

MEETING MINUTES
Cascade Charter Township
Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors
Tuesday, August 21, 2012
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 5:30 p.m.
Members Present: Rob Beahan, David Huhn, Tom McDonald, Joann Noto, Kirt Ojala, Jennifer Puplava
Members Absent: Johnson – unexcused, Kingsland – unexcused, Siegle - excused
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 McDonald. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 3. Approve the Minutes of the May 29, 2012 Meeting

Motion was made by Member McDonald to approve the Minutes. Support by Member Ojala. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 4. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak to non-agenda items. (Comments are limited to 5 minutes per speaker)

There was no one in the audience to speak.

ARTICLE 5. Update of the Centennial Park Streetscape Project

Assistant to the Manager Korhorn stated that the project began on Tuesday, August 14. Strain Electric was awarded the contract and their bid came in at \$561,610.00. The majority of the project will be finished by September 21 with final completion on November 16.

The sidewalks are currently being laid.

ARTICLE 6. Discussion of 28th Street Sidewalk Project – Gap in Sidewalk

The work on the sidewalk project along 28th Street from Hotel Ave to Patterson Ave (on both sides of the street) is still in progress. We have reached a snag with the Applebee's property owner. We need an easement from him and in turn, he is asking that we pay for the review of that easement document by his attorney. While we do not pay for easements, in the past we have occasionally paid for landscaping, fences, etc. in extenuating circumstances to obtain an easement for a project.

Korhorn has discussed this with the Township Manager. He does not want to pay for the review and has suggested that the DDA consider the request. Without this easement, there will be about a 100 foot gap in the sidewalk on the north side.

Since the time Korhorn wrote the memo for the meeting a lady named Margaret of First Right of Way, who has been working on gaining easements, has been in constant contact with the property owner and his attorney. The property owner said he is going to sign the easement document. Should we take his word for it or should a decision be made about it? He has not yet signed the document.

Discussion followed. No action will be taken at this time.

ARTICLE 7. Discuss DDA Liquor Licenses & Process

Korhorn explained that the Michigan Liquor Control Commission offers many types of liquor licenses for businesses owners to purchase or transfer; however each community only has a certain number of licenses available. One type available is a Redevelopment License that is only obtainable in an established redevelopment district. Currently these licenses are not available to our business owners because we do not have an established redevelopment district.

The Township would need to pass a resolution establishing the district which can be the same boundaries as the DDA district. We would have to work with the Assessor to identify public and private improvements within that district for the last 5 years.

It can be a time consuming process but it provides some options for business owners who are interested in obtaining a liquor license, but are not able to purchase one or transfer one for various reasons. A license costs \$20,000; however 55% of the fee comes back to the local unit of government.

Korhorn asked if this is something the DDA is interested in pursuing.

Discussion followed.

The DDA concluded that they are interested in pursuing the process for redevelopment liquor licenses and directed staff to work with counsel and with other communities who already have these licenses, and to prepare a proposal for the next meeting.

ARTICLE 8. Discuss Potential Projects for 2013

Chairman Huhn asked staff to discuss potential projects for 2013. Korhorn said that the 28th street sidewalk project is moving forward. Discussed at the last meeting were mast arms and also bricked or stamped concrete crosswalks at some intersections.

Korhorn would like to partner with the Planning Commission in completing a streets project inventory. She has talked with the Township Manager in regards to the complete streets legislation adopted a few years ago. The Manager feels an inventory is premature, as he didn't believe the KCRC has adopted this plan yet. Member

McDonald wondered why the DDA couldn't be pro-active and at least identify areas that need change, such as safety issues or making a predominate entryway more attractive. Discussion followed.

Korhorn also wanted to discuss possible WIFI for the DDA district. Technology changes all the time but perhaps providing this technology will offer incentive for businesses to locate in the Township.

The DDA budget was discussed in relation to having a study completed for these ideas as well as previous ideas; i.e. a roundabout in the village. Discussion followed.

Member McDonald made a Motion to have \$30,000 as a budget figure for a study to be completed. Support by Member Puplava. Motion carried.

Chairman Huhn asked if there were any other projects that should be added as 2013 priorities. Member McDonald feels strongly that things should be done for kids around the library, such as a children's garden. He said that East Grand Rapids is a good example of attracting people to a downtown or core area. Many people there are walking, running, going in and out of the library and city buildings constantly. After some discussion Member McDonald said that the DDA objective should be in creating a community gathering place that capitalizes on the library and things that would grow the DDA and attract people to Cascade to get a DDA atmosphere.

McDonald, Puplava, and Beahan said they would like to work with Korhorn to come up with more ideas in creating enhancements for a community gathering place atmosphere. Korhorn believes business owners would also like to be involved.

Staff asked if cutting edge technology is something they would like to know more about as a possibility in the DDA District. Members agreed to hear a speaker during the next meeting to be further educated about the subject.

ARTICLE 9. Discuss Noto's Trees

At the last meeting Member Joanne Noto had expressed concern about trees that had been planted in the right of way (ROW) along the frontage of their business. She says that the trees are blocking their business sign and are also growing tall into the power lines.

Staff recently met with Joann and Tom to discuss their concerns. After the meeting Korhorn spent some time driving by the property and looking at their concerns. After driving by and observing the situation several times, it is staff's opinion that the trees do not need to be cut down, but should be trimmed above the sign. B&G should be able to do the trimming.

A stump that was in the right of way from a tree that had been cut down has already been removed.

Member Beahan suggested the trees be thinned/trimmed by a local arborist.

Chairman Huhn asked Member Noto if she wished to speak. Member Noto explained that they had asked that the trees planted by the DDA be removed and relocated shortly after they were planted; however the Township would not remove or relocate them. The trees were planted in front of trees that Notos had already planted. She said they were told that the trees would never be as tall as the power lines but they are already that tall. She went on to say that many of their older guests say they cannot see when they come through that area. There were originally 4 trees planted by the DDA. Because one tree was too close to their sign a tree was cut down, but Joann says it was the wrong tree. From Notos perspective it's both a safety issue and a sign issue and they would like the other 3 trees removed.

Discussion followed.

A decision was made by the DDA to walk over to Notos to observe the situation. They took a short break to walk to Notos property.

When the DDA members returned to the Wisner Center, the meeting resumed. Member Ojala was not able to return to the meeting, so he had given his proxy to Member Puplava. Member Noto was asked to leave the room while further discussion took place and a decision was made.

Member Puplava made a Motion to remove the trees. After Member McDonald shared comments about his observation, he gave his support to the Motion.

Member Beahan said he would rather see the trees trimmed first. Discussion followed.

Motion carried, 4 – 1.

Member Noto came back into the meeting room.

ARTICLE 10. Adjournment

Member Beahan made a Motion to adjourn the meeting. Support by Member McDonald. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Kingsland, Secretary

Carol M. Meyer, Planning Administrative Assistant