



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 • October 14, 2009

1. Meeting called to order at 7:05 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
Absent	Angie Farris	Member	Exp 10/09
Absent	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
Absent	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:	Lori Smith and Ed Cook, Opindor Cathy Cabala, Kid's Closet Margie Sylvester, Caro Downtown Task Force & Second Chance Thrift Shop (BBBS)		

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - a. Secretary Kris McArdle distributed minutes prior to meeting via e-mail and then included them in the meeting packet for the Board meeting.
 - b. Jim McLoskey motioned to approve the meeting minutes from September 9, 2009, as presented, seconded by Patty Volway, and approved by all present. No objections were made.
4. Public Comments
 - a. Guest were welcomed by Don Beavers and given the opportunity to introduce themselves.

- b. Lori Smith and Ed Cook are from Opindor, which is a new nonprofit group who is operating a drop-in center in downtown Caro at the former location of The Geek Shop.
 - i. Their goal is advocacy. They would like to be a link between connecting local resources for those who don't where to start or how to connect those dots.
 - ii. They are not affiliate with any other local agency or nonprofit. They are a standalone entity. Though, they have been in discussion with the group 2011 and may actually work under their entity at first. No discussions have been made.
 - iii. Don Beavers suggested they contact Dave Matlin to ensure they are adhering to zoning ordinance.
 - iv. Ed Cook reported they had about 26 drop in over the course of three days.
 - v. Cook also stated that the front half of the building will be designated as place for these individuals to sell/promote their craft/hobby/product.
- c. Cathy Cabala works at Kid's Closet in downtown Caro, which is a resale shop located between Chemical Bank and Town & Country Bridal. They've been in operation for several years.
- d. Margie Sylvester is the manager of the Second Chance Thrift Shop, which is a division of the Thumb Area Big Brothers Big Sisters agency. She also serves as the Chairperson for Caro's Downtown Task Force.
- e. It was also shared that the former antique/quilt shop downtown has been donated to a local church who will convert it into a youth center. There may also be living quarters established upstairs.

5. Facilitator/Secretary Update

- a. Secretary Kris McArdle shared and distributed info on the following items:
 - i. Thumb Area Tourism Council now has a Facebook presence with a fan page and over a dozen fans.
 - ii. Introduced of the Thumb Area produced documentary – *An Anything But Ordinary Journey* – by Mike McCleary of Bay Port and Casey Turner of Pigeon.
 - 1. They have been interviewed by local radio, TV and papers.
 - iii. A copy of the letter sent to non-attendees inquiring about their interest in continuing to participate in the Blueprint program; as well as, an e-mail that went out to key contacts encouraging them to join the group.
 - 1. Due to the upcoming vote on Nov. 3 regarding the village to city proposal, we will hold off on making any changes to the Board until the results of the election and the next step has been determined
- b. As McArdle and Don Beavers prepare to submit the official first year report to MSHDA, she asked what happened with the business surveys sent out by the Tuscola County EDC.
 - i. Jim McLoskey reported about 25 surveys were returned.

6. Old Business

- a. Michigan Main Street Program Update
 - i. Secretary Kris McArdle and Don Beavers provided updates:
 1. McArdle shared feedback on follow up issues from previous meeting:
 - a. A manager is only required by the MMS program at the Associate level or higher. One is not required during the introductory phase.
 - b. Design guidelines followed by Clare have been distributed via e-mail and are available on their Web site at:
http://library1.municode.com/default-test/home.htm?infobase=13657&doc_action=whatsnew
 - ii. Discussion ensued regarding the best next step for Caro – move forward with the MMS program or take a shot of creating our own program following their formula.
 1. The DDA questioned spending the money on a person to fill the role of a downtown manager/facilitator.
 2. DDA also questioned wish would be best ... hire an employee or contractor.
 3. Mike Henry requested a presentation be prepared for the DDA regarding our proposed next step.
 - a. Beavers and McArdle will take the lead on this project.
 4. The Blueprint Board thru a few suggestions out there:
 - a. Responsible for business surveys – gather data, interpret data and help businesses to use the info for improvement
 - b. Responsible for working one-on-one with businesses – finding out what's affecting their business, sharing of marketing tidbits/resources, etc.
 - c. Responsible for coordinating the development of standard design guidelines
 - d. Responsible for ensuring the Caro brand reminds consistent.
 5. Beavers and McArdle will use this info and the info received from Clare to prepare a proposed next step plan to be presented to the Blueprint Board and then the DDA.
- b. Tactical Action Plan Highlights
 - i. Key highlights include:
 1. Work with and encourage downtown's existing businesses to enhance their curb appeal ...
 - a. Susan Rickwalt-Holder spoke to DOT and the drop box has been relocated to the back of their building.
 - b. Another drop box on the front door of the bail bond man across from the Court House.
 - c. Patty Volway shared she has spoken to the occupants of two of the vacant downtown buildings, which are now being used by church groups, and they do not wish to decorate their windows for festivals/events.

2. Seek additional funding as needed ...
 - a. Don Beavers shared that the village and state will be signing grant paperwork for the water line project to update the lines on Meek, Ward and Bush streets.
3. Make parking management improvements ...
 - a. Ed Volway shared the talking points from the Parking Lot Committee which were shared with the DDA as well.
 - b. These are just in the initial stages of improvements and still requires going through the proper channels for approval.
4. Enhance two remaining parking lots ...
 - a. Project complete!

7. Caro Area Update

- a. Downtown/DDA
 - i. Reported by Don Beavers in Mike Henry's absence.
 - ii. Waiting on results of village to city election on Nov. 3.
 - iii. If the casting vote is to become a city this will mean some slight changes to business and operations for the DDA; therefore, they will look at the development plan once the vote has been cast and the next step is a little clearer.
- b. Village
 - i. Reported by Village Manager Don Beavers.
 - ii. The parking lot improvements are just about complete with only a few minor details – lighting and dumpster enclosure – to be finalized.
 - iii. Beavers provided an update on the water line project.
 - iv. They are waiting on results of the election ... village to city.
- c. Chamber
 - i. Reported by Chamber President Susan Rickwalt-Holder.
 - ii. Membership is currently at 171 members.
 - iii. The Chamber Bucks program is going extremely well ... so well they had to scale it back to 5%.
 - iv. Volunteers are busy planning for the Gingerbread Village, which is Dec. 3 – 9, 2009.
- d. County – Tuscola County Economic Development Corporation (EDC)
 - i. Reported by Executive Director Jim McLoskey.
 - ii. McLoskey shared he is working with potential retailers for the downtown area; as well as, a few service groups.

8. New Business

- a. Margie Sylvester shared that the Big Brothers Big Sisters Christmas store is coming soon to downtown; as well as, they're annual garage sale at the radio station (Mix 92.1).

- b. Patty Volway shared info regarding Get Ready for America Unchained on Nov. 21, 2009
- c. Ed Volway shared an update on the topics of concern and proposed resolutions from the Parking Lot Committee. A copy of their talking points was included in their Board packets.

10. Appointments to Board

- a. New appointments and reappointments are on hold until the village to city issue is resolved and a clear next step is formulated.

11. Adjournment

- a. Susan Rickwalt-Holder motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Rick Lipan, and accepted my all present. No objectives were made.
- b. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

12. Next meeting

- a. Wednesday, November 11, 2009, at 7 p.m. at the Caro Municipal Building

Respectfully submitted by: Secretary, Kris C. McArdle