



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 • February 11, 2009

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
Absent	Rick Lipan	Vice Chairman	Exp 10/09
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	Kris McArdle	Facilitator/Secretary	Concurrent w/Contract
Absent	Jim McLoskey	Member	Exp 10/10
Absent	Bob Moore	Member	Exp 10/10
Absent	Susan Rickwalt-Holder	Member	Exp 10/10
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	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
Guests Present:	Kathy Tenwolde, East Central Michigan Planning & Development		

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - a. Secretary Kris McArdle presented minutes. No discussion took place.
 - b. Tom Striffler motioned to approve the meeting minutes from Jan. 14, 2009, as presented, seconded by Patty Volway, and approved by all present. No objections were made.
4. Public Comments
 - a. None
5. Guest Speaker
 - a. Kathy Tenwolde, East Central Michigan Planning & Development
 - i. Kathy Tenwolde was invited to share possible grant resources with us.

- ii. She began with the announcement that their organization just received a new name – East Michigan Council of Governments.
- iii. Tenwolde discussed the need to prioritize our tasks at hand whether based on main category or individual tasks.
- iv. Her recommendation is to pick top three as priority and focus on them. We will be more effective focusing on a small group of priorities than trying to tackle them all.
- v. In advance of the meeting, Tenwolde had placed about 13 of our tasks on wall-size post-it notes for a storyboard session of ranking our priorities.
- vi. With the post-it notes on the wall, she gave each of dots to use for ranking our priority in the tasks at hand.
- vii. The results, in respective order:
 1. Develop and attract new business.
 - a. Tom Striffler sees this as bringing new businesses to the area.
 - b. Patty Volway believes it's more than just about bringing new business to town but to have a solid infrastructure in place to effectively attract these new businesses.
 - c. Unfortunately, Tenwolde does not know of any grants available for fulfilling this task, unless maybe if it's for a specific event.
 - d. Discussion over the Village's Web site took place. Tenwolde asked if the site was promotional or informational, which the feedback was mostly informational. It provided the necessary info about village services and resources for the locals. It doesn't necessarily promote business and/or downtown. The question was asked if something could be added to the site to promote downtown businesses, which is possible.
 - i. The Chamber will be overseeing a community-wide calendar and a link will be placed on the Village's site.
 - ii. Striffler does not agree that improving the Web site is necessarily the way to attract them here. He believes we need to go out and find them by finding their hot 'buttons' and using those to draw them in.
 1. Tenwolde mentioned there might be some funding through the USDA Rural Development for this.
 - e. The idea would be to make the area so attractive it draws people in on its own.
 - f. Volway asked about the difference in designating an area/district as historical versus individual buildings. There may be more tax credit advantages to doing an area/district versus individual buildings. Volway suggested contacting the historical society for more details.

2. Develop a village brochure
 - a. A basic Village services brochure currently exists. A brief discussion took place as to whether or not the next brochure would be best targeted at visitors or business recruitment.
 - b. Tenwolde shared that there may be grant funding available for the development of a brochure. She also recommends making sure these brochures are available at the Michigan welcome centers.
3. Tie between seek support and work with downtown businesses, and prepare design guidelines.
- viii. Tenwolde also spoke of grants being available for facades through the MSHDA, which we're already involved in; as well as possible grants for various cultural art programs.

6. Marketing/Communications Update

- a. Secretary Kris McArdle provided an update on marketing and communications.
- b. McArdle continues to move forward with the two following press releases on her to-do list.
 - i. Reminder of Advisory Board meeting schedule and public welcome to attend.
 - ii. A collective account of what business resources are available in the area; including: Tuscola County Economic Development Corporation, Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center™ (MI-SBTDC™), Tuscola Enterprise, Chamber of Commerce, ThumbWorks! and more.
- c. She announced having five new MI-SBTDC™ clients since the start of the new year who are interested in starting small businesses in the Tuscola County area.
- d. McArdle provided an update on the Caro 150 Professional Snowmobile Races & Winter Fest, and included samples of marketing efforts for the event in the Board packet.
- e. She also announced that the Thumb Area Tourism Council will soon work with their members to add coupons to the Web site.

7. Caro Area Update

- a. Downtown/DDA
 - i. Reported by Chairman Mike Henry.
 - ii. Progress on the parking lots continues to move forward with a minor adjustment in the funding – decreased from \$280,000 to \$260,000. Once this project is complete it fulfills the basic brick and mortar projects for the DDA.
 - iii. Pumpkin Festival continues to rebuild after the recent Board changes and they are pleased to announce its return to the downtown area.
 - iv. Patty Volway brought up the topic of getting a grant to start a business incubator in downtown. She suggested using Lota's building. It was mentioned that Don Beavers has experience in this arena from his time in Constantine.

- b. Village
 - i. Reported by Don Beavers and Tom Striffler.
 - ii. Striffler reported a group of individuals have come together to create a community calendar that will be managed and hosted by the Chamber.
 - iii. Beavers shared that the revolving loan option through the EDC is going to the Council for review. This loan will act as assistance for business financing similar to gap funding. It is only available for those in the Village of Caro.
 - iv. Patty Volway asked about the legalities of having a beer tent at community events; such as, Cars & Crafts. The feedback was that they would need to put together a plan for the Council to review.
- c. Chamber
 - i. Chamber representative was absent.
 - ii. A Board member did share that a Goodwill store is now open next to Peebles.
- d. County – Tuscola County Economic Development Corporation (EDC)
 - i. EDC representative was absent.

8. Old Business

- a. Reviewed Tactical Plan with Project Leaders providing updates.
 - i. Key highlights include:
 - 1. Discuss with MDOT the moving of the light at State & Burnside to State & Sherman:
 - a. Tom Striffler reported that MDOT confirmed the loss of 2 parking spots on the westside of Sherman Street in front of Tina's Corner Café and American Mattress.
 - b. This project will be further discussed at the March DDA meeting.
 - 2. Institute a fine system to deter placement of business waste in trash receptacles :
 - a. There is an existing ordinance and the Village will produce signage to display.
- b. Tactical Action Plan Worksheets
 - i. Tasks & Priorities
 - 1. Board members discussed revising the layout of the tasks based on project leaders, priority ranking, etc.
 - 2. Secretary Kris McArdle will make revisions for next meeting.
 - ii. Caro Area Business Directory
 - 1. Secretary Kris McArdle has received no updates.
 - iii. Grants & Funding Resource Directory
 - 1. Secretary Kris McArdle still waiting on information to complete.
- c. Business Surveys
 - i. Secretary Kris McArdle provided revised versions, but:
 - 1. It still needs to be determined which organization will use/distribute these surveys (i.e. Village, Chamber, Blueprint, etc.) and how these will be effectively used.

- d. Task Priority Worksheet
 - i. Secretary Kris McArdle received 8 out of 14 worksheets back, plus 1 at meeting.
- e. Discuss missing businesses as indicated in Blueprint Report and discuss possible action plan
 - i. Tabled again due to meeting already running over.

9. New Business

- a. Great Places
 - i. Don Beavers shared an award opportunity with Secretary Kris McArdle. Upon her review, she questioned if we're strong enough to qualify. McArdle recommends Board members look at the info at www.planning.org/greatplaces/. Whether we qualify or not, the info may provide us ideas and/or guidelines to consider as we're working on improvements.
- b. Main Street Program
 - i. At the DDA meeting, discussion took place regarding the Michigan Main Street Program. It was agreed to move forward in looking at our options with respect to the program. Don Beavers and Mike Bauerschmidt will coordinate a presentation by MSHDA to key officials and local business owners.
- c. Downtown Outdoor Seating Zoning
 - i. Tom Striffler announced the Planning Commission is looking at possibility of rezoning the downtown business district (B1) to allow outdoor seating. Currently outdoor seating is only acceptable for businesses in the B2 district, which this does NOT include downtown. The Commission is looking for input from the DDA, Blueprint and business owners. Key contact regarding this is Dave Mattlin. Of course, the appropriate and best criteria for this will be developed.

10. Adjournment

- a. Secretary Kris McArdle motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Janice Schrader, and accepted by all present. No objectives were made.
- b. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

11. Next meeting

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

Respectfully submitted by: Secretary, Kris C. McArdle