

MEETING MINUTES

Cascade Charter Township
Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors
Tuesday, March 19, 2013
5:30 P.M.
Cascade Library - Wisner Center
2870 Jacksmith Ave SE

ARTICLE 1. Call the Meeting to Order

Chairman Huhn called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.
Members Present: Rob Beahan, Diana Kingsland, David Huhn, Tom McDonald, Jennifer Puplava, Rick Siegle
Members Absent: Joann Noto, Kirt Ojala, Paula Rowland.
Others Present: Assistant to the Manager Sandra Korhorn

ARTICLE 2. Approve the Agenda

Motion was made by Member Beahan to approve the Agenda. Support by Member Kingsland. Motion carried, 5-0.

ARTICLE 3. Approve the Minutes of the January 15, 2013 Meeting

Motion was made by Member Beahan to approve the Minutes. Support by Member McDonald. Motion carried, 5-0.

(Member Siegle arrived at 5:35)

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

No visitors present.

ARTICLE 5. Update of the 28th Street Sidewalk Project

The reconstruction of 28th St will begin March 18. MDOT anticipates the project to be completed in November. One lane of traffic will be maintained in each direction, with a left turn at intersections. The sidewalk and lighting will be constructed in conjunction with the road project. The DDA portion of the project came in under budget.

It was asked if it was known if the construction was starting on one end and working towards the other direction. Korhorn said that it was all basically starting at the same time, but that the area west of Patterson was mostly being done at night.

ARTICLE 6. Presentation and discussion of projects from the Community Enhancement Committee meeting.

Last fall the DDA Board discussed potential projects they may want to move forward with in 2013. A large part of the discussion focused on a “community enhancement” project in the village area. The main objective of the project is to attract more people to the Cascade “downtown” area by creating desirable “places and spaces”. The new DDA TIF Plan set goals for DDA projects within the Village development area. They include enhancing the Village to make it welcoming and a destination for shoppers, making the Village pedestrian friendly, have activities and destinations for people of all ages, including children and seniors, include public gathering areas, improved traffic flow and safety, improved recognition as a place with character, charm and quaintness. The Community Enhancement Committee has met a couple times to discuss potential projects in the village area with the above goals in mind. After the first meeting, Pat Cornelisse was recruited to help come up with visuals for ideas. The committee would like to enhance certain “pockets” or “beads” of areas throughout the Township, starting with the Village. The Museum Gardens, Tassell Park and the bridge form a “gateway” into the community. This seems to be a popular area to begin with. Some ideas are:

Museum Gardens and Tassell Park

- Lawn furniture
- Mural
- Art/Sculptures
- Musical Fence/Interactive public artwork.

Bridge

- Mural
- Flags
- Lights
- Entry Visual Marker

Cascade Rd./Thornapple River Dr.

- Upgraded crosswalks
- Boulevard
- Banners
- Entry Visual Marker

Sandra suggested the following projects be further investigated to get started in 2013:

- Flags at the Museum Gardens, Tassell Park and on the bridge.
- Upgraded crosswalks at Cascade Rd./Thornapple River Dr.
- Removal of the pine/crabapple trees in the Museum Gardens
- Lawn furniture
- Preparing the gardens for interactive art or mural.

Sandra asked the board to endorse this plan so she may continue to work with Pat Cornelisse to put together a “grand” plan. Sandra would then return to the board with the visuals, details, timelines, etc. for the above as well as future enhancement projects throughout the village and DDA.

It was asked if the bridge was something that could be incorporated into the DDA, since it’s not taxable. Korhorn stated that it would have to be added to the district and DDA money cannot be used toward it. The township board would have to decide if it would

be beneficial to the township to have the bridge as part of the DDA. The bridge is owned by Kent County.

A member asked if a sidewalk could be added in front of the museum, to make access to the museum easier. Korhorn stated that it could be done but it is very tight through there.

Another member asked how far back does the DDA go towards the church. The DDA goes just past the museum.

It was mentioned that there was talk about making a theme to the enhancement projects because the area is always compared to downtown Ada or downtown East Grand Rapids, and Cascade "downtown" does not have the same configuration as those other locations. This all led to the discussion of enhancing the "gateway triangle" area and the desire to "rebrand Cascade".

It was asked why the gardens at the museum were not used. The reason is believed to be lack of seating, and visibility, as it is tucked away, and not very visible. Plus there isn't anything to see or do, which would be a reason for adding an interactive mural or fence.

A suggestion for Korhorn was to check with the county to see about making it illegal to make a right hand turn onto Red. This way people can cross in that location, and it would be safer to do so. It was also suggested to make the crosswalks different to break things up. The crosswalk at Burton and Cascade, though not in the DDA area, would be one place to change the crosswalk.

It was asked how much is budgeted for the project. Korhorn answered that there is \$100,000 budgeted for the 2013 budget. There will be about a \$2.2 million cash balance with an \$800,000 debt to work around.

It was brought up that something to keep in mind while working on the updating of the intersection at 28th and Cascade Rd., is if there are any future plans for Hundley's development to be remodeled, then the updates at the intersection should coincide.

Member McDonald motioned to endorse plan. Pupilava supported. Motioned carried 6-0.

ARTICLE 7. Discuss the Complete Streets RFP

Last fall the DDA Board discussed collaborating with the Planning Dept. to pursue a Complete Streets plan. The Complete Streets legislation was adopted a few years ago. This legislation applies to road projects where road agencies, engineers, etc. design and operate the entire roadway with all users in mind, including bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and riders, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. Some new "rules" have been developed that says state and local road agencies must now consult with each other as well as inject the desires of a local community in the planning and design of a project when MDOT or a road commission is planning a project within a municipality. Korhorn stated that if we have a plan in place, then when these projects

come up we can have the discussions with MDOT or KCRC and show them our desires and that the project “works” for that roadway.

It was suggested that there may be a need to coordinate the discussion with Pat, as it could tie into the other Community Enhancement Project. Korhorn mentioned that this project would be more boulevard work, structural more than artistic. It was asked if the Complete Streets legislation were a way to get the county to listen to the township. Korhorn stated that the county is supposed to listen to the township. The county was approached about the round-a-bout, and how it would work for the area and the township wants to pursue it. The county stated that if the township pays for it, they will give the green light for the project.

It was asked how this RFP were getting out to consultants. Korhorn stated that she has five or six companies she is getting information to.

Member McDonald motioned to support the Complete Streets RFP. Member Beahan supported. Motioned carried 6-0.

ARTICLE 8. Discuss Commercial Rehabilitation Act

The new Township Manager, Ben Swayze, will be at the meeting to discuss the Commercial Rehabilitation Act. This act was adopted by the State of Michigan as a means of providing a stimulus in the form of tax incentives for the rehabilitation of commercial property for the purpose of creating new jobs and maintaining existing jobs. The Commercial Rehabilitation Tax Abatement Act offers the owners of certain rehabilitated commercial facilities located in designated districts property tax abatement for a period of one to ten years as determined by the local unit of government.

It was discussed how to set the guidelines for the program so as to encourage redevelopment without excluding or hurting the businesses that have been in the Community for many years. Swayze stated that the guidelines for the program would be set by the Township to encourage a strong economic impact for the Township.

It was asked if the total dollar amount could be capped as some developments could be quite large. Swayze stated that this could be accomplished by determining a cap and then adjusting the number of years the abatement is available to the developer.

It was asked how long the process would take to be able to offer the incentive program to developers. Swayze stated that the longest part of the process is getting the district approved. Paperwork must be presented to the State by October 31 for approval for the following year. Swayze stated that the process should be well under way by July to meet the deadline.

ARTICLE 9. Any Other Business

ARTICLE 10. Adjourment

Member Siegle made a Motion to adjourn the meeting. Support by Member Kingsland. Motion carried, 6-0.

The meeting adjourned at 6:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Kingsland, Secretary

Kelli Hults, Planning Administrative Assistant