

MEETING MINUTES

Cascade Charter Township
Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors
Tuesday, January 21, 2014
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, Diana Kingsland, Tom McDonald, Jennifer Puplava, Paula Rowland, Rick Siegle
Members Absent: Joann Noto, Kirt Ojala
Others Present: Assistant to the Manager Sandra Korhorn

ARTICLE 2. Approve the Agenda

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

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

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

Members Kingsland and Siegle arrived at 5:35 PM

ARTICLE 4. Update of Complete Streets Plan

Assistant Korhorn presented. We received a very preliminary draft of the Complete Streets Plan. We are planning a joint presentation with the Planning Commission on Tuesday, February 18 @ 7PM. A copy of the draft will be provided to the DDA Board prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE 5. Discussion of 2014 Projects

Chairman Huhn asked for an update on the DDA funds and commitments prior to the Discussion of the 2014 projects.

Assistant Korhorn stated that there is currently approximately \$1.8M in the bank and approximately \$750,000 on our Bond that we need to pay. The DDA refinanced the Bond with a 1.9% interest rate. The Bond is the only outstanding debt. The final payment is scheduled for 2020. In 2013 we spent between \$20,000 and \$21,000 on maintenance.

Chairman Huhn asked when the tax money will be available as we should be getting about \$250,000 twice a year which will provide a total of \$2.3 M in the fund minus any maintenance costs.

Korhorn stated that we receive the funds with the winter and summer tax rolls.

Assistant Korhorn presented the 2014 projects that were determined to be the top priorities for the year. Progressive AE and Cornelisse Design have provided rough estimates for some of the proposed projects. As you recall, the top projects are: Enhanced Intersections at TRD/Cascade Rd & 28th Street, Museum Park, Bridge Gateway, Old 28th Reconfiguration, Midblock Crossing, and West Median & East Median.

There is a large range of estimates and this is due to our decision on the scope of the projects that we choose. The lower end is if we do the minimums that we are proposing and the higher end is if we agree to do everything we want all at once.

1. The top priority is the Enhanced Intersections at TRC/Cascade Road and Cascade Road and 28th Street. The estimate received is \$87,000-\$163,000. The lower end is if we do just the cross walk and the high end is if we do the cross walks and the intersection.
2. The Museum Park estimate is \$380,000 to enhance the Museum Park. The sidewalk along Thornapple River Drive would cost \$150,000 to extend the walkway to Peace Street
3. The Bridge Gateway estimate is \$180,000. The project runs along Tuffy Muffler and Verburgs.
4. The Old 28th Street Reconfiguration estimate is \$38,000.
5. The Midblock Crossing estimate is \$101,000.
6. West Median & East Median estimate is \$114,000 (for 3).

Assistant Korhorn stated that the estimates from Cornelisse Designs included engineering costs and contingency plans which she did not believe were included in the Progressive estimates.

Chairman Huhn stated that the Board will consider these one at a time starting with the highest priority which is the Enhanced Intersections at TRC/Cascade Road and Cascade Road and 28th Street. The estimate that we have is \$87,000 to \$163,000 and what makes up the difference between the two numbers?

Assistant Korhorn stated that the lower end would be just enhancing the cross walk with stamped concrete. The higher cost would be if we did the entire intersection in stamped concrete.

Member Rowland asked if it would be just at Cascade & TRD?

Assistant Korhorn stated that it would be at both Cascade & TRD and Cascade Road and 28th Street.

Member Siegle stated that the price would include both intersections. So, if we did just the cross walks it would be \$87,000 and if we did the crosswalks and intersections it would be \$163,000.

Assistant Korhorn stated that this was correct.

Member McDonald stated that we chose the stamped concrete because it would last longer than paint, but do we know how long it would last?

Assistant Korhorn stated that the exact time length is not available but this has the most longevity of our options.

Member McDonald stated that he would prefer to do the whole intersection and that we will have regrets if we don't do the entire intersection.

Member Siegle stated that it was his understanding that there may be a roundabout at 28th and Cascade and are we being good stewards if we are spending money only to have it replaced in a couple years?

Chairman Huhn stated that there is no chance of a roundabout at TRD/Cascade Road and the roundabout at 28th Street is a political issue as well as a financial issue. The roundabout will take many years to get approval as it will be controversial.

Chairman Huhn asked if anyone wanted to make a motion to move forward on the approval of the \$163,000 estimate for improving both the crosswalk and the intersection at TRD/Cascade Road & Cascade Road and 28th Street.

Member McDonald made a motion to move forward in 2014 with the project at TRD/Cascade Road and Cascade Road & 28th Street for the full enhancement of both intersections. Support by Puplava. Motion carried 7-0.

Chairman Huhn requested discussion on the Museum Park project for 2014.

Member Rowland stated that \$380,000 is cost prohibitive.

Assistant Korhorn stated that this project can be done on a project by project basis and does not have to be completed all at once. The Park and Rec plan is currently in the process of being updated and the Museum Park is included in that. The Cascade Foundation is also looking at the Museum Park for improvements as well. I think that this will be a multi-step process and we all need to work together to maximize our funds. I think the first step to the process is to cut the tree down and eliminate and/or cut back the tall grasses. We can replace the tree but maybe in a different location so it's not in the exact middle of the park.

Member Siegle stated that the sidewalk should be the first priority.

Member Kingsland stated that she agreed the sidewalk should be done first.

Assistant Korhorn stated that the sidewalk is outside the DDA. We can put a recommendation in to the Board but they will ultimately have the final decision on the sidewalk.

Member Kingsland stated that we should wait to see what the other boards have in mind before we make a decision on funds. Initially, I thought we were just removing the tree and the tall grasses to increase visibility.

Member McDonald stated that he likes the idea of the park as it goes along with the sidewalk but would prefer the gardens get updated first and the sidewalk can come later.

Member Siegle asked that if the park is part of the DDA, how is the sidewalk not included?

Assistant Korhorn stated that the DDA property line ends before the sidewalk.

Member Rowland stated that she would like the DDA to work with the Historical Society and the Parks Board. I think the collaborative effort would be in our best interest and the best use of funds if we all participate in the costs.

Member Beahan stated that the Historical Committee does not have any funds to contribute. The Cascade Community Foundation is getting ready to begin a capital campaign to raise money for park improvements and a portion will be designated to the Museum Park. I think it would be best to coordinate our efforts with theirs.

Member Siegle stated if the Community Foundation is doing a capital campaign: let us find out their intent, then assist them and beautify the park without breaking the bank.

Member Kingsland stated that we need to keep in mind our interest in pedestrian protection and safety.

Member Roland stated that we could table this until we get more information.

Member Beahan stated we have talked about removing the tree and the tall grasses; but I feel we need to have a plan of what we are replacing it with before we begin.

Member Siegle asked who would coordinate all the different organizations, projects, come to a consensus, and move forward.

Assistant Korhorn stated all the organizations seem to have the same vision and are all willing to work together to keep the projects moving forward.

Member Puplava asked if it would be a good idea for us to each have a delegate at a committee meeting so that our ideas of having the tree removed and the grasses cut back remain part of the vision.

Assistant Korhorn stated that the Parks Board is in agreement on the tree removal and the grasses being cut back. The Historical Committee would like to continue a tree lighting ceremony and maybe we plant a new tree or come up with other ideas for a lighting ceremony.

Member Siegle asked if Assistant Korhorn would like a member of the DDA to attend the other meetings?

Member Beahan stated that he is on all of the other committees and would be willing to represent the DDA's views at the other meetings.

Assistant Korhorn stated that we had talked about adding seating, activities for kids and artwork. The \$380,000 included all of this. We can spread it out over the next few years and it does not all have to be done at once.

Chairman Huhn requested a motion to move forward on this project in 2014.

Member Puplava motioned that the DDA work collaboratively with the other interested parties and move forward on this project in 2014. Support by Kingsland. Motion carried 7-0.

Chairman Huhn requested discussion on the Bridge Gateway project.

Assistant Korhorn stated that the funds were for landscaping, guardrails and general beautification of the area. The estimates would include permits, contingencies and engineering fees.

Member Puplava stated that while the nighttime lighting is a good idea, it seems as though we need to determine what each project within the estimate costs before we decide which projects to address.

Chairman Huhn stated that beautifying the area and adding the crosswalks may help draw your attention away from the businesses on the corner and allow you to focus on the river.

Member Rowland stated that she would love to see expansion of the sidewalk on the bridge to better accommodate bikes and pedestrians. The Road Commission controls this but I really think it would be a great asset.

Assistant Korhorn stated that the bridge is outside the DDA as well.

Member Kingsland asked if an easement was needed from Tuffy Muffler for this project.

Assistant Korhorn stated that the projects are within the right of way so an easement is not necessary.

Member McDonald motioned that we need to further evaluate and get actual costs before moving forward on the Gateway Project. Support by Member Siegle. Motion carried 7-0.

Chairman Huhn requested comments on the 28th Street Reconfiguration.

Member Beahan asked what comments the Kent County Road Commission had regarding the reconfiguration of the area.

Assistant Korhorn stated that the Kent County Road Commission staff was favorable to the changes.

Member Beahan stated that the curvature of the street would change heading toward Cascade road but would the road change heading toward 28th Street.

Assistant Korhorn stated that the road would remain but the berm would change which would move the sidewalk further back from the road.

Member Beahan stated that right now it is a turn right only, will that change the ability to get onto Orange Street.

Chairman Hugh stated that the new change would make it impossible to use Orange Street.

Member Kingsland made a motion that we move forward with the reconfiguration of Old 28th Street. Support by Member Rowland. Motion carried 7-0.

Chairman Huhn requested comments on the Midblock Crossing.

Assistant Korhorn stated that the Midblock Crossing would have a raised median and landscaping to make a safer crossing zone for pedestrians.

Member McDonald asked if the Kent County Road Commission was on board with the project or if they had any concerns.

Assistant Korhorn stated that the plantings we show in the middle of the crossing is a concern to KCRC as there is a storm sewer that runs down the center of the road. The concern is that tree roots could impede the sewer at some point in the future. They requested that what we plant is approved by the Road Commission.

Member McDonald stated that the Midblock Crossing will not impede with the gas station as this was a concern with an earlier plan.

Assistant Korhorn stated that the current curb cuts will allow for unimpeded traffic except at one location.

Member Beahan stated that the difficult or impeded left turns are not going to be good for the businesses that are affected. I think it will work if we move it to between the driveways so that traffic is not impeded but still allows safe crossing for pedestrians.

Member McDonald stated that by moving the Midblock Crossing it would allow stacking in the middle lane which would actually be advantageous to the gas station and International Beverage.

Member Rowland made a motion to move the Midblock Crossing west and to talk to property owners regarding traffic calming, esthetics and pedestrian safety. Support by Member Puplava. Motion carried 6-1. Kingsland- Nay.

Chairman Huhn requested comments on the West Median & East Median.

Assistant Korhorn stated that two of the medians would be placed on Cascade Road at Wendell to the West and on Wycliff to the East. The third would be placed on 28th Street by Kingsland's.

Member Kingsland asked if the landscaping would be a sight impediment for traffic.

Assistant Korhorn stated that we would have to work with the Road Commission to get any landscaping approved. Also, as the median on Wycliffe is outside of the DDA area, we could only make a recommendation to the Township Board and they would have final approval on the medians viability.

Member Siegle asked if we could move the crosswalk on 28th Street slightly to prevent the illegal left that is currently a problem and it would not impede traffic into Kingsland's and the doctor's office.

Member McDonald stated that if we move it we can incorporate it into the cross walk that is already there while still preventing the illegal left.

Member Beahan stated that the median on Wycliffe would be problematic. I think we are opening that area up to accidents from people trying to enter off Thorncrest. I think it would be better to move the median between Thorncrest and Wycliffe. This would allow more time to make a left from either direction.

Member Siegle asked if the median to the West would impede traffic into the Villas. I think it would be better served to move the median further west beyond the Villas driveway toward Wendell.

Member Kingsland suggested it be moved closer to Cascade and 28th Street.

Member Puplava made a motion that we shift the 28th Street Median to the east and that we investigate the concept and location of the medians on Cascade Road at Wendell and Wycliffe. Support by Kingsland. Motion carried 7-0.

ARTICLE 6. Discussion of DDA Maintenance Worker job description

Assistant Korhorn stated that it was requested that a job description be created for a DDA maintenance worker. While this job description has been created for the DDA it must be noted that there will be times when this person will be working outside the DDA as well as other workers assisting this position. The salary range would be the low to mid \$30's. If this is something that the DDA is interested in moving forward on, we would have to submit a formal proposal to the Personnel Committee and have them approve it.

Member McDonald stated that the DDA area is quite large and has a lot of area to cover and that is a lot of work for one individual. They are going to need supplemental help. I think the time is right to move forward on this.

Member Rowland stated that she would like to see it spelled out in the job description that the DDA is the priority and that anything outside the DDA should be "as directed by supervisor".

Assistant Korhorn said that it would be spelled out in the job description that the majority of the employee's time would be spent on the DDA but other work outside the DDA may also be required.

Member McDonald stated that it would be difficult to determine exactly how much time as it will depend on the season and the amount of work to be completed. I think as long as it states that the majority of the time will be spent in the DDA, the intent of the position will be clear.

Assistant Korhorn stated the position is titled DDA Maintenance Worker so the job that they are being hired for is very clear.

Member Puplava stated that I think we should insert the word "priority" to make it as clear as possible what their primary focus will be.

Member Siegle asked the cost of the position.

Assistant Korhorn stated low to mid \$30's and with benefits about \$45,000.

Member Siegle asked how we would pay the employee.

Chairman Huhn stated that it would be handled through accounting at the Township. The person would be an employee of the Township and the DDA would be line itemed for the expense.

Member Puplava asked if this would be an additional position or a restructure of the current personnel.

Assistant Korhorn stated it would be additional personnel.

Member Rowland made a motion to move forward with a formal recommendation to the Personnel Board to hire a DDA Maintenance Worker to work primarily in the DDA. Support by Member Puplava. Motion carried 7-0

ARTICLE 7. Election of Officers

Assistant to the Manager stated that Kirt Ojala would like to remain on the Board but that his schedule may not allow him to continue as Vice Chair.

Member McDonald asked if Member Puplava would take to be willing to step in as Vice Chair.

Member Puplava agreed to step forward.

Member McDonald made a motion to re-elect David Huhn as Chair and Diana Kingsland as Secretary and to elect Jennifer Puplava as Vice Chair. Support by Member Beahan. Motion carried 7-0.

ARTICLE 8. Any other Business

a. Contact List for Board Members

Assistant Korhorn circulated a contact list for Board Members and asked that they review the information and make any changes needed.

b. Walkability Review

Assistant Korhorn stated that MDOT had circulated an email in late 2013 stating that they were conducting walkability reviews and if any communities were interested to let them know, which Cascade Township did. The next step was to send them a three paragraph letter stating why Cascade Township felt they needed this. MDOT came back and said Cascade Township was one of the finalists to have this review. MDOT will visit the area and review walking conditions along specific streets. Community leaders and decision makers will sit down with MDOT and analyze any positives and/or negatives of the area. MDOT will likely do this in March or April, but we do not have a specific date yet. We will need volunteers from the DDA and other Boards & Commissions as well as other community leaders to participate in this. It's a group of 15-20 people for approximately a six hour day which includes walking, discussion, etc. Sandra believes this is a good thing to participate in, and along with the Complete Streets report will generate great ideas.

Member Rowland asked what the end result of this review would be.

Assistant Korhorn stated MDOT would be giving the Township some options and ideas for future improvements. Sandra stated the Kent County Road Commission would be invited to send a delegate as well. Sandra stated she would pass along information, as she receives it, to the Board Members.

c. Cascade Village Sign

Assistant Korhorn updated the Board Members regarding the Cascade Village sign at 28th Street and Old 28th that was lost during the recent storm. The Township doesn't have a replacement plan in place yet. The Township is investigating different signage for the area. One example would incorporate the swoosh from the sign at Tassell Park. The Township is thinking of locating the sign in different areas of the Township and having this as the permanent sign design for the Township. The Township would also like to erect a sign at the 36th Street Exit of the highway. Another possible location would be at the 28th Street interchange. Other locations within the Township are being discussed. Also being discussed are different ways of lighting each sign. Nothing, however, has been decided.

Member McDonald wanted to know the purpose of the unsightly pods between 28th Street and Wal-Mart.

Assistant Korhorn stated that Wal-Mart is using them for storage. She would, however, have Planner Peterson make a call to Wal-Mart to find out how much longer they would be there.

Member McDonald stated he understood that he has to move on from the Board, but he will still attend meetings and wants to continue participating in the business of the Township.

Assistant Korhorn thanked Member McDonald for his service and stated she would keep him informed of meetings.

Member Beahan thanked Member McDonald for his willingness to serve on these Boards.

ARTICLE 9. Adjournment

Member McDonald made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Member Kingsland. Motion carried 7-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Kingsland, Secretary
Ann Seykora, Planning Administrative Assistant
Deb Groendyk, Planning Administrative Assistant