

MINUTES

Cascade Charter Township
Downtown Development Committee
March 18, 2025, at 5:30pm
Cascade Library Wisner Center
2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE

ARTICLE 1. Chair Kleyla called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.
Members Present: Vogel, Carlson, Preston, Kleyla, Bingham, Lesperance
Late: Stephan, Makkar
Others Present: Township Manager Jade Smith, Executive Assistant Jessica Stine

ARTICLE 2. Approval of the Agenda

Motion was made by Member Vogel to move Article 4, “Acknowledge visitors wishing to speak regarding any agenda or non-agenda items” to become Article 9, shifting what were articles 5 through 9 each up by one, to give visitors the opportunity to listen to the committee’s discussion before they speak. Supported by Member Preston. Motion carried 6 to 0.

ARTICLE 3. Approval of the Minutes of the February 18, 2024 Meeting

Motion was made by Member Bingham to approve the minutes as written. Supported by Member Carlson. Motion carried 6 to 0.

ARTICLE 4. Metro Cruise Presentation

Manager Smith introduced Brandon Simmons, the Event Manager for Metro Cruise. Simmons explained the proposal of a similar setup to 2024 but with the addition of a Pitstop in Friendship Park to aid in its activation. The full cost wouldn’t be put onto the DDA as the local United Bank is one of their long-time sponsors. He believed that, since the Cascade portion of the event is still newer than most of the events along the 28th St corridor, it will draw between 5,000 and 10,000 participants.

Member Stephan arrived at 5:39pm.

Members emphasized the need to make sure all businesses know about the date and events of Metro Cruise to forecast staffing and any potential collaborations. They also wanted to find a way to track the event’s impact on the district.

Motion was made by Member Carlson to fund Metro Cruise Pitstops in Cascade Township for \$14,000 with the understanding that Metro Cruise will look for additional Cascade sponsors for the 2026 event. Supported by Member Vogel. Motion carried 6 to 1.

Member Makkar arrived at 5:56pm.

Members suggested partnering with Thornapple Brewing for the event. Member Carlson requested Metro Cruise remain on the agenda for the next few months so they

can plan how the DDA will represent themselves at the event and get the information out to other local businesses.

ARTICLE 5. DDA Annual Report

Members asked questions about the change in value of Centennial Business Park. It was determined the value was likely impacted by the Robinson Dental brownfield project.

The DDA was very busy in 2025. Members appreciated completion of the Annual Report. They requested it be updated to also include their 2024 sidewalk restoration efforts.

ARTICLE 6. April Meeting Date

Manager Smith explained that the April 15 meeting would need to be moved to April 17 to accommodate a presentation on the Village Project by OHM. Members will receive the assets for the meeting in advance so they can submit questions. Members requested a reminder before the meeting so that they would remember the change in date.

ARTICLE 7. Staff Updates

Manager Smith went through the staff updates included in the packet. He and staff are researching financing/bonding for the village project. They are still looking for a DDA Manager but currently have one positive lead. The Library Refresh is in progress and will be done around the second week of May. The Parks Department is in the early stages of planning a music series at Friendship Park; Member Makkar said he may have a sponsor and would share that information later. They will also be looking to utilize the Township's relationship with Cascade Community Foundation in planning this event. The traffic flow on the bridge has much improved since the restriping and Members no longer feel like it is a major hazard.

ARTICLE 8. Any Other Business

Manager Smith stated that he is working with the Township's Building Department to obtain a monthly list of new and closing businesses to provide at each meeting.

ARTICLE 9. Acknowledge Visitors & Public Comment

Doug Lee, 6860 Cascade Rd, owner of Jam & Bean, spoke about the bridge construction project near his business and stated that it was too dangerous for him to do business, so he had to shut down. He requested a \$25,000 grant from the DDA for the inconvenience of shutting his business down. Members stated that this wasn't legally possible and they don't have that type of grant. Members suggested creating signs that say the business is open during construction to put along the road at all local businesses in the construction area.

Robert Cribbs, 1980 Deerfield, shared that he believed Jam & Bean is in a unique situation where visitors have less access to his business than other local businesses.

ARTICLE 10. Adjournment

Motion was made by Member Makkar to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Member Vogel. Motion carried 7 to 1. The meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Vogel, Secretary