



## MEETING SUMMARY

Evart

September 15, 2016

10:00 AM

### Attendance

John Iacoangeli	BRI	jri@bria2.com
Joe Borgstrom	Place and Main	joe@placeandmain.com
Sarah Rainero	MEDC CATeam	raineros@michigan.org
Sue DeVries	MEDC CATeam	devriess1@michigan.org
Merri Bennett	TIA/WDA Michigan Works West Central	mbennett@michworkswc.org
Zackary Szakacs	City of Evart	zackary.szakacs@evart.org
Sarah Dvoracek	City of Evart	Sarah.dvoracek@evart.org
Melora Theunick	LDFA	ddaldfa@evart.org
Mark Wilson	Director	mark.wilson@evart.org
Paul Griffith	TIA/WDA Michigan Works West Central	pgriffith@michworkswc.org

Meeting commenced at 10:15 AM.

#### 1. Introductions

Participants asked to introduce themselves and provide a brief background. This included PRT Technical Team, State and Regional Partners and PRT Community Stakeholders.

#### 2. Review of PRT Action Strategy

Zack began the discussion with a review of activities that have transpired since the preparation of the PRT Action Strategy. One outcome noted was the change in leadership at the public school and the positive results that have occurred through the efforts of the new superintendent. Also, the PRT program was responsible for the school and community program; "Pathways to Potential," and the school now has a full time counselor on staff. Another opportunity discussed was that Evart was being considered by Wolverine Boots as an expansion site. They had contacted Zack for available buildings approximately 20,000 sq.ft. in size.

Local issues revolve around the blight and the high number of rental properties. Since the recession Liberty Foods and Dean's Dairy closed and many higher paying jobs were eliminated from the local economy. The local housing market is depressed and the many properties have been converted to rental. A rental inspection ordinance was under consideration but local landlords and several current elected officials who own rental property are not in favor of the program. Also the zoning ordinance has not been updated since 1993. The City has no GIS and the master plan, prepared by the regional planning agency, requires updating. The City would like to streamline its internal review processes.

Another impact associated with the Dean's Dairy and Liberty Foods closing is the available added-capacity in the sewer and water plants. Wastewater has the daily capacity to treat 750,000 GPD and the water plant 800,000 GPD.

Springhill Camp brings approximately 10,000 visitors to the area; mainly in the summer months. Local representatives noted they could do a better job of leveraging this asset, especially for the downtown district. In regards to the DDA their revenues are down due to the plant closings; Dean's Dairy was located in the DDA district.

Potential opportunities for future consideration include the establishment of a G.E.D. program in Evert, and outreach to local community colleges and Ferris State for assistance. Lack of trained welders was noted as a gap in the local economy.

A local group, known as, "Moving Evert Forward," was looking at funding for an Evert Promise program similar to the Kalamazoo Promise.

### 3. Scope of Technical Assistance Work Elements

The group focused on the including;

- a. Economic Development Strategy – Based on various discussions it was decided that the economic development strategy would be performed that included a review of the DDA and LDFA activities.
- b. Master Plan – review and revise the master plan to include RRC best practices. A component of the master plan update will include a housing quality and blight assessment.
- c. Zoning – complete overhaul of the zoning ordinance. In addition, provide some education on the benefits of rental housing inspection program.

### 4. Communications

The web site was reviewed and it was noted that all background documents and information produced through the course of the program will be available on the site. Also discussed was a periodical conference call with all PRT communities to review project status and updates. These will be noticed in advance. It was mentioned that all communications should be sent to Leah DuMouchel at Beckett & Raeder. Her e-mail address is [ldumouchel@bria2.com](mailto:ldumouchel@bria2.com).

### 5. Other Issues.

Lack of GIS and mapping was discussed. Although the City has received SAW funding which includes GIS it will occur several months out. Zack will provide B&R with a printed map so they can assess the best process to perform digital mapping for the master plan. Zach will send to B&R printed copies of the master plan and zoning ordinance for scanning.

Meeting Adjournment: 12:10 p.m.