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Plainwell to sign with developer

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Plainwell city council members took their next step toward the redevelopment of the former Plainwell Paper Mill property when they authorized city manager Erik Wilson to enter into a letter of intent with developers Conestoga-Rovers and Associates Monday, June 8.

The letter of intent indicates that for the next 180 days, the city will work exclusively with CRA to prepare and enter into a development agreement.

Discussion will center on a variety of topics, including a timetable to address environmental concerns, what buildings will be maintained and the terms and conditions of any economic development.

A public community meeting on June 2 (see story, Page 5) allowed CRA to introduce themselves to the community. The audience also had the opportunity to fill out surveys to let the city know if CRA was a good fit or not.

Wilson said from the surveys they received, all the comments were positive.

"We try to be as transparent as possible prior to signing a development agreement," he said.

If an agreement is reached, CRA would move its Kalamazoo office onto the mill site.

"For the first time in a decade, there will be taxable revenue coming from the property," Wilson said.

City hall also has plans to move onto the site.

"It sends a powerful message that the city will not let the project die," Wilson said. "It's not the end of the mill project; it is a beginning."

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