

**Minutes**  
Cascade Charter Township  
Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors  
August 20, 2024  
5:30 p.m.  
2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE

- ARTICLE 1.** Chair Kleyla called the meeting to order at 5:33 P.M.  
Members Present: Vogel, Carlson, Stephan, Kleyla, Lesperance, Bingham, Makkar  
Members Absent: Preston  
Others Present: Township Manager Jade Smith, Executive Assistant Jessica Stine, and those listed on the sign-in sheet.
- ARTICLE 2. Approval of the Agenda**
- Motion was made by Member Makkar to approve the current agenda. Supported by Member Stephan. Motion carried 7 to 0.**
- ARTICLE 3. Approval of the Minutes of the June 18, 2024 Meeting**
- Motion was made by Member Vogel to approve the minutes of the June 18, 2024 meeting as written. Supported by Member Stephan. Motion carried 7 to 0.**
- ARTICLE 4. Acknowledge visitors wishing to speak**
- There wasn't anyone who wished to speak at that time.
- ARTICLE 5. Sheriff's Office Presentation-Deputy Chase**
- Deputy Chase explained that the primary type of crime in the district is property crime. DDA members asked about traffic speed and learned that busses used to slow traffic so that isn't a consideration anymore. Manager Smith talked about their progress with the hotel ordinance, that they hand delivered a copy of the ordinance and all the requirements to each hotel the previous week. They then held a webinar with the hotel owners to answer any questions.
- ARTICLE 6. Elect New DDA Secretary**
- Member Growney resigned from the DDA and was previously the secretary, so a new one needed to be elected.
- Motion was made by Member Makkar to nominate Member Vogel as Secretary. Supported by Member Stephan. Motion carried 7 to 0.**
- ARTICLE 7. Consider Site Improvement Grant Application- Danielle Bouchard**

Danielle Bouchard presented the site improvement grant application and highlighted the items that had been added since the last meeting. They made sure to note that a disclaimer, regarding scoring criteria, was included. Since the grant criteria is a policy set by the DDA, not a law. Member Stephan emphasized that giving points for 'not' meeting certain criteria was interesting and innovative. They liked that the evaluation was a sliding scale of funding based on the number of points and applicate would score on the evaluation. Bouchard made sure it was included that members of the DDA are eligible for the grant but would need to recuse themselves from the evaluation. They will also make decisions as to which businesses receive the grant at public meetings to provide transparency.

Member Bingham wondered if the business being on the Thornapple River should be worth fewer points because there aren't many businesses along the river. Other members agreed that that is a positive way to encourage growth and enhancement along the river. Bouchard will add that only non-residential properties in the DDA district will be eligible for the grant. The program will be rolled out in 2025.

#### **ARTICLE 8. Consider Approval of DDA 2025 Budget**

Manager Smith presented the draft DDA 2025 budget. The budget, as written, assumes all items budgeted in 2024 will pay out before 2025, which is highly unlikely. He suggested they may discuss debt financing in the future. He has had discussions with Harder & Warner and Native Edge regarding tying the DDA together with landscaping, so that line item was increased. The line item for the site development/redevelopment grants is under 'Special Projects' and is currently set for \$100,000. The DDA previously had a director on staff but the position was vacated and never filled; the 2025 budget proposes hiring a staff member with a modified position description. The Township is currently conducting a compensation and benefits study but Manager Smith doesn't think compensation and benefits for Township staff is competitive.

The contracted services line item includes OHM and McKenna. The transportation line item includes the Township's contributions to Ridelink and Hope Network, services for the elderly and disabled. The refund of property taxes line item comes into play if property owners fight the amount they are charged in taxes and, if they win the settlement, the money from that goes back to the property owner. The flowers and plants line item has been changed to landscaping and maintenance that takes place in the DDA area. The Township only has 3.5 buildings and grounds workers and that is not enough to cover all of the Township owned properties. Additional funding may need to be added for planters if they are to translate through the whole DDA. The transfer to general fund line item was new for 2024; it used to be called out by line item but it contains shared services.

The pedestrian bridge falls under capital outlay. Demolition of the Tuffy property is still expected to take place in 2024. Asbestos is the only item that

was noted on the environmental thus far. Streetlights were budgeted for \$230,000 in 2025, which is the same as budgeted in 2024. This would cover all lights on 28<sup>th</sup> St and in Centennial Park. In the future, the Township Board may set an amount they want the DDA to always have in their account, but that hasn't been determined as of now.

**Motion was made by Member Stephan to accept the 2025 proposed DDA budget with a zero-dollar balance. Supported by Member Vogel. Motion carried 7 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 9. Consider DDA Bylaw Adoption**

Parks and Recreation Director Manion was unavailable to present and will bring the topic to a future meeting.

**ARTICLE 10. Staff Updates**

- **Cascade Rd Bridge**-Engineer Thorne said that they received two bids and the lowest came in at \$2.25 million (engineer's estimate was \$997,000). The NE side of the bridge will increase between eight and nine ft and six to seven ft on the SW side. Both sides will have a barrier protecting pedestrians from traffic. There will also have a fence on each side to keep walkers from falling off. They will have three streetlights on the bump out from the pathway that will match the streetlight on Cascade Rd. The guard rail will be made of brushed black metal. OHM has looked at the plans for the bridge and will incorporate it into their design. Burying the utility lines over the bridge would not be fiscally feasible at this time. Chair Kleyla requested the Township look into fixing the light fixture that hangs over the bridge. Manager Smith said he would get the Kent County Road Commission to check it out. Member Vogel asked if there be spots for flags on the bridge and Manager Smith said he would check. Member Preston was concerned with Cascade Rd in the Village. Traffic will be hampered when the bridge is widened, but the area will not be inaccessible. Members stated that they were excited with the new Village Reimagined sign.
- **Bylaws Progress**-Manager Smith said that he is still working with legal on the bylaws but he will bring them to the July meeting for feedback.
- **Hotel Ordinance**-The Township is working on implementation for the hotels. Most Hotel Managers are welcoming the change; the owners are the ones pushing back.

**ARTICLE 11. Any Other Business**

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

**ARTICLE 12. Adjournment**

**Motion was made by Member Makkar to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Member Vogel. Motion carried 6 to 0. The meeting adjourned at 6:11 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Vogel, Secretary