

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Cascade Charter Township**  
**Downtown Development Authority**  
**Board of Directors**  
**August 17, 2010**  
**7:00 p.m.**  
**Cascade Library Wisner Center**  
**2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE**

**ATTENDEES:** Rob Beahan, Ron Clark, Julie Johnson, Diana Kingsland, Tom McDonald, Joann Noto, Kirt Ojala, Rick Siegle.

**Absences:** David Huhn (excused)

**Others Attending:** Assistant to the Manager Sandra Otey, and Dick Wendt, Township Attorney.

**ARTICLE 1: Call the Meeting to Order**

Vice-Chairman Clark called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**ARTICLE 2: Approval of the Agenda**

Vice-Chairman Clark requested a motion of approval of the August 17, 2010 DDA Agenda. No revisions, corrections to the agenda and Member McDonald motioned to accept the minutes as presented, supported by Member Beahan. The agenda of the May 18, 2010 was approved as submitted.

**ARTICLE 3: Approval of the Minutes of May 18, 2010 Meeting.**

Vice-Chairman Clark requested a motion of approval of the May 18, 2010 minutes.

Member Beahan motioned for approval of the minutes as presented, supported by Member McDonald. All in favor of the May 18, 2010 DDA Minutes as presented; none opposed. Motion carried.

**ARTICLE 4: Update of the 2010 Streetscape Project – Sidewalk through I-96 Interchange.**

Assistant to the Manager Otey said there was a progress report Tuesday for the 28<sup>th</sup> Street and I-96 Streetscape Project. The project is moving along nicely and the date for substantial completion is Friday, August 20, 2010. Due to some problems driving the piles under the bridge, the contractor is approximately a week behind schedule.

The wall under the bridge should be installed next week. The conduits for the lights are in and the wire is being pulled this week. The electrician has received shipment of the lights that are to be installed under the bridge. The lights that will be installed west of the interchange will be to the Township at the end of next week or the week after and the Lumec lights to be installed east of the interchange will arrive the end of August or early September.

## **ARTICLE 5: Discussion regarding T.I.F. Plan and Project Eligibility.**

Assistant to the Manager Otey introduced Mr. Wendt is present this evening along with members from the Cascade Community Foundation and Cascade Business Association to hear what Mr. Wendt has to say regarding planning for the TIF Plan. Assistant to the Manager Otey said that she has mentioned potential projects to Mr. Wendt that include: Farmer's Market; Burying Power Lines in the District; Purchasing Banner Signs for the Light Poles in the District.

"Use of DDA Tax Revenues" was presented to the DDA Board. The information defines what a DDA is and where tax increment revenues can be spent. The DDA was initially established by the Township Board in 1994 and includes the area west of Centennial Park that was added in 2004.

Mr. Wendt clarified the various programs DDA's can develop such as the Downtown Development Support Program the City of Grand Rapids DDA is currently developing (i.e. barrier-free design requirements met for a project and the contractor who designed the barrier-free facility would be paid from these funds).

The DDA can also acquire, assemble tax increment revenues on acquire, assemble and to convey or lease land. Mr. Wendt said that if the DDA were to purchase land, assemble it (install a park, clear trees, etc.) for use within the Downtown District. Land can be improved by constructing, reconstructing, renovating and preserve buildings, assuming there are enough funds available and the buildings are located within a downtown district.

A new addition is that DDA's are now allowed to create, fund and market for the benefit of retail use only, or, second you can market the downtown district activities. An example would be the 28<sup>th</sup> Street Dream Cruise that has been marketed by the City of Wyoming DDA.

The DDA can provide broadband service and wireless technology throughout its district.

The DDA can create, operate and fund a loan program to fund improvements towards existing buildings in the downtown district to make them marketable for sale or lease.

Another new category is that a DDA can now create, operate and fund retail business incubators within the downtown district, however, there are a lot of "strings attached" in order to do this. The DDA can now create an area "strip mall" and own it and lease it or give it for a unique business' use (i.e. no other similar businesses in the area). Those that operate the business can only be there for 18-months and have to present a business plan to the DDA and go through a training program on how to operate a business. Kalamazoo DDA currently has an incubator program and how they have achieved success is that they have a new business come into their DDA district and after the 18-months has come up, the DDA moves the property of the business incubator onto another

property within their DDA and this allows the new business to stay in the DDA and they remain in their location.

Member Ojala asked if the DDA had to allocate percentages of the funds to each project (i.e. business incubators receives 60% while broadband wireless receives 40%) and Mr. Wendt said the funds are distributed to cover the costs of the project.

Assistant to the Manager Otey asked in regards to the renovation, reconstruction, etc. of buildings, the DDA would have to own the building? Mr. Wendt said that is correct.

Mr. Wendt noted that if the Cascade DDA were to add any of the above categories to their TIF Plan, they would have to amend their current development/tax increment plan. He reviewed the categories within the Cascade DDA's plan that includes: street lighting, banner poles (including informational, directional banner poles and mast arm traffic lights), sidewalks and pedestrian/bicycle pathways, landscape plantings between the sidewalk and street, landscape medians on 28<sup>th</sup> Street, east and west of the highway interchange, community entry sign in the area of Kraft Avenue and 28<sup>th</sup> Street, facade improvement loans to assist businesses in modeling their business facades, construction of a village amphitheater by the Cascade Public Library, and combine and close drives that have cross access along 28<sup>th</sup> Street. Those are the items the DDA can spend today.

Member Siegle asked what percent of the taxes in value would the DDA receive and Mr. Wendt said that the DDA could capture 100% or less if they wanted to. Member Siegle asked what the tax rate is and Mr. Wendt said it is whatever the tax rate is that the tax levy is at the time, the tax levy regulates the tax. The first \$100,000 goes to the taxing levy and the next \$50,000 all goes directly to the DDA, non-school however.

Mr. Wendt further clarified that those DDA's that claim less than 100%, per say 90%, the percentage is cut across the entire board to each project and must be uniform to each taxing unit.

Vice-Chair Clark asked if the DDA were to amend their current tax increment plan would they be required to obtain members of the 'bodies' that are captured within the DDA District? Mr. Wendt said the short answer is no and further explained that the process to amend the current plan is for the DDA to develop its amendments to the plan and present the amendments to the Township Board. The Township Board would set a Public Hearing and in addition is required to notify each of the taxing units that the DDA is planning to amend the current plan. The Township Board is required to meet with the Township Units to address any concerns the units might have but the Township Board does not have any veto power. The Public Hearing must be published twice at least 20-days prior to the Public Hearing, the notice must be posted in public places within the district 20-days prior to the Public Hearing and a notice must be sent to everyone within the downtown district noting the Public Hearing. Mr. Wendt further said that units within the district could opt out of a planned amendment if you wanted to extend the district. The Unit can elect to opt out of the tax increment in an extended area (i.e. Kent County opted out of Centennial Park).

He also noted that if the DDA were to amend their current plan, to consider going 30-years out which would take the DDA to 2040.

Member McDonald asked what is in the fund now and what are some example projects within the last 5 – 6 years of the DDA fund. Assistant to the Manager Otey said there is approximately \$2 million in the capture at the end of 2010. The majority of the money has been spent on the sidewalk installations, street trees, and streetlights up and down 28<sup>th</sup> Street. Member Beahan also noted that part of the sewer installation along Old 28th Street was also funded by the DDA.

Vice-Chairman Clark suggested the DDA Board decide if they want to amend and/or extend the current plan, not necessarily defining the amendments at tonight's meeting.

Assistant to the Manager Otey asked Mr. Wendt asked if there are partnership opportunities with the Community Foundation and Business Association and can the DDA just end either before the term expires or if the term expires and the plan is not amended? Mr. Wendt said that if the DDA does not amend the term and the DDA expires it is done. Assistant to the Manager Otey asked what happens to the funds if the DDA ends and Mr. Wendt said that if bonds are outstanding, a DDA cannot terminate and in 2023 the Township's bonds would be paid off. As far as partnering, yes, the DDA can partner with others and it is done quite frequently with other organizations that have an interest.

Member McDonald asked when it would be appropriate to scheme into ideas. Mr. Wendt suggested that the DDA Board review the information he has presented tonight prior to the next meeting.

Vice-Chairman Clark asked if the DDA were to ratchet-down their capture, could they increase later? Mr. Wendt also said that could be planned if the DDA chose to.

Member Beahan asked if the outstanding bonds could be paid early and Mr. Wendt said that the Township's bonds are all past 10-years and the Township could pay them off early if they so choose. He believes there is approximately \$580,000 left.

Member McDonald believes that the Township is developing a downtown and believes that Tassell Park and the Library are becoming community gathering areas and favors a gathering park located in this area that included a "sound garden" or skate park in the park. Something that young families can bring their children to would be a tremendous asset for the community. This would 'anchor' the library and increase usage for them.

Member Kingsland noted years ago the DDA did discuss making the library user-friendlier and provide a path behind the library to Tassell Park. She asked if the DDA would have to purchase any property or obtain easements to install one?

Member Clark asked if there was any further development regarding a Farmer's Market in the district. Member Siegle suggested finding a covered open-air area that could host the market during the summer and turn it into a skating rink in the winter.

Mr. Wendt noted that if the DDA chooses to amend their plan, they would want to communicate with the community why they are amending the plan (i.e. to bring more people to the district).

Member Noto supports a lot of these ideas but asked why the DDA would want to scale back and Vice-Chairman Clark noted that the discussion is if the DDA wants to add any of the categories that were reviewed at tonight's meeting. Member Kingsland said that she has not heard any community complaints or discussion regarding the current DDA plan and this is for the DDA's Board consideration if amendments should be made or the term extended.

Vice-Chairman Clark suggested that an agenda item for the next DDA Meeting should be to pass a resolution for an extension of the current DDA term and develop a list of amendments for approval. Mr. Wendt noted that the process for a term extension is extensive and will take time. The Board might want to use some of the time, while developing the term extension, which projects they would like to fund and obtain some approximate expenditures for the projects.

Member Johnson supported the idea of marketing the businesses in the district and hopes there can be funding for some of the existing buildings and support the businesses that are currently here. She thought there could be housing downtown above some of the building that are currently there, such as lofts/apartments above Family Fare.

Mr. Wendt noted the DDA should develop, for instance, if they want to extend their term to 30-years, the Board needs to develop a 30-year plan for that term regarding their projects.

Mr. Wendt also suggested holding sessions with the businesses for their input and what their needs are. Member McDonald suggested that the DDA could ask the businesses to submit their ideas and needs, the list could be compiled for the DDA's review and then the DDA could meet with the businesses and create an obtainable list for their business needs.

Vice-Chairman Clark supported obtaining the business' input and working with them side-by-side. Assistant to the Manager Otey believes it is important to have the businesses understand how the money is captured and what exactly it can be spent on.

Michelle Bottrall, Vice-Chair of the Cascade Community Foundation (CCF), said in the past there has been discussion of a community sign that highlights activities and programs in the Township. If the CCF wanted to donate 10% towards a category (this would fall under marketing) could they do so and have their name on the sign if the sign were erected within the downtown district? Mr. Wendt noted that the CCF could not be on the scrolling part of the sign but they could be mentioned on part of the permanent part of the sign. Laura McDowell from Independent Bank said that they have had discussions with CCF regarding re-doing their sign to include CCF and the scrolling part of the sign would announce community events that would be updated every 24-hours.

Bottrall asked if they could put a community sign on an existing sign (i.e. Walmart's sign) to announce Township events and market the Foundation? The Board thought there might be Zoning Ordinances involved to achieve that but suggested obtaining easements from property owners is possible so they could establish a community sign promoting events downtown (i.e. Summer Concerts at Tassell Park, etc.). Independent Bank noted they receive calls weekly for requests to promote upcoming community events.

Bottrall also noted that she has had lengthy discussions with Marion Robinson, past chair of Friends of the Library, who said that Friends has desperately wanted a park attached to the Library for numerous years and supports the pathway connecting the Library's park with Tassell Park. Member McDonald supported the Library Park and connecting it with Tassell Park. He believes it would attract people and they would bring business to the district.

Vice-Chairman asked CCF and the Business Association submit their ideas for the downtown district and the Board submit their ideas to Assistant Manager Otey for her to compile. The suggestion was made that she compile the lists and distribute to those within the district for their input that would be compiled by Township Staff for presentation at a DDA Board Meeting.

Vice-Chairman Clark suggested holding a special meeting prior to the next schedule meeting on November 19, 2010 to further develop the TIF Plan.

**ARTICLE 6. Other Business**

Member Johnson noted another Township's newsletter is much more informative than Cascade's newsletter. She feels the Township's newsletter is under-utilized. Members of the Board said it would be nice to submit articles regarding the DDA in the newsletter.

Member Johnson requested that the planters be refilled at Christmas and again, volunteered to fill the planters this year.

**ARTICLE 7. Adjournment**

Vice-Chairman Clark requested a motion for adjournment. At 8:19 p.m. Member Ojala motioned for adjournment, supported by Member McDonald. All in favor with none opposed, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Hern, Recording Secretary

Approved as to form by:  
Sandra Otey, Assistant to the Manager