

Minutes
Cascade Charter Township
Downtown Development Authority
Monday, October 18, 2022
5:30 P.M.
2870 Jacksmith Ave SE

ARTICLE 1. Chair Puplava called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.
Members Present: Vogel, Kleyla, Stephan, Puplava, Lesperance, Makkar
Members Absent: Growney and Siegle (excused)
Others Present: DDA Director Sandra Korhorn and those listed 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 Vogel. Motion carried 6 to 0.

ARTICLE 3. Approve the Minutes of the September 20, 2022 Meeting

Motion was made by Supervisor Lesperance to approve the September 20, 2022 Meeting Minutes as written. Supported by Member Vogel. Motion carried 6 to 0.

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

Scott Rissi (7238 Cascade Rd) is a current Planning Commission Member and wanted to bring a few things to the DDA's attention. He stated that many of the trees between the sidewalk and 28th Street have low branches, only about 8ft-10ft above the ground. Ideally, those would need to be 12ft-15ft pruned up from the ground.

Rissi also mentioned that, in previous years, various commissions and boards would have workshops to collaborate on ideas and projects to work on. He thought this would benefit residents greatly if someone could orchestrate this.

ARTICLE 5. Introduction of the Township Engineer – Aric Thorne

Aric Throne expressed that he was happy to be at the meeting. He worked for 5 years in Holland as a civil engineer and graduated from Michigan State University with a civil engineering degree. His education and career have given him extensive experience in this field, and he has enjoyed working at Cascade so far.

Member Makkar arrived at 5:38 P.M.

ARTICLE 6. Discuss DDA and Strategic Plan Draft Goals and Objectives

Chris Khorey and Danielle Bouchard, representatives from McKenna, attended the meeting to further analyze the details of the strategic plan. The DDA will need to incorporate a more defined mission statement in the future; this will help identify important projects and create a framework that aligns with DDA goals. Bouchard explained there may be some difficulty in the development of the Thornapple Plaza

since all tenants and owners must be on the same page working, towards the same vision.

Chair Puplava asked about the timeframe for aligning these goals. Khorey said the lower village is the starting point, followed by the upper village and then Thornapple Plaza.

Member Kleyla asked if completion of the first two tasks (the lower and upper villages), will lead to business owners and landlords supporting the proposed Thornapple Plaza changes. Khorey was confident that starting the projects will enable them to see the bigger picture. Chair Puplava added that having a group meeting with other boards, commissions, and committees could help gain different perspectives and ensure alignment.

Supervisor Lesperance suggested in the memo to remove “Wish list vision for the Noto’s site” since she didn’t want to target a privately owned business. Khorey explained that this was not about their property specifically, but rather its strategic location and other businesses with similar advantages.

Khorey said they wanted to start with the Lower Village to show an immediate impact. He presented a bubble map with upgrades differentiating areas for redevelopment/site upgrades, recreation/nature, and beautification/mobility.

Supervisor Lesperance left the meeting at 6:36 P.M.

Various facades and building types were displayed in a slide show to give members an example of architecture they could emulate to capture the essence of Cascade. Member Vogel said that there’s a variety of different architectures in the village with completely different styles. Member Kleyla agreed and pointed out that the historical museum is right next door to a mid-century modern building. She wondered how elements of older-styled buildings could integrate newer elements.

Motion was made by Chair Puplava to table this discussion until later in the meeting. Supported by Member Makkar. Motion carried 5 to 0.

ARTICLE 7. Discuss and Consider Permanent Tree at Westdale Park

Formerly Article 8.

Motion was made by Chair Puplava to table the Transportation Committee update until later in the Meeting. Supported by Member Stephan. Motion carried 5 to 0.

The DDA had instructed staff to look into a permanent tree at Westdale Park. Director Korhorn met with Thornapple River Nursery staff and they suggested a 10ft-12ft Norway Spruce. Member Stephan said that, after analyzing the suggested locations within the park, he would not put the tree there and wondered if there was another place within the township that would be a better fit.

Member Kleyla said the permanent tree at the park was discussed before the flag pole and memorial plaque were installed. She believed that the tree lighting ceremony should be held elsewhere since the park has since been dedicated as a memorial park.

Motion was made by Member Stephan to cancel the permanent tree at Westdale Park and continue looking elsewhere. Supported by Member Kleyla. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Motion was made by Chair Puplava to table the Centennial Park Streetlight discussion until later in the meeting. Supported by Member Makkar. Motion carried 5 to 0.

ARTICLE 8. Discuss and Consider Pedestrian Facilities Improvements on Cascade Rd. Bridge.

Formerly Article 10.

Director Korhorn said the Township has discussed with the Road Commission on potentially adding pedestrian improvements to the Cascade Bridge. Currently, the bridge has two raised sidewalks on each side, which are not very wide. The Road Commission said the project is possible and will consist of widening the walkway, incorporating a barrier, and decreasing the width of car lanes. Each side will cost approximately \$250,000. The Pathways Committee is interested in pursuing this project, but only on the northeast side. Director Korhorn asked if the DDA would be interested in funding the other side.

Member Makkar expressed concern with the decreased width of the car lanes. He said that cars drive fast on the bridge and he would be worried about the safety of his kids.

Scott Rissi (7238 Cascade Rd), a member of the Pathways Committee, explained that the Road Commission would lower the existing sidewalks to street level. The road lanes on the bridge are wider than Cascade Road, so narrowing the lanes would still keep them at a normal width. There will also be a barrier between the sidewalk and the road.

Chair Puplava said that there is interest in exploring this, but the DDA would like more options before making a decision. She also wanted legal confirmation that the DDA is able to fund such a project, since the bridge is not located within the DDA.

Motion was made by Chair Puplava to explore other options to improve the walkability of the bridge pathway. Supported by Member Makkar. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Motion was made by Chair Puplava to remove Articles 6, 7, and 9 from the table. Supported by Member Kleyla. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Member Makkar left the meeting at 7:00 P.M.

There were no longer enough Members for a quorum.

ARTICLE 6. Discuss DDA and Strategic Plan Draft Goals and Objectives

McKenna staff continued the discussion on different architectures to include in the Strategic Plan. Chair Pupilava liked the idea of creating a transitional style with a mix of the old character Cascade already has and more modern touches. Members agreed that they preferred more of a residential feel with separate buildings as opposed to brick-styled continuous storefronts. Adding more sidewalks, street parking, and investing with landlords or business owners to incorporate public seating were also discussed.

ARTICLE 9. Update on the Transportation Committee

Formerly Article 7.

The Transportation Committee met and discussed ridership data. The main takeaways included the 2021 changes negatively impacting ridership in Cascade Township and Meijer generating a large amount of ridership. There will be continued research on what other communities do for transportation.

ARTICLE 10. Discuss Centennial Park Streetlights

Formerly Article 9.

The streetlights have been up for about 12 years and some lights won't turn on anymore. After having professionals analyze the problem, it was concluded to be a driver issue. They recommended replacing the fixture and arm on the poles, which are estimated to cost \$5,700 per pole.

ARTICLE 11. Update on DDA Budget

Director Korhorn said the DDA needs to start budgeting for capital improvements to showcase how projects will be funded.

ARTICLE 12. Any Other Business

- a. Next meeting: November 15, 2022
- b. Township Board Minutes: September 14 & 28, 2022
- c. Transportation Committees Meeting – November 2, 2022

ARTICLE 13. Adjournment

Motion was made by Member Stephan to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Member Vogel. Motion carried 4 to 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Rene Growney, Secretary