

# City of Plainwell



“The Island City”

Brad Keeler, Mayor  
Lori Steele, Mayor Pro Tem  
Todd Overhuel, Council Member  
Roger Keeney, Council Member  
Randy Wisnaski, Council Member

Department of Administration Services  
211 N. Main Street  
Plainwell, Michigan 49080  
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Web Page Address: [www.plainwell.org](http://www.plainwell.org)

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## Agenda September 23, 2024, 6:30 PM Annual Board Meeting

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call of Boards
3. Annual Report Presentation
  - a. DDA BRA TIFA/ Economic Development Strategy
  - b. District Library
  - c. Planning Commission
  - d. Parks and Trees/ Community Recreation Plan
  - e. Master Plan
  - f. Redevelopment Ready Community
4. Community Engagement Annual Report
5. Comments
6. Adjourn

*The City of Plainwell is an equal opportunity provider and employer*



# City Boards Annual Meeting

July 1, 2023–June 30, 2024



# Annual Report 2023-2024

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, as amended, requires that an annual report of Planning Commission activities be prepared for the legislative body that reflects the administration and enforcement of the master plan and zoning ordinance, including recommendations for amendments or supplements to the ordinance.

# City Council

- ▶ Mayor Brad Keeler
  - ▶ Mayor Pro Tem Lori Steele
- ▶ Council Member Todd Overhuel
- ▶ Council Member Roger Keeney
- ▶ Council Member Randy Wisnaski



# Board of Review

**Meets 1st Tuesday after 1st Monday in March**

Public meetings commence on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in March, lasting not less than two (2) days. Also meet in July/December. 3-year terms.

Jerome Westergaard

Courtney Andrie

Derek Carter

# Compensation Board

Members are appointed by City Council

Members must be qualified voters registered in the City of Plainwell and must not be employed by the city, nor be members of an employee's immediate family. The Compensation Board meets in the spring of odd-numbered years to determine the salary of each local elected official.

William Parsons

Sherry Pallett

Joe Smith-Risk

Vacant

Vacant

JoAnn Leonard, City Clerk – Non-voting staff, Recording Secretary

# DDA BRA TIFA

Meets the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7:30AM

4-year term - Ordinance Section 13.5

Mayoral Appointment/Council Approval

Members appointed by City Council. Members do not have to be city residents.  
Members must own a business in the Central Business District (CBD), the Industrial Park or have a background in Brownfield development.

Nicholas Larabel, Chairman BRA

Paul Rizzo, Chairman TIFA

Adam Hopkins, Chairman DDA

Cathy Green

Jim Turley

Vacant Seat

Kevin Seckel

Justin Lakamper, City Manager

Randy Wisnaski, Council Advisor

Denise Siegel, Community Development Manager (Non-Voting)

# DDA BRA TIFA

## Downtown Development Plan

- ▶ Plainwell Paper Mill Site (BRA):
  - Phase 2 Demolition – Completed
  - Lead Paint Abatement finalizing / Completed
  - Actively seeking Developers/ RFQ Launch Party November 2023
  - Utilize site for Farmers' Market, Carnival Island City Festival, Flea/Vendor Market
- ▶ Downtown Central Business District (DDA):
  - Small Business Revolving Loan –Three (3)business loans taken out in 2022-2024 for improvements
  - 7 new businesses opened their doors downtown between 2023-2024
  - Completed CDBG Rental Rehab project above Perfect Image. \$240,000 funded by MEDC
  - Created a Rehabilitation District at 119 W Bridge St. for redevelopment and future funding from MEDC
  - 2 Businesses participated in the MEDC Technical Training program receiving business coaching and \$2,500
  - Opened Social District in May 2024
  - 20 Special Events in Downtown
- ▶ Sidewalks:
  - Repair as needed
- ▶ Landscaping:
  - Flower Committee
  - Lights on Brooks Plaza
  - Installation of sculptures by Riverwalk/M89 Stairs
- ▶ Industrial Park (TIFA):
  - Filled in potholes on Acorn Street
  - 25 Acres sold on the Miller Rd property
  - Conducted 8 business visits w/MIWorks & Lakeshore Advantage
  - Renamed the Park – James R. Higgs Industrial Park





# Businesses in Plainwell

Commercial Business break down:	
Accommodations/Apartments/Senior Living	19
Education	7
Grocery	3
Medical	6
Dining/Pubs/Treats	12
Retail	18
Service	57
Worship	8
<b>total</b>	<b>130</b>

## CURRENT OCCUPANCY CONDITIONS - INDUSTRIAL PARK & CBD

**Industrial**  
830 Miller Road

**Commercial**  
618 Allegan St.

Vacant Property  
200 Allegan

Commercial Business 130  
Industrial Businesses 41  
Total Businesses 172

60 Businesses are located in our CBD



# District Library Board:

- ▶ The Ransom District Library Board is comprised of members from Gun Plain and Cooper Townships and the City of Plainwell.
  - Members appointed by the City are Roger Keeney, William Parsons and Melissa Gelbaugh
- ▶ The City Council appoints its members to possess all powers and performs all functions of library boards as set forth by statute.



# Planning Commission

- ▶ Members are appointed by the Mayor, Council confirms
- ▶ Members must be city residents qualified by experience and/or training in matters related to land use planning.
- ▶ Planning Commission works from the Economic Development Strategy and the Master Plan.

Rachel Colingsworth, Chair

Gary Sausaman, Vice Chair

Kevin Hammond

Jay Lawson

Elizabeth Raich

Stephen Bennett

Lori Steele (Council)

Denise Siegel, Non-Voting Staff, Recording Secretary

## Actions taken by Planning Commission 2023–2024

### Rezoning/Site Plan Reviews in accordance with the Future Land Map

ACTION	ADDRESS	TYPE	APPROVED	DATE
Site Plan Review	12 <sup>th</sup> Street	Island City Hospitality Inc	Yes	8/2/2023
Site Plan Review	119 W. Bridge St.	Mosaic Distillery	Yes	8/16/2023
Rezone Property	377 N. Main St. from CS to RIC	Rezone	Yes	10/04/2023
Special Use Permit	950 Industrial Parkway	Wireless Communication	Yes	10/18/2023
Site Plan Review	950 Industrial Parkway	Wireless Communication Tower	Yes	11/01/2023
Site Plan Review	820 Miller Road	Industrial Property Profielnorm	Yes	02/21/2024

# Planning Commission

Action Step: Review the zoning ordinance to see if it inhibits master plan implementation; make necessary changes

Ordinance	Amendment	Action	Date
Ordinance 387 Site Plan Review	Amendment process of Site Plan review for R2 & CBD	Recommended to CC	12/06/2023
Variance Request	Rear Lot Line at 627 W. Bridge St.	Recommended to CC	06/19/2024

# Parks & Trees Commissions

Members are appointed by City Council.

Members must be city residents and registered voters qualified by experience and/or training a variety of disciplines:

Matthew Bradley, Chair

Shirley De Young

Bunny LaDuke

Marsha Keeler

Cory Redder

Todd Overhuel (Councilman)

Bob Nieuwenhuis, DPW Superintendent

Cheryl Pickett, Non-voting staff, Recording Secretary

# 2023-2027 Community Recreation Plan



# Community Recreation Plan

## Goals & Objectives

### ▶ **Goal 1: Parks & Recreation Maintenance & Improvements**

- ▶ Routinely identify recreation facility and programming deficiencies throughout the city
- ▶ Design facilities in compliance with ADA requirements and strive to achieve universal design
- ▶ Ensure the safety of parks and recreation facilities by routinely evaluating amenities for wear and tear.
- ▶ Repair, remove, or replace damaged, worn or obsolete facilities and amenities.

### ▶ **Accomplishments:**

- ▶ New Fence along M89 and Hicks' Park (safety)
- ▶ Added Lights to Brook's Plaza
- ▶ Removed dangerous fishing dock in Fannie Pell

### ▶ **Goal 2: Parks & Recreation Financial Responsibility**

- ▶ Explore funding opportunities for park development through state and local funding sources
- ▶ Establish and compare long-term maintenance costs with deciding to repair, replace, or add new recreation amenities.

### ▶ **Accomplishments:**

- ▶ New exercise equipment in Sherwood Park funding Michigan Gas Utilities and Motan \$15,000
- ▶ Lights at the Pickle Ball courts funding through the Anna R. Pipp Foundation \$10,000
- ▶ Kayak launch and fishing dock for Darrow Park funded through Anna R Pipp Foundation \$7,000



# Continued Park Upgrades:

## ▶ **Goal 3: Kalamazoo River**

- ▶ Improve access to the river through enhanced and maintained launch amenities, wading areas, and fishing platforms.
- ▶ Maintain public access to the river as a priority through the acquisition of riverfront property.
- ▶ Remove dams where appropriate to improve the river, reduce maintenance costs, enhance safety, and improve fish migration
- ▶ Work with neighboring communities and the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council in the development of the Kalamazoo Heritage Water Trail
- ▶ Continue to maintain, enhance, and expand existing Riverwalk.

## **Accomplishments:**

- ▶ National Fish and Wildlife Grant for the engineering of removal of 2 conversion dams and the dam in front of City Hall



# 2023 – 2027 Master Plan



City of *Plainwell*

## ***2023 MASTER PLAN***

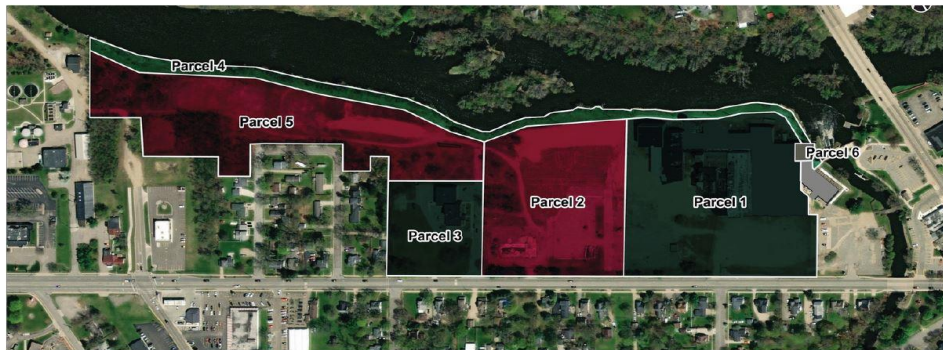
## Master Plan Action Item–Key Focus area #2

Continue to support the conversion of the former paper mill and site to mixed development that includes employment based land uses.

RFQ Launch – Thursday, November 2, 2023

Continued to work with MEDC showing building complex and land to developers.

WORK IN  
PROGRESS



The City of Plainwell Invites you to the RFQ Launch

**15 ACRES - 200 ALLEGAN ST. PROPERTY**

Request for Qualifications Lunch / Launch

Please RSVP to [dsiegel@plainwell.org](mailto:dsiegel@plainwell.org) by Oct. 26

(269)685-6821



**211 N. Main  
Plainwell, MI 49080**

**Thursday, Nov. 2  
12 - 2 pm**

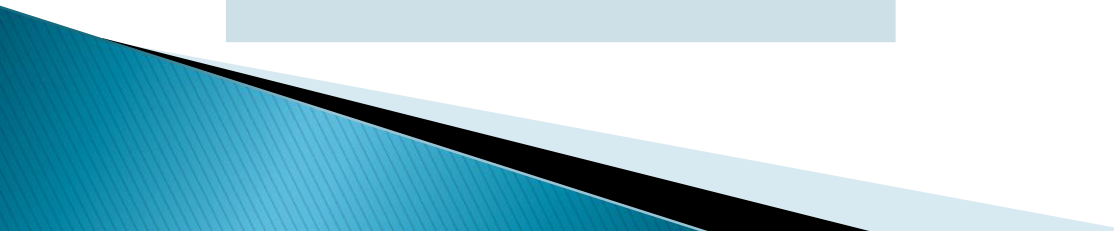
# Master Plan Action Items – Key Focus area # 6

Market Plainwell’s businesses and waterfront as unique destinations between Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids—publications, Social Media, Websites, etc.

Publications
Jaqua Realty Plainwell Relocation Brochure
City of Plainwell Parks brochure
Plainwell Business Tri-Fold

Websites	
Plainwell.org	Localharvest.org
Puremichigan.org	Marketmaker.org
Miplace.org	MIFMA.org

City Social Media	
Email blast	550
Facebook	7,800
Instagram	1375
LinkedIn	132



# Master Plan Action Items – Key Focus area #10

Continue to expand Plainwell’s current Industrial Park



Two parcels sold along Lincoln Parkway  
15 Acres – Profielnorm USA/PRN Group  
10 Acres – Nobis

## Master Plan Action Items – Key Focus area #1 1

Continue to build on programs that encourage building renovations and improvements

### Rental Rehabilitation Project

CDBG Funds were utilized to renovate 4 apartments above Perfect Image.

Project Cost: \$323,382.00

CDBG Funded – \$240,000.00

Property Owner Funded– \$83,382.00



Revolving Loans up to \$10,000 for local businesses with a 1% interest rate & 5-year payback period.

26 Loans given out since 2009

Total Amount of funding: \$63,345.46

Available as of 6/30/2024: \$51,148.66



# Redevelopment Ready Community



RRC Certified Communities

- ▶ Certified since April of 2020 / Renewal January 2025
  - To be vibrant and competitive, Michigan communities must be ready for development. This involves planning for new investment and reinvestment, identifying assets and opportunities, and focusing on limited resources. Certified Redevelopment Ready Communities® attract and retain businesses, offer superior customer service, and have a streamlined development approval process making pertinent information available around the clock for anyone to view.
  - Top 3 Priority Redevelopment Sites
    - Plainwell Paper Mill – Building Complex
    - Plainwell Paper Mill – Vacant Land
    - Industrial Park Expansion – 52 Acres (2 lots sold, 15 acres and 10 acres)

## RRC Funding Opportunities Received:

Technology Assessment – coaching program, internal review, and \$2,500 in funding went to two Downtown Businesses in March 2024

Match on Main Grant –\$25,000 grant submitted for Mosaic Distillery June 2024.

Technical Assistance Funding \$22,100 for updates to the Master Plan 2023-2027



MOSAIC™  
DISTILLERY

Passiflora  
by angela diomira



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## City of Plainwell Community Engagement Statement Annual Report (2023-2024)

### Background

On December 10, 2018, the City Council adopted the City of Plainwell Community Engagement Statement. This plan was a requirement of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation’s (MEDC) Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) program. [Community Engagement Statement](#)

### Community Engagement Objectives

The City of Plainwell will continue to involve the community as “Key Stakeholders” in the future development of our City. This is meant to be a living document that is updated periodically to respond to the changes in staffing, noticing, and community needs.

### Objectives:

- The City of Plainwell evaluates each project on an individual bases to determine project scope, stakeholders, project limitations, approving body, points of community impact during the decision-making process, internal and external resources, and level of appropriate community involvement.
- The City of Plainwell makes information available in a timely manner to enable interested parties to be involved in decisions at various stages of the review and approval process.
- The City of Plainwell engages citizens in a transparent manner, making information easy to access for all interested members of the community.
- The City of Plainwell seeks public participation for matters involving future development of the City, such as the Master Plan, Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Zoning Ordinances updates process.
- The City of Plainwell seeks creative ways to involve a diverse set of community stakeholders in planning, land use and development decisions.
- The City of Plainwell uses comments and information received from interested members of the community to make decisions regarding planning, land use, and future development.
- The City of Plainwell tracks and analyzes the results of all public participation to the extent feasible and provides summaries back to the public.

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## **Methods of Community Participation:**

### **Inform - provide information and assist public understanding**

- **Website** – [www.plainwell.org](http://www.plainwell.org) announces meetings, posts packets and agendas, minutes, public notices/hearings, and sometimes will contain pages or links for topics of major interest.
- **Newspaper** – Allegan County Union Enterprise is the City of Plainwell’s newspaper for public notices/hearings.
- **Printed Postings** – Available for viewing at City Hall and on the Kiosk at the drop box.
- **Announcements** – During City Commission meetings, Planning Meetings, and other boards and committee meetings.
- **Press Release/Articles** – At various times, the City will issue a press release and information for articles to various newspapers, TV stations, and radio stations.
- **Email or postal mail** – Interested parties may request to City Administration they be notified personally of meetings/topics for discussion and postal mailings to neighbors within 300 feet according to statute.

### **Consult – obtain public feedback**

- **Social Media:** The City currently uses Facebook, Instagram & email to announce upcoming events, community happenings, press releases, etc.
- **Surveys:** Utilizing online and paper surveys allows for the collection of large amounts of data and opinions from the public
- **Public Hearings:** Public attendance at meetings is strongly supported and allows for an appropriate venue for public input.

### **Involve – work directly with the public throughout the process**

- **Open Houses:** To create two-way communication, the City will hold open house events for projects and initiatives as needed.
- **Community Workshops:** Issues that require community feedback can benefit from a noticed workshop.
- **Charrettes:** Multiple-day designs charrettes and information-gathering sessions allow a large group of people to participate in the community engagement activity.
- **Developers:** Work with developers to encourage feedback from the community by providing them with mailing labels, space for public meetings, sharing information on social media re: updates, public meetings etc.

### **Communicating the Results**

- **Advisory Committees:** The City uses advisory committees for specialized aspects of our community to enhance collaboration between city staff and the public.
- **Focus Groups:** Bringing together stakeholders to discuss and brainstorm decision-making options.
- **Meeting Minutes:** All meeting minutes are posted on our website at [Plainwell.org](http://Plainwell.org)

- **Incorporate Public Outreach:** The City will always incorporate public outreach into adopted plans.

**July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024 Annual Status Report:**

- ✓ 13 Public Service Announcements
- ✓ 1 City Commission Work Session
- ✓ 24 City Commission Meetings
- ✓ 9 Planning Commission Meetings
- ✓ 10 Parks and Trees Meeting
- ✓ 12 BRA/DDA/TIFA Meetings
- ✓ 2 Downtown Business Community Meetings
- ✓ 14 Public Hearing Meetings
- ✓ 1 Manager Meeting (specific to Old Orchard Project)
- ✓ 600 Door Hangers (water shut-offs, ordinance violations, etc.)
- ✓ 40 Radio Announcements for various events
- ✓ 12 Monthly Community Newsletters
- ✓ 11 Public Safety Community Training (Schools, Churches, Middle school youth)
- ✓ 24 Public Safety Events
- ✓ 1 Social Media Video regarding the Water Fee increase
- ✓ Weekly Social Media Engagement by City Departments. The Facebook Account reaches approximately 44,400 people per month w/post engagements averaging 17,000 per month. Number of Facebook Followers - 7,800