

Meeting Minutes
Cascade Charter Township
Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors
May 18, 2010
7:00 p.m.
Cascade Library Wisner Center
2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE

ATTENDEES: Rob Beahan, Ron Clark, David Huhn, Diana Kingsland, Tom McDonald, Rick Siegel.

Absences: Julie Johnson (excused), Joann Noto (excused), Kirt Ojala (excused)

Others Attending: Assistant to the Manager Sandra Otey,

ARTICLE 1: Call the Meeting to Order

Chairman Huhn called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ARTICLE 2: Approval of the Agenda

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

ARTICLE 3: Approval of the Minutes of March 16, 2010 Meeting.

Chairman Huhn requested a motion of approval of the March 16, 2010 minutes.

Member Beahan motioned for approval of the minutes as presented, supported by Member Siegel. All in favor of the March 16, 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 this project should be getting under way fairly soon as the Township has received MDOT's (Michigan Department of Transportation's) approval.

Bidding specs were distributed in late April and due to the Township May 12, 2010. Fishbeck estimated the costs for the project at approximately \$800,000. Two (2) bids were received one from Rivertown Contractors at \$536,000 and a bid from K & R was received for \$652,000. The Board will review the bids for their approval next week. Assistant to the Manager Otey believes the project will be awarded to Rivertown Contractors. Fishbeck is obtaining references on Rivertown Contractors. Chairman Huhn asked if the Township has dealt with Rivertown Contractors before and Assistant to the Manager Otey said they have not and this is the reason why Fishbeck is looking into the company for references and past projects. The project should begin in June and she believes will be completed in approximately 8-weeks.

Chairman Huhn asked if the contractors are bonded and Assistant to the Manager Otey said they are.

Member Siegel asked if there is anything with MDOT's construction on the overpass bridge next year that would be tied into the DDA's project that is happening this year? Should there be some coordination of these projects between the Township and MDOT? Assistant to the Manager Otey said that the Township does not receive timely communication from MDOT. Initially they told the Township that they were going to color the bridge and the Township asked to work with them. Then MDOT said they were not sure if the bridge would be colored or not. The Township has tried to coordinate this project with MDOT to no avail. The Township will not be coloring the wall since they are not sure what MDOT will do to the bridge and the Township can color the wall at a later time. The two (2) projects should not pose a conflict with each other.

Concern was raised in the Township coloring its project after the concrete has been poured and Assistant to the Manager Otey said that Fishbeck has told the Township that the coloring can be added without too much trouble.

ARTICLE 5: Discussion of Roundabout.

Assistant to the Manager Otey said that Member McDonald had previously distributed an email with information on roundabouts.

She thanked the board members for attending the information meetings concerning the potential project. The first meeting involved the business owners and there were approximately fifteen (15) attendees. The attendees were not in favor of the roundabout.

The second meeting was for the general public with approximately sixty (60) attendees. The majority of the attendees were opposed to the possibility of installing a roundabout.

Concerns regarding the roundabout mentioned that economic times are bad and the roundabout would not help businesses in the area with the construction and new flow of traffic. Other comments received included that the roundabout is not needed at this time and people just do not like them. Suggestions were received from the public to add another lane or improve the current intersection.

Independent Bank was in favor of the roundabout and would have to grant easement rights if the roundabout were installed.

Chairman Huhn attended the meetings and the meeting held for the citizens seemed to have an organized group that attended, possibly from the apartments in the area, as everyone in attendance was close to the same age.

The business owners expressed concerns regarding the construction affecting their business in a difficult economy.

Chairman Huhn said when the safety benefits of the roundabout were presented; the community did not seem to be impressed though cars at that intersection have previously hit some of them.

Assistant to the Manger Otey suggested educating the public as to the benefits and safety of a roundabout. She proposed putting the project in the TIF Plan and the DDA could pursue it at any time within the next 10-years.

She did speak with Member Johnson regarding the project and Member Johnson is in support of the project. She expressed her concern is how the children will get across the intersection, currently there is a crosswalk with a signal that assists the children and she would like this looked into some more prior to deciding if a roundabout would be installed at the intersection.

Member Siegel noted that his initial thoughts regarding the roundabout were against it. He did his due diligent research on roundabouts and is now greatly in favor of them. Member Siegel suggested placing non-government web links on the Township's web site that would provide a fair and balanced assessment of roundabouts and help educate the public. He also noted that he shares Member Johnson's concerns for the children crossing at that intersection and how they would navigate the intersection safely.

Member Siegel also expressed his concern for the current speed limit after Burton that is posted at 45 mph. He believes that the traffic should be warned of the slower speed limit prior to crossing Burton because the intersection does come up quick. Assistant to the Manager Otey said that the speed limit is set by the State Police. She noticed that the speed board and rubber strips were in the area after Burton and is not sure what they are studying. During the second meeting, the community did express their concern regarding the speed limit of this area. Member Siegel asked if the Township could make the request that the speed limit be lowered in the area and Assistant to the Manger Otey said that they could make the request and speak with the State Police. One time the Township did speak with the police and requested a lower speed limit and the speed limit went up. She believes that the studies tabulate how many cars travel on an average during a certain period of time and their speed limit. The police then calculate what 80% of the drivers' speed limits are and adjust the speed limit to the 80% average speed.

Member Beahan reported that a study was recently done on Cascade Road, south of Burton, in a 40 mph zone only 40% of the vehicles averaged between 35-40 miles per hour. 37% of the cars averaged 40-45 mph, 6% were traveling at over 55 mph with a maximum speed reported at 73 mph. This was done between Noon and 9 p.m. and reported 3,423 vehicles in one (1) day.

Member Siegel noted that if the roundabout were constructed, the landscape would change. He believes that people would need to be warned of the roundabout or the vehicles would be traveling too fast to negotiate the roundabout. Member Clark noted that the traffic light would be removed if the roundabout was constructed and it provides a visual that would slow the traffic down. He noted that the roundabout on M-37 is on a road that has 55 mph speed limit and the roundabout does provide a visual to slow the traffic down so they can enter it.

Chairman Huhn believes the roundabout would make the intersection safer as a traffic light seems to encourage speeders so they can make it through the light. The public needs to be educated on its safety benefits.

Member Siegel noted that the argument from the businesses is that the intersection, not so long ago, was under construction and business was down approximately 30%. The economy is difficult right now and is there a possibility that some of the construction could be done at night or other possibilities to help the local businesses affected by the construction? He believes this should be explored as well.

Member Beahan also noted that Member McDonald is also very much in favor of the roundabout along with the Kent County Road Commission (KCRC)

Member McDonald said he was in favor of the project and believes that the Township should continue to educate the public and keep discussions going. The negative comments received do not change the facts that they are safer, the Road Commission has told the Township that the intersection will be at capacity in the near future. The Master Plan noted that the community wants a “gateway” into the community that is attractive and a roundabout meets all these criteria.

Member Siegel suggested utilizing the Township newsletter to educate the community and Member Beahan also noted the public should be educated as to how the money for the project has come to be and that it does not cost the taxpayers anything extra.

Member Kingsland asked what the DDA Board would be doing as the next step in the project if the comments from the meetings were very favorable and Assistant to the Manger Otey said that the Township Board would need to approve the project and then Kent County Road Commission (KCRC). Currently, KCRC is in favor of the project as long as they do not have to financially support it but they have not officially approved the project.

Member Kingsland feels that the DDA should keep it on the same time line as proposed since they heard from such a small portion of the public. The timeline for construction is still two (2) years away and this would allow for educating the public.

Assistant to the Manger Otey said the Township would also like to hold more public meetings in the fall.

The Board openly discussed that they have received both negative and positive and will continue educating the public.

Member McDonald motioned to keep the roundabout project on the DDA’s schedule as a future project and to continue educating the public and leave the project on the DDA schedule for the future. Member Siegel supported Member McDonald’s motion. All in favor with none opposed. Motion carried

ARTICLE 6. Other Business

Assistant to the Manager Otey asked the Board to think of other projects that should be included in the TIF Plan, the amendments will be done next year.

ARTICLE 7. Adjournment

Chairman Huhn requested a motion for adjournment. At 7:50 p.m. Member Clark 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

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, August 17, 2010
Wisner Center of the Cascade Township Library
Please call 949-1500 if you cannot attend