

MINUTES

Cascade Charter Township
Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors
May 18, 2021
5:30 P.M.
Virtual Meeting

ARTICLE 1. Chairman Puplava called the meeting to order at 5:32 P.M.
Members Present: Lesperance, Kleyla, Stephan, Vogel, Siegle, and Puplava.
Members Absent: Makkar, DeWitt, Growney
Others Present: DDA Director Sandra Korhorn, and Nick Monoyios

ARTICLE 2. Approve the current Agenda.

**Motion was made by Member Siegle to approve the Agenda.
Supported by Member Lesperance. Motion carried 6 to 0.**

ARTICLE 3. Approval of the Minutes of April 20, 2021 Meeting

**Motion was made by Member Siegle to approve the Minutes of the
April 20, 2021 Meeting. Supported by Member Stephan. Motion
carried 6 to 0.**

ARTICLE 4. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak to non-agenda items.
(Comments are limited to five minutes per speaker)

Mr. Lance Werner (Director of Kent District Libraries) stated that the KDL system values the bus service as both employees and patrons use it.

Member Siegle asked Mr. Werner approximately how many patrons and employees he thinks use the bus system regularly. Mr. Werner stated that it depends on the season, but he would say a quarter to a third of staff and patrons use the system regularly.

ARTICLE 5. Discuss and Consider The Rapid Bus Contract

Director Korhorn stated that the Board did approve a short-term contract with The Rapid at the April 20th DDA Meeting, which would begin May 15th of this year, and run through September 30th, 2021. Tonight, the

DDA will be considering a proposed long-term contract with The Rapid that will begin October 1, 2021 and run through September 30, 2022. Director Korhorn stated that the Township Board has stated that for this service to continue, the DDA must fund 100% of the 28th Street route.

Manager Swayze asked Nick Monoyios (representative from The Rapid) to discuss how the Rapid Board is viewing the new revenue hour service model. Mr. Monoyios stated that the contract dates will need to be revised (tentatively October 1, 2021 through May 9, 2022) as there was an amendment to the motion to entertain the contract for one year at the start of this revenue hour service relationship. This will help The Rapid evaluate and monitor impact as they are now sharing cost of the service into Cascade.

Manager Swayze asked if there is a way for the DDA Board to partner with The Rapid Board to gather all information and data possible. Mr. Monoyios stated that is possible, and will help both Boards make decisions going forward.

Chairwoman Pupilava asked if The Rapid will be making a revised proposed contract for the DDA to consider. Mr. Monoyios stated that is correct. Chairwoman Pupilava stated this will be added to the next DDA Agenda for consideration.

Member Stephan asked what the potential bus route will look like if the bus makes fewer stops, and if it would make sense to use a smaller bus to match Cascade ridership numbers. Mr. Monoyios stated that “on demand” service using a smaller transit van is being tested in Kentwood and Walker, and will be implemented in the new year. Mr. Monoyios stated that the cost per hour between normal vehicles and smaller ones is very nominally insignificant as the cost of the operator is the largest cost. Mr. Monoyios stated that shortening the route would mean that The Rapid will be paying for more of the service than the DDA.

Mr. Monoyios stated three available options to lessen the cost of operation. These options are to (1) reduce weekday evening service, (2) reduce weekday evening and Saturday service, and (3) to reduce weekday evening service, Saturday service, and eliminate Sunday service. Choosing any one of these options will result in a 10% to 25% cost savings.

Member Lesperance asked how shortening the route will increase cost to The Rapid. Mr. Monoyios stated that a vehicle needed to be added to the entirety of 28th Street when Cascade wanted service, and shortening the route means that the vehicle will need to sit longer (layover time) in

order to keep the incremental stop times accurate. Cascade is only charged when the vehicle is moving on a street in Cascade Township. Member Lesperance asked if stop times can be changed, Mr. Monoyios stated that would be difficult as the alignment of buses meeting at a central location is needed. Mr. Monoyios stated that this can always be considered if there is another route added in the future.

Member Siegle asked if Cascade pays for the route stops on 33rd and 36th Streets, and if so, is there a possibility of combining that route with the 28th Street one. Mr. Monoyios stated that Cascade does pay for those stops, but combining them would cause a loss where current ridership demand is on other routes.

Manager Swayze stated that the 33rd and 36th stops are already shortened to 15 stops a day that are based around shift changes of the business nearby.

Chairwoman Puplava stated that the options Mr. Monoyios provided that would reduce stop times should be considered. Mr. Monoyios stated that this would also impact paratransit access as it covers $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile around route stops for individuals with special needs.

Member Lesperance stated that Cascade currently has a contract with Hope Network for individuals in Cascade with special needs.

Manager Swayze stated that prior to The Rapid having a route in Cascade, anyone that needed paratransit service used Hope Network. Now that there is Rapid service in Cascade, and rider that qualifies for Go Bus ridership living within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of a bus stop is required to use the Go Bus. Manager Swayze stated that if there is a pivot in hours for Go Bus riders, they will have access to the Hope Network service.

Chairwoman Puplava stated that cost comparison for the Go Bus vs. Hope Network services will be helpful to see.

Member Siegle asked for confirmation that ridership means a person getting both on and off in Cascade. Mr. Monoyios stated that is correct.

Member Siegle asked if there was any explanation of a 25% decrease in ridership from 2018 to 2019. Mr. Monoyios stated that he is unsure as he does not have that information at this time, but will follow up on this.

Manager Swayze stated that two large telephone centers that were in the Township closed during 2018/2019, and that likely impacted ridership numbers.

Member Vogel stated that he believes further development in the Township may be dependent on/rely on bus service to those areas.

Discussion was held about the cost/benefit of funding this route, and how the Township Strategic Plan and Master Plan will tie into ridership.

Member Siegle states that going forward, the DDA should decide what percent of their budget they are willing to commit to the bus service. As of right now, 20% of the DDA budget is being used for The Rapid service, and Member Siegle believes that is a high percent to be committed to as there are other projects within the DDA.

Member Siegle asked if there is a certain amount of the DDA budget that needs to be spent every year per government rules, Director Korhorn stated there is not a certain amount, but the government does not like to see a bank account “built up” by captured funds.

Member Kleyla asked if larger projects that need substantial funding can be saved up for. Manager Swayze stated that in this case a resolution of commitment should be made for a project to specify what “saved” funds will be used for.

Member Siegle asked if the Township is exploring possible federal grants for a bus system. Manager Swayze stated that there are communities that have their own small bus programs, and there are federal grants available, however he would have to look into what that entails. Member Siegle stated that he was thinking along the lines of a bus system subsidy that would go to a mall from a residential community. Manager Swayze stated that around 33% of the current bus system is paid for by federal grants that The Rapid collects.

Motion was made by Chairwoman Puplava to table The Rapid Bus contract consideration. Supported by Member Siegle. Motion carried 6 to 0.

ARTICLE 6. Discuss and Consider the Interlocal Agreement to Use Tax Increment Revenues for The Robinson Dental Brownfield Redevelopment Project

Director Korhorn stated that the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority is the applicant for the EGLE brownfield grant and loan application, and this is for the cleanup of the Robinson Dental site. Director Korhorn stated that although the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and the Township Board typically approves the majority of agreements, documents, and plans for brownfields, this interlocal agreement falls on

the DDA because it is located in the DDA district. The agreement states that the DDA is willing to give up their TIF capture for this property for the duration of the brownfield plan. The BRA will capture that money instead, and it will be used to reimburse the developer for any eligible brownfield activities which support this project. Once the developer is reimbursed, the DDA will again start to capture all incremental taxes for that property.

Director Korhorn stated that it is anticipated that this brownfield project will be initiated in 2022, and will remain active until all loans and eligible activities are paid off, which is typically no more than 15 years following the implementation of the loan.

Director Korhorn stated that the Township Attorney from Foster Swift has reviewed the interlocal agreement and sent it back with his comments and potential changes. Director Korhorn stated that she shared both the original document with the included Attorneys changes, and a clean version with the DDA for Members to review. Director Korhorn stated that this is a normal process with a brownfield project.

Chairwoman Pupilava asked for clarification on what needs to be approved tonight. Director Korhorn stated that the agreement (document) needs to be approved. Chairwoman Pupilava stated that there are suggestions in the Attorneys comments that seem as if the agreement is not final, or may need to be changed. Director Korhorn stated that the Township Board will be holding a public hearing on May 26th for the approval of the brownfield plan, and when that gets approved the details will need to be included in this agreement.

Member Siegle asks what the cost to the DDA will be, and where exactly this project will be located. Director Korhorn stated that this project is on "27th Street" located behind Goodwill and in front of Tanaz on a vacant piece of property. Member Siegle asked if there is typically toxic waste or some type of cleanup involved in brownfield developments. Director Korhorn stated that there are contaminants on the site that do need to be cleaned up, and that is what the grant and loan will help cover those costs.

Member Siegle asked if the grant and loan is specifically for cleanup, or if it will be used for the actual building as well. Director Korhorn stated that the funds can be used for cleanup and redevelopment of the site.

Member Lesperance asked what redevelopment of the site includes. Member Kleyla stated that brownfield plans are typically very specific in what needs to be done, and that can include taking away construction

rubble, removing fill dirt, scraping to get rid of contaminants and then the replacement of clean soil. Director Korhorn stated that transportation cost, and phase 1 and 2 environmental assessments are included as well.

Member Siegle asked for clarification that reimbursement is just for cleanup fees and other related costs, not for the cost of construction. Director Korhorn confirms that is correct.

Member Lesperance asks if the DDA votes no on this agreement, will that essentially stop the entire project. Director Korhorn stated that is very possible.

Member Lesperance asks if the DDA will continue to capture TIF if the project is not developed. Director Korhorn stated that if there was not a brownfield on this property and it were developed, the DDA would capture the TIF, however when there is a brownfield project located within the DDA district, there needs to be an interlocal agreement that allows the BRA to capture TIF for the number of years that the brownfield plan is in place in order to reimburse the developer. The DDA will then begin to capture the TIF once the developer is paid off.

Member Vogel stated his opinion that since there is a developer willing to cleanup a contaminated site within the DDA that is not being utilized, he does not see a downside to approving this agreement.

Motion was made by Chairwoman Puplava to approve the interlocal agreement subject to updates acquired upon the Township Boards approval of the brownfield plan. Supported by Member Lesperance. Motion carried 6 to 0.

ARTICLE 7. Discuss Plantings around New Street Lights

Director Korhorn stated that the owner of Daylily Floral reached out to Member (Supervisor) Lesperance about the new streetlights that were placed in the DDA district along the Cascade Road corridor, and stated that she is interested in adding plantings or flowerpots to the area. The owner stated that she would come up a design and price quote if the DDA is interested in moving forward.

Chairwoman Puplava asked if the DDA will be charged by Daylily Floral for providing a quote, Director Korhorn stated that she is unsure of that at this time. Member Lesperance stated that she believes the DDA will not be charged for a quote, however the owner would like to know if there is interest in her service before moving forward with putting a quote together.

Director Korhorn stated that there are currently pots in the Village area near Cascade Road and Thornapple River Drive, near the Gathering Place, near the museum, and along Old 28th Street. These pots have irrigation installed in them for the flowers and plantings. There are also a couple of medians along Cascade Road and 28th Street that have irrigation installed in them, however the Township does not irrigate right of way areas so that should be part of this discussion.

Member Kleyla asked who tends to the existing pots and plantings, Director Korhorn stated that the Township Buildings and Grounds Crew does this.

Chairwoman Puplava stated that it's hard to move forward with wanting a quote provided not knowing a general price range.

Director Korhorn stated that the DDA will need to look at location as they may need to get approval from the Road Commission to place pots in the right of way, or seek private easements from property owners to potentially place the pots.

Member Stephan stated concern that this is too late in the planting season to begin with this project, however he is in favor of it.

Member Lesperance asked if the DDA purchased the existing pots, Director Korhorn stated that they did. Member Lesperance asked how many pots there are, Director Korhorn stated there are 10.

Member Kleyla asked to have the owner put more detailed information together for further discussion at a future meeting.

Member Siegle added his professional opinion that these pots should be high enough so that a dog does not use the bathroom on them if they are on a walking path.

Director Korhorn stated that this is enough information for her to move forward in discussion with the owner of Daylily Floral.

ARTICLE 8. Discuss and Consider Virtual or In-Person (Hybrid) Meetings

Director Korhorn stated that nothing has changed since this was on the last agenda, so meetings can continue to be virtual, or the hybrid in-person option can be held.

Chairwoman Pupilava stated that if the transition is made to hybrid in-person and virtual, she would like to see the virtual option continued for those who wish to participate that way. Chairwoman Pupilava asked how the transition to hybrid has been going for the Township Board. Director Korhorn stated that it has been somewhat glitchy with the technology, Member Lesperance stated that it has been going well, however she does not believe that smaller Boards and Committees need to transition yet.

Director Korhorn stated that if Kent County does not extend the emergency order that expires June 30th, the DDA will have to go back to in-person meetings with a virtual option after that.

Motion was made by Member Siegle to stay with virtual meetings through June. Supported by Member Vogel. Motion carried 6 to 0.

ARTICLE 9. Any Other Business

Director Korhorn confirmed that June 15th will be the next DDA meeting.

Director Korhorn stated that new businesses have opened in the Township. Those businesses are Reva Salon (Thornapple River Drive), and EverPlay Café (in the Gathering Place strip center), The Cancer and Hematology Center has purchased a building at Tahoe and Lucerne, the old Sheldon Cleaners business is now a small IT office, the Detroit Cookie Company may be moving into the area, and a Tommys Car Wash has applied to develop where the Pizza Hut property is. Member Vogel stated that the old Babies R Us has been transitioned into a Total Wine and More business.

ARTICLE 10. Adjournment

Motion was made by Member Lesperance to adjourn. Supported by Member Siegle. Motion carried 6 to 0. Meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rene Growney, Secretary