



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 • December 10, 2008

1. Meeting called to order at 7:00 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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	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

### 3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. Jim McLoskey motioned to approve the meeting minutes from Nov. 12, 2008, as presented by Secretary Kris McArdle, seconded by Susan Rickwalt-Holder, and approved by all present. No objections were made.

### 4. Public Comments

- a. None – no public guests were present.

### 5. Marketing/Communications Update

- a. Secretary Kris McArdle reviewed the desire to obtain more insight from the Board on the SWOT feedback – with the primary intention of using information for marketing purposes (i.e. Caro is home to the only ethanol plant in the Thumb Area or the Village is proud of its dedication to parks and recreation with their walking trail at Chippewa Landing).

- b. McArdle also provided an update on marketing/communications; including the coverage of Caro's Gingerbread Village in the current issue of TravelHost. This story was done in conjunction with the publication's editor and the Caro Chamber of Commerce.
- c. Still no mention of the Board members or meeting schedule in the paper from the press release that was sent out in November. A follow up press release will be sent out in January.
- d. The domain for the original Caro Blueprint Web site ([www.caroblueprint.com](http://www.caroblueprint.com)), which was created and used during the Blueprint process, has not been renewed and has been discontinued from use. All Caro Blueprint info will now be posted on the Blueprint's page of the Village's Web site.
- e. The Village's membership to the Thumb Area Tourism Council (TATC) has yet to be renewed.
  - i. If payment is not received by the first of the year, their membership listing will be removed from TATC's Web site. A second invoice from TATC was sent Dec. 16, 2008.
  - ii. If payment is received, TATC will enhance the content of information that is included in the posting.

## 6. Caro Area Update

- a. Downtown/DDA
  - i. Reported by Chairman Mike Henry.
  - ii. Façade program continues forward with the start of Time Out and the remaining 4 to follow shortly.
  - iii. Henry spoke of the understanding that Goodwill was moving into the vacant space next to Peeble's but no formal announcement has been made as of meeting.
  - iv. Parking lot project may get a jolt forward with the possibility of grant funds becoming available. More details to follow under 'New Business – Federal Grant Opportunity'.
  - v. DDA is working on their Better Business award nominations. Final award winner(s) to be recognized at the Caro Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year event in February.
- b. Village
  - i. Reported by Don Beavers.
  - ii. The village received news of a new business coming to town – Excel Group, which is an in-coming call center to be located at the former Curve's location on Hooper Street. The new business is reviewing applications and will initially bring about 25 jobs to town.
  - iii. Residents of the Village of Caro now qualify for flood insurance.
- c. Chamber
  - i. Reported by Susan Rickwalt-Holder.
  - ii. The Chamber has 151 members.
  - iii. Caro's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Gingerbread Village concludes Dec. 10.
  - iv. Next events in the works, include:
    - 1. Citizen of the Year, Saturday, Feb. 28, 2009
    - 2. Cars & Craft, June 2009

d. County

- i. Reported by Jim McLoskey.
- ii. A new employment group has opened in the area – Extra Resource Staffing.
- iii. Click-n-Stitch has moved back to downtown Caro next to Intermission Deli.
- iv. The Second Change Thrift Shop has temporarily set up shop at the radio station for the largest garage sale.
- v. A new marketing business, using walking sandwich boards, has opened in Caro with about 8 clients using the service.
- vi. The County continues to work with Mark Cleavey on the economic gardening concept in Tuscola.

**7. Old Business**

- a. Reviewed Tactical Plan with Project Leaders providing updates.
- b. Key highlights include:
  - i. Don Beavers is working with DDA to submit the parking lot project for consideration of Federal matching dollars from the US EDA.
  - ii. Caro Police Department added as Project Support for the Parking Management Improvement task, and Ben Paige to be contacted regarding existing ordinances and enforcement.
  - iii. A notice to the downtown businesses will be sent in late winter/early spring to remind them of using the trash bins in the parking lots for their trash versus the bins in front of the buildings on main street. These bins are for downtown customers and the public.
    1. Method of delivering notice to be determined at that time. Discuss took place as to using the Village newsletter or Chamber newsletter. The Chamber newsletter may not be appropriate since it includes businesses outside of the downtown.
  - iv. A meeting with MDOT is being scheduled to discuss a number of the projects on the list.
  - v. Discussion over funding sources took place in addition to the information listed below - 'New Business – Federal Grant Opportunity'.
    1. Tom Striffler suggested we consider the option of creating our own funding source by using the Communication Foundation as other communities do this.
    2. A suggestion was made to keep track of funding sources sought after. Secretary Kris McArdle will develop a database for tracking funding sources applied for and the results of the effort.
  - vi. Patty Volway is seeking information from Kent \_\_\_\_ at MSHDA and Michigan's Historical division to help 'encourage and assist in the efforts to develop additional downtown housing'.
  - vii. Secretary Kris McArdle will develop a press release in January from an entrepreneur's stand point of business resources available in the area.
  - viii. The Chamber has yet to select a new lead person for neither the Downtown Task Force nor the Farmers' Market.

- ix. A meeting with the Port Austin Farmers' Market representative is still in the works for early 2009.
- x. Tom Striffler and Chairman Mike Henry will develop a draft of 'local standards for government support of new downtown restaurant development' for review by the Council.
- xi. Discussion took place as to how to keep track of businesses ... types of business, openings/closings, # of employees, etc.
  - 1. Secretary Kris McArdle will create a database for tracking; as well as, surveys for businesses to complete upon opening in the Caro Area and on a regular basis thereafter.
- xii. Susan Rickwalt-Holder and Secretary Kris McArdle will meet to discuss marketing and promotions of the area, and to develop a plan of action.
- c. See Tactical Action Plan for complete updates.
- d. Prioritizing projects and review of missing businesses were tabled until January 2009 meeting due to lack of time for review at meeting.

## **8. New Business**

- a. It was mentioned that Warren Taylor, a local Caro resident who recently lost the bid for Village Council and County Commissioner has shown an interest in getting involved with the Blueprint project. Secretary Kris McArdle will send him a note to invite him to the Advisory Board meetings.
- b. Federal Grant Opportunity
  - i. Both Don Beavers and Secretary Kris McArdle received communications regarding a one-time opportunity to receive Federal grant money.
  - ii. The US EDA (Economic Development Administration) is trying to show our newly-elected officials the need for Federal dollars.
  - iii. They are looking for projects which are ready to go and just need matching funds from a grant source.
  - iv. The DDA/Village will submit the parking lot project for consideration.
  - v. In an effort to learn more about available grants, Kathy Tenwolde from East Central Michigan Planning & Development will attend the February Board meeting.

## **9. Adjournment**

- a. Secretary Kris McArdle motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Susan Rickwalt-Holder, and accepted by all present. No objectives were made.
- b. Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

## **10. Next meeting**

- a. Wednesday, January 14, 2009, at 7 p.m. at the Caro Municipal Building

Respectfully submitted by: Secretary, Kris C. McArdle