



A collaboration of business owners, property owners, local officials and individuals dedicated to the revitalization and growth of Caro's downtown and the surrounding business area!

Blueprint Advisory Facilitation Board Meeting Minutes • May 13, 2009

1. Meeting called to order at 7:02 p.m.
2. Roll Call/Attendees

Attendance	Name	Position	Term
Absent	Mike Bauerschmidt	Member	Concurrent w/Position
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	Don Beavers	Member	Concurrent w/Position
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	Angie Farris	Member	Exp 10/09
Excused ABS	Mike Henry	Chairman	Concurrent w/Position
Absent	Louise Hodges	Member	Exp 10/10
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	Rick Lipan	Vice Chairman	Exp 10/09
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	Kris McArdle	Facilitator/Secretary	Concurrent w/Contract
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	Jim McLoskey	Member	Exp 10/10
Absent	Bob Moore	Member	Exp 10/10
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	Susan Rickwalt-Holder	Member	Exp 10/10
Absent	Janice Schrader	Member	Exp 10/09
Excused ABS	Tom Striffler	Member	Concurrent w/Position
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	Ed Volway	Member	Exp 10/10
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	Patty Volway	Member	Exp 10/09
Guests Present:		None	

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. Secretary Kris McArdle presented minutes. No discussion took place.
- b. Jim McLoskey motioned to approve the meeting minutes from March 11, 2009, as presented, seconded by Don Beavers, and approved by all present. No objections were made.

4. Public Comments

- a. Secretary Kris McArdle shared letter DDA and Blueprint received from American Mattress regarding their concern for the lost of parking spots around and near their building at the southwest corner of Sherman Street and M-81 if the light at Burnside was to be moved there.
- b. Jim McLoskey shared a postcard from ethanol producers asking for support regarding E15 and the EPA.

5. Facilitator/Secretary Update

- a. Secretary Kris McArdle shared collaboration efforts between Thumb Area Tourism Council (TATC) and TRAVELHOST magazine. McArdle provided a copy of the Caro spread in the recent TRAVELHOST issue.
- b. McArdle announced TATC now offers a Coupons & Special Offers page on the Web site.
 - i. As TATC members, the Village and/or Chamber can have a coupon or special offer included on the page.
- c. McArdle also shared the latest small business news and training schedule from the Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center (MI-SBTDC).
 - i. Don Beavers asked if the info could be reduced for use in the Village newsletter and/or Chamber Newsletter.
 1. McArdle will revise and return info to the Village and Chamber.
 - ii. McArdle announced having 10 dislocated workers already registered for the FastTrac NewVenture program for dislocated workers in the Thumb Area.
 - iii. She is also excited to share three new businesses have opened in the Thumb Area, including a poultry processing, landscaping and outdoor wood boiler business.

6. Old Business

- a. Michigan Main Street Program Presentation
 - i. Don Beavers recognized those in attendance for the Michigan Main Street presentation in April and for those who actively participate in the Blueprint Board meetings.
 - ii. He went on to say that both programs work well with the right kind of support and involvement from local businesses and community members, and that the key to success is building a long-term, viable plan, which usually starts with the Blueprint Program and then steps up to the Main Street Program.
 - iii. Beavers went on to discuss how difficult it is to get support from local businesses while the Village, DDA and Blueprint groups continue to press forward doing their part in making Caro a better place to live, work, play, visit and shop.
 - iv. Ed Volway asked if maybe it's that many of the downtown business owners really don't care and/or don't have a vested interest in seeing progress???
 1. No one had any specific feedback on that.
 - v. Patty Volway shared that she has asked businesses why they don't get involved and the feedback has been:
 1. Mostly non-retail stores, so they survive with or without foot traffic in the downtown area.
 2. Many simply pick downtown Caro because the rent was less expensive.

- vi. Volway also spoke of the image of Caro outside of the immediate area with the high percentage of non-retail and hair salons right on Main Street, which reflects negatively back on downtown Caro.
 1. She asked how could we encourage the non-retail business to consider adding some retail to their non-retail space???
- vii. Susan Rickwalt-Holder added that it is also important we get the building/property owners involved in these efforts as well.
- viii. Beavers reflected that a lot of good has come out of the downtown and many improvements have been made ... now it's the time to take it up another notch. To do so, we'll need more/new volunteers to get involved.
- ix. Beavers continued that the DDA is at a point where they need to decide which path to take ... infrastructure or project-oriented.
- x. It will be up to those involved to determine whether we as a community we should continue with the Blueprint Program or step up to the Main Street Program.
- xi. Beavers ask if the Chamber could communicate his concerns to their members in hopes of recruiting more volunteers to help with the future progress of Caro.

b. Homework Assignments

i. Blueprint versus Main Street – Questions of Interest

1. Secretary Kris McArdle sent out a request for feedback from Board members as to what questions/concerns/thoughts they might have if we could speak to another Michigan Main Street community. Only received feedback from one Board member.
 - a. The initial list of 'questions for other towns' was shared with the Board.
 2. After some discussion, the Board agreed to move forward with networking with Clare, a Michigan Main Street community similar to Caro in size and economics.
 - a. McArdle will work to make the connection and schedule a visit.
 - b. Initial questions of concerns for networking purposes:
 - i. Can we get a tour?
 - ii. Can we go to one of their meetings?
 - iii. How long have they been operating as a Main Street community?
 - iv. Can we meet with key contacts?
 - v. Open to additional questions ... e-mail to McArdle to add to the 'questions for other towns' list.
 - c. It was also decided that we should invite DDA and Blueprint Board members; as well as, interested local business owners to participate in the networking opportunity.

ii. Task Priority Worksheet Results

1. Done

iii. Caro Area Business Directory

1. Status quo – no feedback from Board members has been received.

- iv. Business Surveys
 - 1. Don Beavers shared the addition of a summer intern – Elliot Nelson – doing Fellowship with the Village of Caro and other local communities as well.
 - a. Beavers will have the business surveys incorporated into Nelson’s tasks/responsibilities.
- c. Reviewed Tactical Plan with Project Leaders providing updates.
 - i. Key highlights include:
 - 1. ~~A committee of Vice Chairman Rick Lipan, Susan Rickwalt-Holder, Angie Farris and Secretary Kris McArdle was formed to look into the funding, liability and long-term management/maintenance of a skateboard park in Caro.~~
 - a. Please note ... this committee was formed to look at the language used on the ordinance sign for the dumpster issue NOT for the purpose described above.
 - 2. Moving of the street light at Burnside to Sherman Street has been put on hold until further notice from the DDA due to the significant loss of parking spots.
 - 3. There will need to be at least five businesses interested in the façade program in order for another round to take place.

7. Caro Area Update

- a. Downtown/DDA
 - i. Reported by Vice Chairman Rick Lipan.
 - ii. Lipan shared the DDA approved Kappen Tree Service to inject some of the smaller trees in downtown Caro with a growth-stunting serum. There will be about 20 trees injected.
 - iii. Notice of intent to improve two parking lots and an alley has been approved. Construction is anticipated to start early July.
- b. Village
 - i. Reported by Village Manager Don Beavers.
 - ii. See Beavers’ input under Michigan Main Street Program presentation.
- c. Chamber
 - i. Reported by Chamber President Susan Rickwalt-Holder.
 - ii. The Chamber and Village have collaborated together to offer a community-wide calendar of events.
 - 1. The Web link will go live shortly.
 - 2. The Chamber also already developed a community-wide event brochure, which is in circulation.
 - iii. The annual Cars & Crafts event is coming up first weekend in June with a community-wide garage sale being added to events for this year.
 - iv. Membership is currently 157.
- d. County – Tuscola County Economic Development Corporation (EDC)
 - i. Reported by EDC Director Jim McLoskey.
 - ii. McLoskey reported a new pool and spa business coming to the downtown area, which will open shortly.

- iii. He was also working with a retail establishment who was looking for a downtown location, but they needed more immediate parking adjacent to the desired location.

8. New Business

- a. Don Beavers shared his intern will also be doing a community survey, which is why it would be fitting for him to incorporate the business survey information into this project.

10. Announcements

- a. Ron Rademacher of Michigan Back Roads will be our guest speaker at the June meeting.

11. Adjournment

- a. Susan Rickwalt-Holder motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Angie Farris, and accepted my all present. No objectives were made.
- b. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

11. Next meeting

- a. Wednesday, June 10, 2009, at 7 p.m. at the Caro Municipal Building

Respectfully submitted by: Secretary, Kris C. McArdle

Minutes revised per Board input June 10, 2009.