

**Minutes**  
Cascade Charter Township  
Downtown Development Authority  
Tuesday, June 20, 2023  
5:30 pm  
2870 Jacksmith Ave SE

**ARTICLE 1.** Chair Puplava called the meeting to order at 5:32 P.M.  
Members Present: Vogel, Kleyla, Preston, Stephan, Puplava, Growney, Lesperance, Siegle, Makkar  
Members Absent: None  
Others Present: Parks Director Melanie Manion, Township Engineer Aric Thorne, and others listed on the sign-in sheet.

**ARTICLE 2. Approve the current Agenda**  
**Motion was made by Supervisor Lesperance to approve the agenda. Supported by Member Siegle. Motion carried 9 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 3. Approve the Minutes of the May 16, 2023 Meeting**  
**Motion was made by Member Siegle to approve the May 16, 2023 meeting minutes as written. Supported by Member Vogel. Motion carried 9 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 4. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak**  
There was no one that wished to speak.

**ARTICLE 5. Discuss and Consider Request from Cascade Community Foundation**

Chair Puplava disclosed she is a member of the foundation and abstained from any decisions.

Justin Swan with Cascade Community Foundation attended the meeting seeking a partnership with the DDA to collaborate on a Workshop Series called “Bloom School” to teach individuals how to use Bloomerang; a donor database system. Bloom School is peer-led and helps small businesses and non-profits to further their education and skillsets. DIY was another item presented which is directed toward teachings on video production. There will be 4 -6 workshops per year.

Member Siegel suggested having businesses pay an attendance fee since this would further ensure commitment to attend.

Member Stephan asked what businesses are being targeted for these workshops. Swan said their goal is to reach as many small businesses within the coverage area as possible, as well as other businesses they have previously engaged with.

Swan said that funds will be coming from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, private donors, sponsors, and potentially the DDA. The DDA’s commitment will be \$18,000 per year.

Member Vogel wanted to ensure that the advertising was targeted at their DDA business.

**Motion was made by Member Siegle to support donating \$18,000 per year, for two years, to the Cascade Community Foundation for the Work Shops. Supported by Member Vogel. Motion carried 8 to 0 with 1 abstention.**

**ARTICLE 6. Updates from Parks Director Regarding Tassel and Westdale Memorial Park**

Parks & Recreation Director Manion introduced herself and said she previously worked for 13 years in the Ottawa County Parks Department, which included 43 parks in total.

She created a slideshow for the board to view as she described the status of Tassel Park. The park was severely run down, aged, and neglected. The Buildings and Grounds crew completed some minor updates consisting of gardening and power washing. The riverfront at Tassel Park is not inviting and she strives to have that updated to engage the community. Westdale Memorial Park is covered in weeds and will need updating as well.

**ARTICLE 7. Update Regarding Library Outdoor Space Project**

Lulu Brown, Kent District Library's Manager, said she has had meetings with the Parks Committee to discuss converting the outdoor space into an official park.

Member Siegle asked if there were any plans for the expansion of the library since it is a heavily trafficked area. Brown said they specifically need more meeting rooms, but would sooner configure what they have as opposed to building an addition.

Member Stephan asked if the trail material had changed. Wes Landon with Native Edge explained that some of the trails are now made of decomposed granite. These will be located in the wooded area and where the benches will be placed. This will be more cost-effective and soften the space.

Supervisor Lesperance asked about moving the benches and interactive sculptures from Westdale Memorial Park to the library. Landon said that the benches may be heavy and difficult to move, but there shouldn't be a problem transporting them. He did mention there may be damage to the concrete underneath depending, on how they were put in. The members were undecided about whether to relocate the benches and sculpture or not.

Landon discussed the various pavilion options detailed in the packet. Members agreed that the style combination of 1, 4, and 5 would be most practical since they have storage, are versatile, and reduce potential liability.

The next step is to present the final designs to the Township Board for approval.

**ARTICLE 8. Updates From Township Engineer Re: Road Commission Guidance**

Township Engineer Aric Thorne attended the meeting to discuss feedback received from the Road Commission. In the downtown village area, there have been speed issues and pedestrian safety concerns. He indicated that the most effective method to decrease

speed is to enhance streetscape design by incorporating features such as greater proximity to trees, smaller building setbacks, and narrower lanes.

Thorne mentioned the potential of placing a pathway on Thornapple River Dr, however, they would have to obtain easements from residents, make the road a one-way, or reduce the road's width.

Member Siegle asked about the impact of an electronic speed sign. Thorne said that, in general, they work for a few weeks but generally don't slow traffic down permanently.

#### **ARTICLE 9. Discuss and Consider Transit Options**

Over the past few months, the DDA has been attempting to reconfigure the bussing route to better serve Cascade residents.

Danielle Bouchard with Mckenna explained their initial recommendation was to eliminate Route 29 and extend Route 28 to Cascade Meijer, while potentially incorporating the Lyft Pass Program. She explained that switching the bus route to avoid going beyond Meijer would result in idle time for the bus, which would cause the DDA to be charged anyways. Bouchard saw benefit in renewing the contract but struggled with the lack of effort on The Rapid's end.

Member Vogel agreed but emphasized the importance of selecting an alternate, third-party transportation method that provides exceptional service to the community while avoiding disruptions to local businesses.

Member Siegle suggested reaching out to businesses where bus usage is high to update them on The Rapid predicament, along with a thorough explanation for citizens on the Cascade website.

**Motion was made by Chair Puplava to decline both proposed contracts by The Rapid and attempt to reach an alternative agreement. Supported by Member Kleyla. Motion carried 9 to 0.**

**Motion was made by Chair Puplava to have McKenna initiate the planning of the Lyft Pass deployment. Supported by Supervisor Lesperance. Motion carried 9 to 0.**

#### **ARTICLE 10. Brief Updates**

- **Developer Day Update-** Planning Director Hilbrands, Supervisor Lesperance, and Bouchard took two busloads of people around the Township to view a few areas for development.
- **Planting Project Update-** Planters have been filled and watered.
- **Metro Cruise Update-** There was no update.
- **Strategic Plan Implementation Update-** There have not been meetings for a few months.
- **Joint Meeting Update-** Chair Puplava reached out to attempt to schedule a meeting. There was a consensus to wait until more staff positions are filled before scheduling.

- **Update Regarding Replacement of DDA/Economic Development Director-** The township is waiting until the Township Manager position is filled before hiring an Economic Development Director.
- **Update Regarding Scheduling of Informational Meeting-** This will need to be scheduled for the July meeting.
- **Update Regarding Cascade Road Bridge Pedestrian Facilities-** The Pathways Committee did not like a few aspects of the design, so they are working on an alternative.

**ARTICLE 11. Any Other Business**

- **Upcoming Meetings**
  - a. Strategic Plan Implementation Meeting – July 21, 2023
  - b. Next Meeting: July 18, 2023
- **Recent Meeting Minutes**
  - a. Township Board (5/10, 5/24)  
**Budget to Date**

**ARTICLE 12. Adjournment**

**Motion was made by Member Makkar to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Member Siegle. Motion carried 9 to 0. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Rene Growney, Secretary