Minutes
Cascade Charter Township
Downtown Development Authority
Monday, November 15, 2022
5:30 P.M.
2870 Jacksmith Ave SE

ARTICLE 1. Chair Puplava called the meeting to order at 5:31 P.M.
Members Present: Vogel, Kleyla, Stephan, Puplava, Lesperance, Siegle
Members Absent: Growney and Makkar
Others Present: DDA Director Sandra Korhorn and those listed on the sign-in sheet.

ARTICLE 2. Approve the Current Agenda

Motion was made by Member Stephan to approve the current agenda. Supported by Member Kleyla. Motion carried 5 to 0.

ARTICLE 3. Approve the Minutes of the October 18, 2022 Meeting

Motion was made by Supervisor Lesperance to approve the October 18, 2022 Meeting Minutes as written. Supported by Member Stephan. Motion carried 5 to 0.

ARTICLE 4. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak regarding any agenda or non-agenda items

There weren't any visitors who wished to speak on non-agenda items.

Member Siegle arrived at 5:33 p.m.

ARTICLE 5. Review and Discuss DDA Strategic Plan Architectural Designs

Consultants from McKenna presented on different architectural designs that could be used in the new village area. Some of their ideas included service drives, roundabouts, on street parking, and filling sidewalk gaps.

There was much discussion on if roundabouts would slow traffic and if they were an option the DDA, Board, and Road Commission were willing to consider. McKenna will bring more statistics and information on roundabouts to a future meeting.

McKenna explained how they could regulate gables, building height, awnings, and lighting to create a positive hamlet-like feel. They will take aspects of current businesses as well as use facades to improve the look of buildings that don't fit their desired design. This will determine which regulations the DDA imposes on businesses in the village area. They want to create this village area in partnership with the businesses to increase business and economic development.

The DDA will need to meet with the Planning Commission to both align their visions of the village area and align the master plan with the strategic plan. This will be especially necessary in regards to mixed use development.

Member Vogel explained that he thinks the reason the village area in Ada has not been as successful as he believes Cascade has the potential to be is because they don't have the strong residential mixed development piece or staple assets.

Member Stephan expressed gratitude for McKenna and the work they have done with both the DDA as a whole and the Transportation Committee.

ARTICLE 6. Update on the Transportation Committee

Chair Puplava explained that, at the last Transportation Committee meeting, McKenna brought data and statistics from similar municipalities and the committee asked them to dig into some of the options a bit further. Thus far they have found that there are more on demand services than they thought in places of similar size and composition to Cascade. This included services like the Rapid Connect but the services other municipalities receive from their bus line were comparable to Cascade's, except that, the other 11 comparable municipalities have their bus go either downtown or into an area with a large job center, without requiring a transfer. They will be looking deeper into funding, what services the township could get for a flat fee, and how other non-full millage-based municipalities fund their transit service.

Supervisor Lesperance requested that McKenna determine how the Rapid Connect bus system is working and how it is funded.

ARTICLE 7. Discuss and Consider Pedestrian Facilities Improvements on Cascade Rd. Bridge

Manager Swayze presented a plan for pedestrian safety on the Cascade Road bridge. Kent County Road Commission came up with a design where the bridge could be modified for pedestrian safety without the expense of making structural changes to the bridge itself. They proposed shaving down the lanes on each side, as the lanes on the bridge are oversized, and put in a protective barrier between the pedestrian area and the travel lane. Doing both sides would give them 8 ft on each side with a barrier or a full 10 ft pedestrian crossing on just one side. The Pathways Committee was only interested in completing one side at first because the other side wouldn't connect to any current or proposed pathways but the DDA would likely see it as an asset in and out of the DDA. The Road Commission estimated it would cost around $250,000 per side, making it infeasible for the Pathways Committee to fund both sides.

At the previous meeting, the DDA requested more information about creating a truly separated bridge and Manager Swayze took that to the Road Commission with Township Engineer Thorne. The Road Commission said that the bridge is currently at its capacity so it is unable to cantilever paths off the side without making major structural changes to the bridge itself. Cantilevering the paths, making engineering or structures to the width of the bridge or pier, or creating a completely separate bridge that ran next to it would each cost approximately two million dollars per side.

Another question that came up at the previous meeting was if the DDA could legally make that investment and the answer was yes. There isn't a problem connecting the safe passage of pedestrians into and out of the DDA as an approved expenditure.

Manager Swayze believes the line in the TIF Plan that says, "pedestrian safety improvements or improved pedestrian crossings on Cascade Road" already shows that this bridge would be an approved expenditure. A few weeks ago, staff spoke with legal counsel who don't think the project would be problematic to fund but suggested that the right way to validate it would be to amend the TIF Plan. He also reviewed the TIF Plan and determined that it needs to be updated because revenue has greatly surpassed the estimate from when the plan was created.

Member Kleyla asked about the Road Commission's assertion that the bridge lanes are oversized because she has experienced vehicles going over the line when turning there. Manager Swayze explained that they are considered oversized from an engineering perspective and may not feel oversized from resident's experiences. Member Vogel suggested only building the path on one side so that the traffic lanes could stay somewhat larger and he was unsure if it would be worth the cost to add a path to the side that leads into the neighborhood. Member Stephan suggested doing one side with the idea that they could complete the other side eventually. Member Puplava didn't want to rule out the cantilever option, even after hearing the price. Supervisor Lesperance encouraged the DDA to contribute to the funding of this project as the residents rated it as a high priority on the strategic plan survey and the Parks Committee, Pathways Committee, and Township Board also view it as an important safety improvement.

Member Siegle recommended completing this project when school is out if the bridge will have to be closed down to one lane coming into Cascade, because traffic is less during that time. They discussed the other road construction happening in the township at the same time.

The DDA was in consensus that they will set aside money in their budget for the bridge and work on amending their TIF Plan. Manager Swayze recommended the DDA set aside $250,000 for the project.

Motion was made by Chair Puplava for the DDA to cover half of the cost of the Engineering to start the Cascade Road Pedestrian Bridge project. Supported by Supervisor Lesperance. Motion carried 6 to 0.

The committee took a brief recess.

ARTICLE 8. Discuss and Consider 2023 DDA Budget

Manager Swayze presented the proposed 2023 DDA budget. Revenue is up as the increase in interest rates is providing a higher rate of return on their current fund balance as well as the increase in rent due to the township, on township property, because of inflation. Points to note included funding for the tax tribunals that largely comes from DDA funds because hotels and big box stores are generally seeking this type of refund, and funding for tactical urbanism. This brought about the idea to test narrowing the Cascade Road bridge with hay bales before completing the actual project.

The capital outlay plan does not currently include the pedestrian bridge but it does include replacement lighting for Centennial Park. Manager Swayze shared that the light poles in that area aren't very old and they would have liked the poles to last longer, but this time they will use the Township Engineer, Aric Thorne, and/or the new Engineering Consultant Company, Spaulding Dedecker. At the beginning of 2023 the DDA fund balance will likely hover around $2.5 million.

Member Siegle asked about the DDA's current loan balance and when it would be paid off. Manager Swayze didn't know the exact balance at that time but said that this was the fourth year of a ten-year loan. The loan was for the Tuffy Muffler building. The debt service on it is around $95,000 and the rent, keeping with inflation, is now around $80,000, so the rent is almost covering the debt service.

Chair Puplava asked if the funding for the library project had been earmarked in any of these calculations and Manager Swayze said that it hadn't been yet. They don't want to include that in the budget until they know the cost since the library already had the first phase of the project funded. Manager Swayze will update the budget to include the cost of consulting on updating the TIF Plan. They have many projects and ideas in mind but aren't at the point of introducing costs and timelines. The Strategic Plan gave the boards and commissions a list of projects the public wants but most of the committees are in the same boat, with strategic goals but an incomplete plan of execution.

There was conversation on where Wisner Center AV and microphone funding comes from and Manager Swayze said they should be able to fun an upgrade to the microphone at the podium from within the Wisner Center/Library millage.

ARTICLE 9. Any Other Business

- **a.** The next meeting will be held December 20, 2022.
- **b.** Township Board Minutes: October 12 & 26, 2022
- **c.** Tree Lighting Ceremony – November 27, 2022, 5:00 p.m. at Westdale Park
- **d.** Member Vogel requested they invite a sheriff's deputy to come to a meeting to talk about if crime has been a problem in the DDA and if the DDA should fund additional manpower to maintain safety and property values. The members acknowledged that there are pockets of problems that they may want to apply more resources to. They don't always consider the other side of I-96 and that may be an area that could use additional resources.
- **e.** Member Vogel and his wife will be honored at the Cascade Community Foundation Gala on November 16th.
- **f.** There are new businesses moving in: The Graze Craze, a new high end nail salon, Holladay Photo, the Saucy Crab is turning into a Mexican restaurant, Scooters Coffee, and McDonalds and United Bank are performing interior renovations.

ARTICLE 10. Adjournment

Motion was made by Member Stephan to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Member Vogel. Motion carried 6 to 0. The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rene Growney, Secretary