

City of Plainwell



“The Island City”

Rick Brooks, Mayor
Lori Steele, Mayor Pro-Tem
Todd Overhuel, Council Member
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October 31, 2017

Parchment Citizens Group
Mike Connor – Judy Resler

RE: Response to Questionnaire – October 11, 2017

You have asked me to respond to questions on a variety of topics related to how the City of Plainwell operates. There is certainly not “one way” to accomplish goals and objectives of a community, but I offer the following responses to your questions:

1. What businesses are in your community?

Variety of businesses from Retail, Hardware, Office/Service, Fitness Centers, Deli’s/Health Food, Restaurants, Quilt Shop etc.
Industrial Park – Certified through the MEDA. The Park is full w/34 businesses

A. Why do you think they were attracted to your community?

Location (131 between K’zoo & GR) - Traffic count through Plainwell - Small town feel – Kalamazoo River – Economic Development in our community is growing – Good School System – Housing is a hot commodity right now

B. Do you offer any incentives for small businesses?

Yes – we have a small business revolving loan fund through the USDA
We do provide IFT breaks for industrial businesses

2. Do you have other ways to communicate to your residents besides your website?

- ✦ City calendar mailed with taxes
- Messages on the water bills
- ✦ Special mailings –
- Email blast through Constant Contact
- ✦ Social media – Twitter, Instagram, Facebook
- Direct contact – letters or in person

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A. Costs involved?

Fee for constant contact - \$480.00/yr

City Calendar \$4,000.00 year – not including staff time to compile/review/edit.

3. Police Services: Do you have your own department?

Yes, Public Safety

A. What is your yearly budget for this police coverage?

2017/2018 Police coverage: \$1,036,282.00 Fire Services: \$137,488.00

B. How long has it been established?

Police 1930's (when city chartered from a village to a city) Public Safety
1993

C. How many officers on duty, full-time

8 (counting Director and Deputy Director), 2 part-time

D. What kind of coverage do you provide?

24/7 365 days, police/fire/medical first responder

4. Parks and Recreation: Who provides the flowers for your community?

City purchases – we have use Napps Greenhouse for many years, they custom grow for us.

A. Who pays for the flowers?

Residents & businesses donate to our Flower Program, each first donation over \$75.00 receive a plaque with what they wish on it, (in memory, in honor or just their name or the business name) which is put in one of the flower beds then if they donate at least \$50.00 each year after that we continue to put the plaque out. What we do not receive in donations the City covers. We have a separate activity under General Fund for flowers – approximately \$40,000 per year. This includes PW Labor and equipment costs plus yearly purchases.

B. Who maintains them throughout the season?

The City does; we have a dedicated part-time Public Works employee and hire 3 to 4 seasonal.

C. Who plants them?

Volunteers at our annual planting day; we usually get 20-30 residents that help. What doesn't get planted on planting day, the City will finish.

5. **How many DPW workers do you have currently?**

DPW - 7 FT (counting Superintendent and 1 admin/office) 2 PT.

Water Renewal – 3 FT counting Supervisor

A. **What city services do your DPW workers provide (snow removal, leaf pick-up, weed control, junk pick-up, etc.)?**

Maintain water system; sewer collection system; storm water system streets; parks; building and grounds; Snow removal, sidewalk snow removal on designated school routes and in the CBD, Monthly Leaf & brush pickup & annual loose leaf pickup; city street trees & nursery; streets signage; city flower beds, baskets & planters; assist with Special Events, Christmas displays throughout the CBD and parks

6. **What types of recreation do you offer your community?**

Seven Parks- offering playgrounds, pavilions, basketball, volleyball, ice skating, sledding and a pickle ball court is under development ;

River walk - is a linear park, offering opportunity for exercise and connecting our downtown with several of our parks, our library, and local creameries;

Kayak/Canoe Livery-Launch for floats trips on the Kalamazoo River

Baseball Fields -We have a 3-field softball venue contracted with a local league that offer tournament play early spring through late fall.

We have numerous community events throughout the year including summer concerts, outdoor movies, holiday celebrations, city festival,

We host an outdoor Farm Market from spring until fall, and an indoor Farm Market from early fall to early winter.

A. **Do you have plans for a dog park?**

Yes in the works opening summer 2018. The City received a grant which required the community to raise \$20k, this was matched by MEDC.

M.I. EDU. DEV. CO.

B. **Do you have places for kids to skate board?**

No

7. **What are the biggest challenges that your community faces?**

Recruitment of retail in the downtown, roads, redevelopment of the former Plainwell Paper site and ensuring our budget funds the delivery of services our residents expect given uncertainty of funding (i.e. personal property taxes, revenue sharing).

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8. What challenges has your community faced in the past, and how did you remedy those?

Plainwell Paper Mill and managing expectations of a quick turnaround.

Concept plan and keep the residents informed; ensure progress is being made even if it's incremental.

Budget/Road –

Not sure it will ever be “remedied.” We have a great staff and we monitor expenditures/revenues very closely.

9. What are some of the ways in which you have encouraged your residents to be actively involved in their community?

- Dog Park Community Fund Raiser
- Farmers’ Market Outdoor & Indoor
- Volunteer for annual Flower Planting
- Participating in Krazy for Kazoo Annual River clean up
- Participate in the Bike Trail development committee
- Public Input meetings
- Arbor Day
- Special Events:
 - Memorial Day Parade
 - Scarecrow contest
 - Pumpkins in the Park
 - Arts and Eats Tour
 - Photo Contest- with winning photos going into our annual city calendar
 - Art Hop
 - Plainwell Christmas Festival
 - Christmas Parade/Christmas tree lighting
 - Egg Hunt
 - Veteran’s Day Service
 - Several boards (Council, Planning, Parks & Trees, Joint Recreation, Library, Compensation, Zoning Board of Appeal,) are set up to allow volunteers to become involved in local government and serve their community.