

Minutes
Plainwell DDA, BRA, and TIFA
July 9, 2024

1. Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 7:31 a.m. by Larabel
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call:
Members Present: Randy Wisnaski, Cathy Green, Jim Turley, Adam Hopkins, Paul Rizzo
Excused: Kevin Seckel, Justin Lakamper
Guests: Mayor Brad Keeler; DPW Superintendent Robert Niewenhuis
4. Approval of Minutes from 06/11/24: **A motion was made by Rizzo to approve the minutes and place on file, seconded by Green.**
5. General Public: None
6. Chairman's Report: None
7. BRA Action Items
 - A. Discussion regarding the sale of 1 acre of Mill Property to NAPA Auto was met with disappointment and frustration from the board. The Board asked several clarifying questions regarding the process of the sale and felt the sale was hasty, and that it did not align with the vision/concept plan for the Mill Site. A big concern moving forward is setting a precedent, that will include discussion about Mill property sales so their expertise and perspectives can be heard and considered. *See Attached Addendum Minutes submitted by Green.
 - B. **Motion to accept accounts payable for June of \$1,628.18 was made by Turley and seconded by Hopkins. All in favor vote. Motion passed.**
8. DDA Action Items
 - A. **Commercial Redevelopment Project updates** – Mosaic Distillery was awarded the Main Street Funding grant through MEDC for \$25,000.
 - B. General Review and quarterly update of the Revolving Loan
 - C. **Motion to accept accounts payable for June of \$1,055.09 was made by Larabel and seconded by Green. All in favor vote.**
9. TIFA Action Items
 - A. **Motion to accept accounts payable for June of \$477.14 was made by Hopkins and seconded by Turley. All in favor vote. Motion carried.**
9. Communications: 05/28/24; 06/10/24 Council Minutes and the Financial Report/Summary as of 6/30/2024
10. Public Comments: None
11. Staff Comments: Updates were given by Siegel, Community Development Manager
12. Member Comments: None
13. Adjournment: **A Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 a.m.**

Submitted by Denise Siegel, Community Development Manager

Addendum to minutes BRA/DDA/TIFA meeting July 9, 2024.

Nick Larabel, Adam Hopkins, Cathy Green, Paul Rizzo, Jim Turley, Randy Wisnaski, Brad Keeler, Robert Nieuwenhuis, Denise Siegel

Discussion regarding the sale of mill property to NAPA

Siegel indicated that a purchase agreement had been signed for the mill. The BRA members expressed surprise about this fact. Larabel had written a memo to the City Council, Mayor and City Manager asking them to pause the purchase agreement until community stakeholders, the BRA/DDA/TIFA could review it. The board was not aware that the purchase agreement was signed.

Keeler indicated that the budget is bad and that they don't want to raise taxes so the sale will help with the budget. Larabel indicated that he felt the purchase price appeared quite low especially because the city would be responsible for half closing costs and site survey. He indicated that there are many steps to take and it might not pass the Planning Commission. Keeler stated there are several environmental covenants that have to be met. He stated he probably would not take on a project such as this because of all the restraints and costs

Larabel indicated the Plainwell BRA nor its members were consulted in making the decision. The Board members have invested a considerable amount of time serving and provide a great deal of insight and experience on these matters. Larabel expressed concern that the addition of a Napa auto store did not align with the city or community's vision for mill.

According to the memo prepared by Larabel and restated in part during the meeting, that when reviewing the 2005 Reuse Plan for the Plainwell Paper Mill, the City's 2007 Concept Plan, and the City of Plainwell's 2023 Master Plan, reuse goals focused on development with residential use promoting community gatherings while recognizing and celebrating the Mill as an important part of the community's history and heritage. It is a hasty decision and is the 1st property to be developed. It sets a tone and trend for future businesses. Green asked what's next, Dollar General, a tattoo shop? Larabel indicated that the Planning Commission will have no leverage because standards have not been set. The community was not given a chance for input. Further, Larabel indicated that during a previous Mill community outreach meeting, several poster boards were reviewed for mill redevelopment ideas. Big box retail and stand-alone national retailer were not desired, rather businesses that would complement the downtown and mimic the historic character of the mill. Larabel indicated he was unclear on how the redevelopment with a Napa auto store would be completed while ensuring the historical nature of the mill would be considered.

Jim Turley indicated this kind of business should be out by Sweetwater's or on the corner by the traffic light. This sale does not add employees, doesn't help with taxes, and should not be on the mill sight. Green indicated they were more expensive.

Green asked why there was not meeting "for consideration of the sale", that the public could attend. Keeler said it was on the June 24th agenda for the Council. Green asked how council members were informed of the details of the purchase agreement without it being a "consideration item". Keeler indicated that the council was apprised in the Budget Meetings. Green indicated that neither the agenda or the minutes of that meeting reflect any such discussion. Keeler said the item was on the June 26 City Council agenda. Keeler indicated he was trying to help Justin and it was his fault that the item did not come before the BRA. Green indicated that it was not Keeler's responsibility to do so. He stated he knows he should have informed the DDA/BRA

Adam Hopkins expressed concern that this group was not apprised. The group was chosen because it has expertise to deal with the mill development, and have been working on it for more than 10 years. Nick has environmental

background and Adam is an architect. Adam also expressed he did not feel the NAPA auto was a good fit for the mill. He asked if the committee has no input then why is there a board? There is a concern about precedent moving forward and that the city should be using the expertise of the board to help stay within the vision.

Hopkins added that the community vision for the property does not include national chain retail. And again expressed displeasure the sale never came before the DDA. It is not the vision that the community has for this property.

Turley indicated that this area is about one of the only ones with trees on it. Larabel they will likely want them cleared for visibility. Keeler said they might not have to come out.

Keeler indicated that everyone he has talked to said they thought it was a great deal. Green countered that that is not what she was hearing. People are upset.

Keeler also mentioned the previous potential sale to Bronson in the same location and felt in many ways it was similar to this transaction; however, Bronson wouldn't pay taxes. Larabel wasn't entirely clear on the previous arrangement but felt Bronson's presence might be viewed differently than an auto store. If the area was to be redeveloped with primarily residential, the addition of a medical center could add value to those residents and would create additional jobs spurring additional economic value. Larabel felt simply moving napa from one location to the other, wasn't generated any significant value.

Nick Larabel, the Chair for the BRA stated that if we are not an authoritative body for Brown Field Redevelopment then why are we serving on the board?