

Minutes  
Cascade Charter Township  
Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors  
Tuesday, February 15, 2022  
5:30 P.M.  
2870 Jacksmith Ave SE

**ARTICLE 1.** Chairwoman Puplava called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.  
Members Present: Vogel, Kleyla, Reynolds, Puplava, Growney, Lesperance, Siegle (5:40 P.M.), Makkar (5:46 P.M.)  
Members Absent: Stephan  
Others Present: DDA Director Korhorn and others on the sign-in sheet

**ARTICLE 2. Approve the current Agenda**  
  
**Motion was made by Supervisor Lesperance to approve the current Agenda. Supported by Member Growney. Motion carried 6 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 3. Approve the minutes from the November 16, 2021 meeting**  
  
**Motion was made by Member Growney to approve the minutes from the November 16, 2021 meeting. Supported by Member Kleyla. Motion carried 6 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 4. Approve the minutes from the January 18, 2022 meeting**  
  
**Motion was made by Supervisor Lesperance to approve the minutes from the January 18, 2022 meeting. Supported by Member Growney. Motion carried 6 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 5. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak to non-agenda items.**  
  
There were not any visitors who wished to speak on non-agenda items.

**ARTICLE 6. Strategic Plan Update**  
  
Strategists Danielle Bouchard and Chris Khorey from McKenna presented on the township's strategic plan survey. Some highlights from the survey included:  
  
1,887 responses (9.5% of total Cascade Population) This is an above average response rate!  
  
Cascade's median age is 42.5 and the survey of data is consistent with this.

(Member Siegle arrived at the meeting at 5:40 P.M.)

Cascade residents saw their top assets as:

1. Natural Scenery
2. Safety (from Crime)
3. Proximity to most areas in Grand Rapids

Cascade residents saw their top areas of concern as:

1. Too much speeding on major roads
2. Lack of a village area
3. Too much traffic speeding in neighborhood and residential areas
4. Lack of river/lake preservation efforts
5. Too much traffic congestion along township's major roads

Cascade resident's top priorities were:

1. Creating a Downtown Village
2. Not raising taxes
3. Allocating and planning residential growth in appropriate areas
4. Creating a community gathering space
5. Improving existing parks.

(Member Makkar arrived at the meeting at 5:46 P.M.)

Strategic planning workshops are scheduled for

Planning Commission 3/7/22

Township Board 3/9/22

DDA 3/15/22

Parks Committee 3/15/22

Township Staff 3/15/22

Business Leaders First week of March 2022

Chair Pupilava confirmed that the DDA Strategic Plan Workshop would take place outside of the normal meeting time and asked if they were still looking at having a meeting where members of different committees met together to go over their parts of the strategic plan. Danielle Bouchard confirmed that the workshop would take place outside of the meeting and they are looking to have a cross-committee workshop closer to the end of the planning process. The idea of a public open house, whether virtual or in person, is also under consideration.

Focus Groups:

Downtown and Village 3/24

Parks and Trails 3/29

Growth Management and Preservation 4/14

Road Safety and Streetscapes 4/21

After all of these meetings, a plan will be drafted and actionable items will be identified.

Director Korhorn said she would work on getting the survey results and slide deck up on the website.

Chris Khorey encouraged DDA members to come to any of the focus groups they are interested in but especially the Downtown Village and Road Safety and Streetscapes focus groups.

The Road Commission and MDOT will both be invited to the Road Safety and Streetscapes focus group. If Kent County Road Commission cannot attend the 4/21 focus group time, the focus group will be rescheduled as their buy-in is essential if changes are to be made.

Member Siegle clarified that Cascade Road is a state highway but it is controlled by the Kent County Road Commission.

**ARTICLE 7. Discuss DDA Goals**

Each board member shared their thoughts on goals for the DDA.

Member Vogel: Member Vogel shared a document he designed to explore what defines Cascade and where there are opportunities for growth. Some of these opportunities include: underdeveloped airport, no defined central gathering space, no defined city center or 'downtown', lack of parking in and around the areas focused for a 'downtown', high speed and volume traffic in an area that could become a city center, and low occupancy rates in some areas of the township.

His ideas for ways to utilize these opportunities included: partner with the airport to attract a large corporation by the airport, leading the charge on electric vehicle car charging, building an incubation kitchen and business center (for example, 2899 Thornapple could be great for this), bring events or infrastructure in the parks and pathways system, creating interactive, peaceful, and accessible green spaces.

Member Kleyla shared ideas for infrastructure and how the DDA should function. She laid out a framework for creating a DDA strategic plan.

Member Reynolds urged the committee to remember that they were Cascade, not Ada, Grand Rapids, or Holland, and they need to focus on that identity and consensus building.

Member Stephan shared his ideas with Chair Puplava prior to the meeting. He suggested they focus on drawing people to the area for recreation and then they'll visit businesses in the area while they're here. Creating a recreational area with additional parking and adding parking to current sports fields were among those suggestions.

First, Chair Puplava suggested the implementation of spaces for concerts, food trucks, and other community gatherings. Secondly, they should ensure the continued vitality of the DDA economy and thirdly they should update the Complete Streets plan.

Member Growney suggested first defining what the 'downtown' area for the village is and then look into private funding from the community for expenses to cover big projects.

Supervisor Lesperance encouraged bringing in professionals to help make decisions and plan projects. Her emphasis was on growing public consensus by striving for greater transparency and public input on individual projects. She said that people live in Cascade due to the amount of greenspace and quaint character and that the focus needs to be on the people already in Cascade rather than growing too much.

Member Siegle urged the committee to focus on the 'downtown' aspect and quaintness of Cascade. He said they would need to slow down traffic, work with the Road

Commission, and alluding to emotional appeal. He also agreed that more recreation spaces would be beneficial.

Member Makkar suggested building a Community Center to bring the township closer together, maybe one with a park attached. He also proposed adding retirement homes and retirement centers to retain community members as they age. This would allow for generational progression in the community. Fostering diversity was his other main goal. Cascade has large international businesses that are hiring people into high paying jobs. Cascade needs them to settle here instead of dispersing to surrounding communities.

(Supervisor Lesperance left at 6:36 PM.)

Director Korhorn will send a Doodle poll out to the members to schedule a meeting with McKenna to dig deeper into these goals.

**ARTICLE 8. The Rapid Contract Update**

Director Korhorn explained that the Rapid Contract Committee has met and had a question-and-answer session with The Rapid. They will now be sending out a short survey to businesses, as well as contacting the businesses directly, to get input on the contract. The ITP Board will meet February 23<sup>rd</sup> and will provide the DDA with more information for their next Rapid Contract Committee meeting on February 28<sup>th</sup>. The DDA will then have to make a decision on how to proceed with the contract at the March 15, 2022 meeting.

**ARTICLE 9. Any Other Business**

- a. Landscape Maintenance Bid: Director Korhorn asked committee members who would be willing to go through the RFPs with her to narrow them down before they came in front of the whole DDA board. Members Growney and Kleyla volunteered to help her narrow them down and hopefully bring the final options to the March 15 meeting.
- b. Business Spotlights: Two business spotlights were filmed in the prior week and they will continue to create seven to eight more before they begin sharing the spotlights. Members Vogel and Growney' businesses were test subjects and they went very well.
- c. Next Meeting: March 15, 2022

**ARTICLE 10. Adjournment**

**Motion to adjourn was made by Member Makkar. Supported by Member Reynolds. Motion carried 7 to 0. The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Rene Growney, Secretary