

Minutes
Cascade Charter Township
Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors
Tuesday January 18, 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, Stephan, Puplava, Lesperance, Growney
Members Absent: Makkar, Siegle, Reynolds
Others Present: DDA Director Korhorn and others on the sign-in sheet

ARTICLE 2. Approve the current Agenda

Motion was made by Member Stephan to approve the current Agenda. Supported by Supervisor Lesperance. Motion carried 6 to 0.

ARTICLE 3. Approve the minutes from the November 16, 2021 meeting

Member Stephan thought the first full paragraph on page four, article six was confusing and didn't accurately reflect the discussion.

Motion was made by Supervisor Lesperance to table the minutes from the November 19, 2021 meeting, have them reviewed with the transcript, and brought back to the next meeting. Supported by Member Growney. Motion carried 6 to 0.

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

Chris Khorey of Mackenna: Khorey came to talk about the Strategic Plan and what Mackenna is starting to see in the results. This topic was originally to be discussed in Article 9 but, since the representative was at the meeting to talk about it, they decided to tackle that subject during public comment as he was the only visitor who wished to speak.

Khorey passed out the partial preliminary survey results with 1359 surveys entered, over 100 more print copies to enter, and a week and a half until the survey closed. He said this was a very successful response rate and that they had a representative distribution of responses in relation to age range (in those over the age or 18) and a solid geographical distribution. There has been plenty of interest in focus groups so the township shouldn't have a difficult time finding volunteers.

Thus far, the top priorities and concerns that relate to the DDA are creating a downtown village, the lack of a village area, traffic speeding (the number one issue of concern), and river clean-up. A Mackenna representative will be back in March to do a more thorough workshop to work through DDA opportunities and what the public is asking for. This will be the first step in the creation of the DDA portion of the township's strategic plan.

The survey/strategic plan timeline was discussed at length. They are looking at a final adoption of the strategic plan around August 2022. The final report, that is cross tabulated by age and geography, will be available at the February 2022 DDA meeting. Khorey asked the DDA members to start thinking about which projects they think should be a priority and how they can take a visibly active approach towards making that happen.

Chair Pupilava requested there be a cross-board meeting for all township boards/committees to come together and talk about how their different pieces of the strategic plan puzzle fit together.

Member Vogel asked if they had found out from the survey what creating a 'downtown village' meant to them. Khorey said that that will be covered in focus groups and it was intentionally left vague to see what residents and the DDA perceived as a 'downtown village'. They will dig into where the residents are considering 'downtown', if they're more interested in commute speed or quaint walkability, and if they are considering 'downtown' more than just the stores, such as streetlamps or a community center.

ARTICLE 5. DDA Funding/2022 Budget

Director Korhorn went through a booklet of information that covered DDA location, funding, budget, and purview. Member Vogel asked what would happen to DDA excess funds if they have a long-term plan and deferring investment on that project for a couple years makes more sense. Director Korhorn said that she believes the board can save up to five years of TIF funds, but they need to show there is a plan in place and they're saving for a specific project. Chair Pupilava clarified that they can also allocate unspent funds to specific future projects if they have one planned, such as creating a downtown village, that will save them from needing to accrue a large amount of debt to take on the project.

Member Stephan asked why the maintenance, repair, and improvements is budgeted so much higher this year than in the previous year. Director Korhorn answered that it was because they need to reseal the stamped concrete this year and that costs around \$35,000.

ARTICLE 6. Discuss & Consider Flower Bed/Landscape RFP

Director Korhorn updated the RFP that she brought to the November meeting to include board member suggestions and re-submitted it to the DDA for review. She also put together a list of landscape companies to submit the RFP to and requested board member suggestions as well. Director Korhorn's suggestions were: Daylily Floral, RRR Lawn and Landscape, Thornapple River Nursery, Peterburg Berhague, Brooks Landscaping, Rockwell Earthworks (the provider Ada Township uses), Monsma Landscape, and Pro Cut Lawncare.

Motion was made by Supervisor Lesperance to approve the Flower Bed/Landscape RFP as written. Supported by Member Growney. Motion carried 6 to 0.

ARTICLE 7. Discuss Projects and Tactical Urbanism

Chair Pupilava wanted to talk about projects and goals at this meeting as it ties in with the Strategic Plan update. Director Korhorn said that she did speak with the attorney who said as long as the project or event that is on private property is being used for a public purpose, it can be funded with TIF dollars. She said if they do anything on private property, they should get some type of agreement or easement, depending on what the project calls for.

Some of these projects from the previous meeting that were more short term included food trucks/cafes/pop-up retail in the parking lot at the Thornapple Center, D&W Center, or some type of expanded outdoor dining.

Planting a real tree at the Museum Gardens, at the location there was previously a real tree and currently a fake Christmas tree, was suggested. Director Korhorn contacted Thornapple River Nursery who visited the site and recommended an 8-10 ft Norway Spruce. The artificial tree is currently 14 ft but a real tree would continue to grow over the years. The installed cost would be around \$775.

Director Korhorn is still working on an RFP for holiday lighting but wanted to check back in about the snowflakes for the street lights and if the board was still interested in purchasing more of them to either extend the lights further down 28th St or switch from every other to every lamppost in the section they currently decorate. Bronner's is also having their holiday sale until March 1st and 20 snowflakes of different shapes, after holiday specials, would cost just under \$8,000. Chair Pupilava shared her support for purchasing more snowflakes for either purpose and said that she doesn't believe they would go unused. Member Kleyla asked if they currently had any snowflakes in reserve in case they start to decorate one year and a light no longer works; Member Korhorn said they did not currently have any extras.

Chair Pupilava said she likes the idea of planting a new tree at Museum Gardens Park but is reluctant to do it right now due to the strategic plan being in progress and they don't know if the plans for that area may change in the next few months. Other board members concurred and decided that it wasn't something they had to do immediately, it could be planted at most times of the year.

They determined that they didn't have to rush into any decisions at the moment as the snowflakes were the only thing out of their ideas that was time and inventory limited. They decided to table this until the next meeting when they may have more of an idea what will be done with the holiday lighting RFP.

There was more discussion about a food truck area with an anchor bar in the winter, an off-season food truck rally, an outdoor skating area, and ice sculptures.

ARTICLE 8. Discuss DDA Goals

Board members agreed that 'getting new businesses' was one of their number one goals for the next year and Member Growney suggested tax incentives for new businesses.

Member Vogel suggested having a brainstorming session outside of normal meeting time; there was talk about how this would have to be posted and advertised if they decided to hold one.

Director Korhorn said that they are currently working on updating the business guide for the community as well as a series of short videos to spotlight local businesses.

Member Vogel said that he has seen other communities attracting businesses by investing in infrastructure, whether it be widely available high speed internet access or commercial kitchens at a subsidized rate, there is a lot that can be done to help get new businesses off the ground. Chair Puplava suggested, depending on what they see in the survey, creating some sort of report looking back and looking forward as a sort of economic forecast to show companies that business in Cascade is growing. Member Vogel suggested highlighting other assets they have in the area such as the airport and density of hotels per square mile. Chair Puplava requested members think about broader goals they have for the DDA that they would like to explore.

ARTICLE 9. Strategic Plan Update

Due to the visitor from Mackenna, this article was covered under the public comment section.

ARTICLE 10. Election of Officers

Motion was made by Supervisor Lesperance to reelect Jennifer Puplava as Chairperson, Steve Stephan as Vice Chair, and Rene Growney as Secretary. Supported by Member Vogel. Motion carried 6 to 0.

Members thanked Chair Puplava, Member Stephan, and Member Growney for being willing to continue with their current positions for another year.

ARTICLE 11. Any Other Business

- a. Contact List for Board Members
A list was passed around for members to update their contact information.
- b. Next Meeting: February 15, 2021
- c. Members discussed the benefits of encouraging a larger police presence around the local hotels. Member Vogel shared that the Kent County Sherriff's Department has been phenomenal in partnering with local businesses and, if any more resources become available, they are welcome.
- d. Cascade's contract with The Rapid is ending in May so they will need a decision by March 15 as to what the township is doing for the next contract. It will be talked about at the next DDA meeting and Director Korhorn will send out a doodle link.

ARTICLE 12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Member Vogel. Supported by Member Kleyla. Motion carried 6 to 0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Rene Gowney, Secretary