

**MEETING MINUTES**

Cascade Charter Township  
Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors  
Tuesday, June 7, 2011  
5:30 P.M.  
Cascade Library - Wisner Center  
2870 Jacksmith Ave SE

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**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, Julie Johnson, Diana Kingsland  
Tom McDonald, Joann Noto, Kirt Ojala, Jennifer Pupilava  
Members Absent: Rick Siegle, excused  
Others Present: Assistant to the Manager Sandra Korhorn

**ARTICLE 2. Approve the Agenda**

**Motion was made by Member Beahan and supported by Member McDonald to approve the Agenda as presented. There were no questions or comments. Motion carried unanimously.**

**ARTICLE 3. Approve the Minutes of the May 17, 2011 Meeting.**

**Motion was made by Member McDonald to approve the Minutes.**  
Member Johnson requested that the sentence "Member Johnson asked if the two trees that are to be removed will be replaced" stricken from the Minutes. (Article 6: Review and Consider Plans for Centennial Park Streetscape Project – last paragraph) **Member McDonald made an amended Motion to approve the Minutes with the modification that was requested by Member Johnson. Support by Member Kingsland. Motion carried unanimously.**

Chairman Huhn introduced and welcomed the newest DDA Member, Jennifer Pupilava.

**ARTICLE 4. Review and Consider Plans for Centennial Park Streetscape Project**

Chairman Huhn requested that Assistant to the Manager Korhorn open the discussion.

Korhorn stated that the Township Board had reviewed the DDA recommendation at their May 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. After much discussion the Board decided to kick it back to the DDA for reconsideration. Korhorn included drawings/renderings in the packets to give the DDA more ideas. Whatever is recommended tonight will go back to the Township Board at their June 22 meeting.

Member Beahan said that there were two members of Centennial Park who were in attendance at the Board Meeting on May 25th; one was Larry Fleis and the other was George Wanty. They expressed concern about having the sidewalk on only one side of the street. They are both here tonight.

Chairman Huhn asked if there was anyone present from Centennial who wished to speak.

Present was George Wanty who is the President of the Building Owners Association of Centennial Park. He introduced Larry Fleis who is a property owner and on the Centennial Park Review Committee. Mr. Wanty stated that they had attended the Board Meeting and found out for the first time that the sidewalk project had been revised to only have sidewalks on one side of the street area. Originally proposed to have sidewalks on both sides, Mr. Wanty wanted the DDA to reconsider. He stated that recently he had driven through Centennial Park with a friend who is a real estate consultant. In a frustrated way, he asked the consultant, "What is it about this park that doesn't seem to lend itself to full occupancy?" The consultants' reply was that it hasn't changed in 50 years. The buildings and property looks great, but it's the park. The entry sign was designed in about the 50's when this was a very rural area. The rest of Cascade has changed. Mr. Wanty went on to say that the sidewalk project would provide a wonderful entry into the park along with new signage that the Building Owners Association wants to do. It would really have an impact on updating the park and would still maintain the beautiful country-like setting that they all love. They want to maintain the bushes, trees and landscaping.

Another thing Mr. Wanty wanted the DDA to consider; In the park there are about 25-30 properties that even in this market represent between 50 – 100,000,000 dollars in market value. The vacancy rates are too high and they shouldn't be. As the DDA considers the investment in the park, along with Centennials past and future investments into the park, there could be an immediate impact. Putting sidewalks on both sides represents a balance in the aesthetic feeling that is real important to maintain.

In addition there is a Business Improvement District Legislation that Mr. Wanty and a committee in Lansing are working on. It has to do with Special Assessment Districts where the actual private stakeholders would tax themselves to make improvements in their area. It is in the process of being passed in the State House for Townships. It represents the commitment we have as stakeholders in the park to continue to make investments on our own to make Centennial Park what it should be today.

Larry Fleis talked about the entry features and a sidewalk on both sides as being a completed project. As a completed project it will make for a better first impression for any future client.

Rick Stout of Fleis and VandenBrink Engineering stated that feedback from real estate brokers was that the whole image of the park needs to be refreshed and transformed; especially the entryways. First image forms a lasting impression of the park. There are 5 main entry points to the park: Lucerne, Foremost, Charlevoix Drive, Coach, and potentially Tahoe. We are in the first stages of working on cost estimates in materials, sign elements, etc. There may be future expansion with sidewalks.

In conclusion, Larry Fleis commented that they had gone through a lot of public meetings in conjunction with the DDA to work on the Master Plan for Centennial Park.

The Plan called for sidewalks on both sides. There are 25 to 30 buildings, so there is a lot of potential pedestrians and bike traffic. There are about 2000 people now just in the office park complexes, plus all the residential that are in the condos. Since we are not at full capacity we could be as high as 3000 people.

Member Beahan spoke from the Township Boards perspective. He said that the Board was more inclined to have sidewalks and lights on both sides. The Board also learned that Centennial was interested in helping out with landscaping themselves.

Kirt Ojala, DDA Member wanted to go on record that he is not an owner at Centennial. He is a representative but has no personal gain by anything there.

Chairman Huhn opened the meeting up for DDA questions or discussion.

Member McDonald shared that he was one of the DDA members that was for sidewalks only on one side, not knowing the volume of traffic, forgetting about the study that we the Township and you the Association paid a lot of money for. I would completely flip-flop based upon four new pieces of good information.

1. The input from the Association that George and Larry gave us is news and input that we did not have before regarding the park and regarding their investment. The information from the Association is extraordinarily valuable and we really appreciate that.
2. We did not have a landscape plan from Pat Cornelisse that showed the trees, both deciduous and evergreens going on both sides. That makes the park look much more attractive to me. The previous information we had only reflected that we were going to cut down trees and put in sidewalks. We did not have good drawings or a landscape plan.
3. We did not have the entranceway plan. I think it will be a remarkable addition. When we paid for a study three years ago, the firm even talked about how dated the entranceway was.
4. Regarding the Master Plan for Centennial: We were worried about vacancy rate three years ago, even before the economy turned down. We were perplexed saying, 'this is such a unique and beautiful location, we are by the highway and the airport, it has mix of residential and other ..... then why isn't it full to capacity?'

With these four pieces of input, along with understanding that the Association is very interested in this Special Assessment on themselves to make it even a better park, I completely understand why one would want sidewalks, streetlights, and landscaping on both sides as well as the entranceway to really improve this park. I think we received a lot of information today that we did not have before.

Member Kingsland commented that the DDA knew nothing about the Master Plan. Some of the DDA members had questioned what Centennial was doing on their own behalf. She added that it is nice to be made aware that Centennial is participating in their destiny; not only with plans but also financially. With tonight's additional information she fully agrees that they are able to make a better judgment.....we had none of this until tonight.

Member Noto said that she totally agrees. The renderings helped make sense, showing reasons to have a sidewalk on both sides. She added that in the future items should not be put on the agenda unless complete information is available. She noted that it is a waste of time to make a Motion that will be passed to the Township Board based on partial information.

Member Ojala said he is on both sides of the table and trying to be a neutral balance. Brokers that he deals with have stated that when they come in that entry, potential clients have remarked that it is out of date; and they turn around and go home. He agrees that a sidewalk on both sides will give a balanced look, especially in the entryway.

Member Johnson explained that they were not previously given much information with which to vote on. When told that about 25 trees would be removed she did not understand because of the large office park lawns. She asked why they couldn't seek easements from the property owners. Johnson commented that you're basically building pedestrian pathway sidewalks which don't have to be right next to the road. The sidewalks and lights could curve a little bit. You have mentioned that it will be a park-like setting; if I were a walker I would rather be in further and have the lights shining on me instead of the cars. Especially on a hot day, pedestrians want to walk on a path with trees for shade. Driving into Charlevoix Drive is a very pretty drive with all the established trees and I hate to see any of the trees leave. If you are replacing 22 out of 23 trees, I will vote for it.

Assistant to the Manager Korhorn wanted to make sure that Member Johnson realized that the DDA would be taking out the trees and replacing them, not Centennial.

Member Puplava said that she is in favor of paths and lights on both sides.

Member Beahan stated that he was glad to see that if there are 23 trees coming down, 22 will be replaced. He went on to say that some of the trees should probably come down because of their age and they have reached a point where they are deteriorating. We have an opportunity to replace them with healthy/hardy trees.

Chairman Huhn asked if anyone was ready to make a Motion.

**Member McDonald made a Motion to support the new plan with the information we received tonight, with sidewalks and lights on both sides. Support by Member Kingsland.**

Chairman Huhn asked if there was further discussion. Member Kingsland suggested that as well as making a nice entryway across from Walmart, possibly they could do the same to the entryway into the Crowne Plaza. She feels they need to improve that entryway more than the entryway near Walmart. Member Johnson was in agreement.

**With no other questions or discussion, Motion carried.**

**ARTICLE 5. Any Other Business:**

Korhorn summarized:

1. There had been discussion at the last meeting about purchasing a Toolcat for the Township. Amy Waugh is getting some prices from other companies.
2. A sample of the second streetlight fixture previously discussed is here to look at. It is called Universe.
3. June 21 at 8:00 a. m. will be the next DDA Special Meeting to discuss the TIF Plan.

**ARTICLE 6. Adjournment**

Chairman Huhn asked for a Motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Member Noto. Support by Member Ojala. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Kingsland, Secretary

Carol M. Meyer, Planning Administrative Assistant