saturday ridership of 126 riders per day, and Sunday ridership of 70 riders per day. Manager Swayze stated that the additional information provided by The Rapid can help if Members are looking into alternate service parameter options provided by The Rapid.

Chairwoman Puplava stated that she is appreciative of the alternate service options provided by The Rapid, however she is against eliminating Sunday service (option #4) as there is Sunday ridership. Member Stephan agrees with Chairwoman Puplavas statement, adding that he does not believe it will benefit the Township or businesses within.

Chairwoman Puplava asked if there is a dissenting viewpoint, and if not, states that eliminating option #4 may help advance conversation. No Member stated dissent.

Chairwoman Puplava stated that she would like to figure out which option is most appropriate for the contract going forward.

Member Stephan asked for clarification of time frames/definitions (morning, mid-day, etc.), especially regarding the Saturday schedule. Mr. Max Dillivan stated that the morning, 60-minute period goes from (roughly) 6:30am until 10am. From (roughly) 10am until 6:30pm will be a 30-minute, mid-day period, and then from (roughly) 6:30pm on will be a 60-minute evening period.

Manager Swayze asked Mr. Dillivan if there will be a way to collect data from riders if the DDA chooses to select option 2 or 3 (both of which will reduce service hours), and how the schedule change has impacted them. Mr. Dillivan stated that he believes a survey with this data can be created and administered.

Member Stephan asked Mr. Dillivan how the schedule/time change will be communicated to riders if the DDA chooses to reduce service hours. Mr. Dillivan stated that this will fall into larger, system wide changes that are already taking effect, so related information will be included in some press releases, social media posts, physical notices at stops, analog notifications, and even through business owners whose employees use the bus service.

Member Stephan believes that with the help of Director Korhorn, the DDA should communicate new routes/times with Cascade businesses that may be impacted by a change. Chairwoman Pupilava agrees, stating that it would also be nice to give riders and businesses a time frame to transition if needed.

Chairwoman Pupilava asked when the schedule change would take place if the DDA decides to choose a new service schedule. Mr. Dillivan stated that the current contract runs through September 30, 2021, so notices will be released before then stating an October 1st change.

Member Vogel asked what service changes The Rapid is making itself, and how they may relate to current trends. Mr. Dillivan stated that there will be schedule adjustments and alignments to all fixed routes, with the level of service remaining the same. Mr. Dillivan stated that ridership numbers are trending similarly with routes nationwide, and expects numbers to gradually rise in the near future.

Member Vogel stated that the bus service provides an opportunity for employees to get to work, and believes that it may become more important as more people enter the work force.

Member Stephan agrees that the bus service is vital to both employees and business owners at this time, and believes that service should continue with a reduced schedule (he is in favor of option 3) to benefit the Township, and those who rely on bus service.

Chairwoman Pupilava agreed that option 3 is acceptable as there is money in the budget, no money will be taken away from other programs or services, and it will provide a tangible benefit to businesses in the DDA. Member Vogel asked what the percentage savings will be if another service option is chosen. Manager Swayze stated that option 3 is 13.2% reduction over the current bus service, and option 2 is 9.1% reduction over the current service.

Member Vogel believes that option 3 is a reasonable option to still support local businesses in the community.

Chairwoman Pupilava stated that option 3 also addresses those who have expressed concern about the cost of the service.

Manager Swayze asked Members to approve a contract based on the material terms the DDA set forth in order to save time bringing a written contract back to them for review and approval, and stated that it will likely need to be signed by Director Korhorn or Chairwoman Pupilava. Chairwoman Pupilava asked if this will technically be a contract with the Township even though the DDA is providing the funding. Manager Swayze stated that he will need to look into that.

Motion was made by Chairwoman Pupilava to approve a long-term bus contract through May 9, 2022 having the rates articulated in Option 3 of the memo, and allowing the contract to be finalized, approved, and executed consistent with those terms. Supported by Member Growney. Motion carried 6 to 0.

ARTICLE 6. Discuss and Consider Village Flowers/Plantings

Director Korhorn stated that Daylily Floral requested to put pots and plantings throughout the Cascade Village, and that she met with Mary from Daylily to walk through the corridor. Director Korhorn stated that this project would involve 23-25 new planters and concrete bases through the district, and there is a map in the packet that has approximate locations marked on it.

Director Korhorn stated that Mary proposed the planter contents be changed seasonally, with exception of spring as there is a lack of options and as the weather is typically unpredictable. In addition to fall plantings, Mary has proposed tall corn husks for each of the black lamp posts in the Village, and potted spruce trees in the winter with solar powered tree toppers. In addition, there is a landscape bed adjacent to the Citgo gas

station on Cascade Road and Old 28th that could use an update, Director Korhorn stated that she is waiting on more information about that space.

Director Korhorn stated that she has met with a representative of the Kent County Road Commission, and as long as height and setback requirements are followed, they are in favor of this plan.

Director Korhorn stated that she would like guidance from the DDA on how they would like to proceed with this, and let Members know that she did receive an email from RRR Lawn & Landscape (located in the Village) who would also like to enhance the Village area with seasonal colors.

Director Korhorn stated that there is not irrigation to a lot of the proposed planters, so a drip line may need to be discussed in order to keep the plantings properly watered and thriving.

Member Stephan reviewed the estimated cost of pots (\$13,000), bases (\$25,000), the fall arrangement (\$5,000), corn husks (\$1,800-2,900), 6-8" Christmas trees with LED lights (\$7,000), and an average of \$200 per pot for summer plants (\$5,000), and stated that he believes \$56,000 (without irrigation and soil included) is a lot of money for one year's worth of flowers, and although the following year the cost of pots and bases would not be included, believes a better price can be found for annual plantings per pot.

Chairwoman Puplava agrees with Member Stephan, stating that irrigation will add a significant cost and disruption to the areas it's needed. Chairwoman Puplava stated that it would be helpful to have these isolated into individual projects (fall husks, Christmas trees, etc.) as some won't require as much infrastructure.

Chairwoman Puplava stated that she is not opposed to the idea of installing pots, but believes the budgeting process should be taken into consideration, and more information should be gathered before moving forward. Chairwoman Puplava also believes that if there are other companies in The District interested in collaborating on such projects, all options should be explored and reviewed for future consideration.

Member Kleyla asked if the existing permanent bowl planters (there are 10 of them) could be duplicated in order to be consistent with aesthetic, and agrees that this is a large-scale project that would benefit the DDA financially by obtaining proposals for the desired work, and having adequate time to be thoughtful about expanding. Member Kleyla

believes proposals for planting the existing pots and the bed by the Citgo station might be a good place to start for now. Director Korhorn stated that the proposed “new” pots would be smaller in stature than the existing ones, and states that there may be opportunities to start this project on a smaller scale and add to it if desired in the future.

Chairwoman Pupilava stated that beginning with the replanting of the plant bed by Citgo, replanting the existing ten planters, and additional temporary decorations (such as the corn husks) may be a good place to start as they can be considered definable projects, but is hesitant to begin planning anything more permanent without more information, such as total cost.

Member Kleyla believes that the capabilities of a vendor(s) to be able to offer and manage all of what is being asked for is very important to keep in mind for a project such as this.

Chairwoman Pupilava stated that routine maintenance cost also needs to be considered. Director Korhorn stated that the Township Buildings and Grounds Crew would do a lot of that work.

Member Stephan asked if any input should be sought from nearby communities as to what works/doesn't work well for them, and how their plantings are maintained. Director Korhorn stated that she can do that.

Chairwoman Pupilava stated that this process can start to be planned now for the next budget year, and next season of planting in order to make better informed decisions.

Member Stephan believes this would be a good opportunity to add a possible water feature and/or flower feature near the entrances of Cascade and the downtown area.

Member Vogel states that adding planters near the roadway (and/or possible roundabout if there is one being considered in the future) may help slow down traffic, and would be a good time to couple those costs. Chairwoman Pupilava stated that there was discussion at a recent Township meeting about slowing traffic, so they (the DDA) would want to make sure they are aligned with the Board on a project like this.

Director Korhorn asked if Members would like to table this item while she gathers more information about discussed concerns.

Motion was made by Chairwoman Puplava to table this item. Supported by Member Growney. Motion carried 6 to 0.

ARTICLE 7. Discuss and Consider DDA Sponsorship for the Cascade Metro Cruise Warmup Event

Director Korhorn stated this event is happening this year (canceled last year due to Covid), but will be scaled back a little bit. The event is held at the Thornapple Centre in the parking lot, and has always been a very popular event in the past.

Director Korhorn stated that the DDA Plan allows the DDA Board to create, manage, and support annual events occurring within The District, and that the DDA has been a great partner and supporter of this event in the past. Director Korhorn stated that the business community has been asked for sponsorships in the past, however after the pandemic, the Committee is not comfortable asking businesses for sponsorships this year, and is asking the DDA for \$10,000 in sponsorship for the event this year for that reason. Director Korhorn stated that typically the DDA has given between \$5,000-8,000 per year.

Motion was made by Member Stephan to approve a \$10,000 donation to the Metro Cruise Warm Up event in August. Supported by Member DeWitt. Motion carried 6 to 0.

ARTICLE 8. Discuss Meeting Location Status

Director Korhorn stated that Kent County will not be extending the emergency to allow fully virtual meetings, so moving forward meetings will be held in-person. Meetings are held at the Wisner Center, but can be hybrid to allow applicants or residents to attend and comment via Zoom (the Board needs to be present), meetings can be strictly in-person for all attendees, or meetings can have a static camera (camera recording meetings).

Chairwoman Puplava stated that she likes the reach that a hybrid meeting provides, however the DDA does not have a history of broad public participation. Given that and the problems that can arise with virtual meeting technology, she is in favor of having full in-person meetings.

Member Stephan agrees with Chairwoman Puplava, but does like the transparency aspect of allowing virtual attendees and states that if desired, maybe adding a virtual option in the future can be discussed.

Chairwoman Puplava stated that there may be a benefit of adding a static camera to people can watch, but not join virtually. Member Vogel stated that he does not see the down side of having a static camera for the sake of transparency.

Motion was made by Chairwoman Puplava to resume in-person meetings and have a static camera record the meeting, and then said recording is posted to the Township YouTube Channel after the meeting concludes. Supported by Member Kleyla. Motion carried 6 to 0.

ARTICLE 9. Any Other Business

a. Robinson Dental Brownfield Update

Director Korhorn stated that the Brownfield Plan was approved by the Township Board at their May meeting, so it is now in final review by EGLE. Director Korhorn anticipates hearing a decision by the end of the month, and then Robinson Dental can get started on their project.

b. Strategic Plan Meeting – July 20 at 5:30 p.m.

Director Korhorn stated that the next scheduled meeting (July 20) will be a joint strategic meeting (in-person) with the Planning Commission, and it would be best to not have anything else on the agenda if possible.

Member Stephan asked about the status of the Tommys Car Wash, Director Korhorn stated that went through the Planning Commission and they recommended Tommys as well as a coffee shop on the site.

ARTICLE 10. Adjournment

Motion was made by Member Vogel to adjourn. Supported by Member Growney. Motion carried 6 to 0. Meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rene Growney, Secretary