

## MINUTES

Cascade Charter Township  
Downtown Development Authority  
August 19, 2025, at 5:30pm  
Cascade Fire Station 1  
2865 Thornhills Ave. SE

**ARTICLE 1.** Chair Kleyla called the meeting to order at 5:31pm.  
Members Present: Preston, Stephan, Kleyla, Bingham, Lesperance  
Late: Makkar, Vogel, Carlson  
Others Present: Township Manager Jade Smith, Executive Assistant Jessica Stine,  
Township Engineer Aric Thorne

**ARTICLE 2. Approval of the Agenda**

**Motion was made by Member Stephan to approve the agenda with the addition of sidewalk repairs in the district as a new Article 4.5. Supported by Member Bingham. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 3. Approval of the Minutes of the July 15, 2025 Meeting**

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

Member Carlson arrived at 5:32pm.

**ARTICLE 4. Approval of the Minutes of the July 15, 2025 Informational Meeting**

**Motion was made by Member Bingham to approve the minutes as written. Supported by Member Preston. Motion carried 6 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 4.5 Sidewalk Improvements**

Engineer Thorne recapped the previous year's sidewalk improvements, stating that all damaged areas that could be considered legal hazards were replaced at that time. In 2025, \$50,000 was budgeted to fix sidewalks in the DDA. Engineer Thorne determined that there were 400 linear feet of sidewalk that would be considered a trip hazard in 2025.

There will also be a path created at Friendship Park, funded through the Library fund, that connects to 28<sup>th</sup> St; visitors have turned one area into a goat path, and this will help it become more ADA accessible. Member Stephan suggested making the pathway into a ramp for bands, but Engineer Thorne didn't believe the Kent County Road Commission would want that because it would look like a pedestrian crossing, which it would not be.

To the Township's surprise, they only received one bid for the sidewalk project, and the price was \$62,685.60, as compared to Engineer Thorne's estimate of \$54,417.

**Motion was made by Member Bingham to fund the sidewalk improvements in full, including the additional amount over the originally budgeted \$50,000. Supported by Member Carlson. Motion carried 6 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 5. Tassell Park Contract Approval**

The Township went to bid for the Tassell Park contract and received eight bids. Members of the interview committee scored each of the applications individually, compared their scores, and interviewed the four companies who scored the highest. They then followed up with Troyer Group, an engineering firm with representation in Cascade Township, who partnered with Fleis and VandenBrink and Wes Landon from Native Edge, both of whom are also Cascade businesses. They came in at the lowest price to complete the design and requested 8% of the construction cost as their fee, which was standard among all applicants.

Mike Reese of Troyer Group attended to answer questions. He discussed the concept plan, the first steps in creating the design, internal meetings that would be held with staff and then donors to the project and disclosed that he is also on the Cascade Township Parks Committee. Supervisor Lesperance explained that OHM was not chosen, even though they completed the initial design, because they aren't local and some residents and Board of Trustees members believed they were going too far in changing the look of the Township. They wanted a balance of engineering and design as well as the incorporation of native plantings. A key point that was missed in the initial designs was contacting the families of those who initially funded the design and creation of Tassell Park, the Tassells and the Kingslands. They will be putting more focus on the lot that once housed Tuffy Muffler. The focus will be on streetscape, cohesion, and connectivity, establishing gateways to the DDA.

Member Preston asked if there was any appetite at the Board of Trustees level for building high rise buildings or high-density housing in the village. Supervisor Lesperance explained that they would only allow condos with first floor commercial and they would have to be 2,000 sq ft each, with a max building height of 35ft.

**Motion was made by Member Stephan to approve Troyer Group as the contractor for the Tassell Park contract. Supported by Member Preston. Motion carried 6 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 6. Staff Updates**

The pedestrian bridge over the Thornapple River is complete with light poles, so they will now begin looking into additional lighting and seasonal décor, such as flags.

Member Makkar arrived at 6:07pm.

The Township won the bid for the Verburg property, and the environmental study is currently in progress. Closing has yet to occur. There was also a partial environmental study completed for the Tuffy property, but the 'ground' portion of the environmental will be completed in the next phase.

Manager Smith updated the DDA on the zoning ordinance amendment. Approximately 80 residents attended the Planning Commission work session on Monday, and they had many questions. The next Board of Trustees work session will take place on Monday, August 25. There were many residents concerned about form-based code, what it allowed, and if it would change the feel of the Township. There were some concerns regarding whether they were making the Township too high end and unaffordable. Community Planning and Development Director Hendrick mentioned the DDA façade program and that was well received.

Member Vogel arrived at 6:18pm.

The DDA Board discussed that corporate office vacancies are over 30% but there are many small businesses looking for space. They talked about converting some of the office buildings in Centennial Park into condos or senior living.

Ryan Sennett will be the new DDA Manager. He was previously the Zoning Administrator and will retain some of those duties in his new role.

Heritage Festival will take place on September 20<sup>th</sup> from 5-9pm. The Township will be looking for volunteers to pour beer.

Metro Cruise will take place August 22-23 and the DDA will evaluate its benefit to the Township after the event.

**ARTICLE 7. Any Other Business**

There was not any other business to discuss at that time.

**ARTICLE 8. Acknowledge Visitors & Public Comment**

6464 Cascade Rd Ben Rembadt: A resident who works for Tower Pinkster, one of the firms that applied for the Tassell Park contract, spoke about his opinions regarding Tassell Park amenities and making it family friendly. He asked them to think about the younger families with kids joining the Township and stated he did not appreciate, at a Board of Trustees meeting, being told to go to Ada if he wanted to use a splash pad. Members Preston and Carlson said that resonated with them as well and Supervisor Lesperance apologized for the wording of the response at the Board of Trustees meeting.

**ARTICLE 9. Adjournment**

**Motion was made by Member Vogel to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Member Makkar. Motion carried 7 to 1. The meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Vogel, Secretary