

City of Plainwell

Brad Keeler, Mayor
Lori Steele, Mayor Pro-Tem
Cathy Green, Council Member
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AGENDA Plainwell City Council Monday, January 26, 2026 - 7:00PM Plainwell City Hall Council Chambers

1. Call to Order
2. Invocation
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Roll Call
5. Approval of Minutes – 01/12/2026 Regular Meeting
6. Presentation – Mill Development Presentation
7. Public Comments
8. County Commissioners Report
9. Agenda Approval
10. Mayor's Report
11. Recommendations and Reports:

A. City – Consideration of NAPA Purchase Agreement

Council will consider authorizing the City Manager to negotiate the sale of approximately one (1) acre of real property of the parent parcel ID #55-030-076-01 with David Steffen at a price of \$40,000 per acre.

B. City – Consideration of a Purchase Agreement with Classic Auto Mill

Council will consider approving the sale of buildings located on the permanent parent parcel ID# of 55-030-076-01, subject to surveys, and authorizing the City Manager and City Clerk to enter into a purchase/sale agreement for the property. Further authorize the City Manager and City Clerk to execute any documents or other agreements necessary to close on the sale of the property. Further authorize the City Manager and City Attorney to take any steps reasonably necessary to effectuate the sale of the Property subject to this motion.

C. City – Consideration of Parking Use Agreement with Mill 17

Council will consider authorizing the City Manager to enter into a use agreement with Mill 17 for the purposes of parking on the Mill property in front of buildings 15 and 16.

12. Communications: The December 2025 Department of Public Safety and Water Renewal Reports and the 12/09/2025 DDA/BRA/TIFA meeting minutes
13. Accounts Payable - \$274,160.09
14. Public Comments
15. Staff Comments
16. Council Comments
17. Adjournment

Agenda Subject to Change

Note: All public comment limited to two minutes, when recognized please rise and give your name and address.

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Reports & Communications:

A. City – Consideration of NAPA Purchase Agreement

Local Plainwell Auto store owner David Steffen would like to purchase approximately 1 acre of mill property to build a new building for his business.

In June of 2024, the City entered into a purchase agreement with David for one acre of land on the same property but in a different location. For a number of reasons, it was determined by both David and the City not to execute that agreement. The original purchase agreement stated closing costs would be split between David and the City, and the City would pay for the survey work to create the new parcel. It also stipulated that David would have 90 days for an inspection period, with closing taking place after his site plan has been approved for the building, ensuring that the land purchase would only occur if he can build his store on the property.

Since that original agreement, we moved the proposed location to be positioned along M-89 directly west of the cutout (see picture). This location is in an area that was remediated to “commercial standard”. This means that this area can only be used for commercial development. This does not include any form of housing.

During the building design process, we asked the architects to create a building that would be compatible with other retail uses in the future as well as incorporating design elements from the mill buildings. To accomplish this, they have included brick/stone in the façade.

Bringing NAPA to the mill property on M-89 will allow David to build a larger store and grow his business. Having commercial businesses along M-89 would not prevent the proposed residential development from taking place on the rest of the property.

Despite this development having elicited some controversy over whether or not it is the best use for this property and whether or not it fits with the vision, I believe it is compatible in both use and vision. It is in line with the City’s master plan, current zoning (CBD), and commercial cleanup criteria. It brings needed development and additional property taxes for the city. Additionally, it will help a long-standing business in the community expand and grow, which is something we strive to do for all of our businesses.

Recommended action: Consider authorizing the City Manager to negotiate the sale of approximately one (1) acre of real property of the parent parcel ID #55-030-076-01 with David Steffen at a price of \$40,000 per acre.

B. City – Consideration of Purchase Agreement with Classic Auto Mill (CAM)

The City has been negotiating with Classic Auto Factory, now Classic Auto Mill, for six months to come up with an agreement to get their classic auto storage and repair business into the remaining mill buildings.

Negotiations covered a purchase agreement, then a long-term lease, and now are back to a purchase agreement. All of the remaining vacant buildings would be conveyed to Classic Auto Mill for \$1. There would also be a claw back provision should they not complete a list of renovations within three years.

This property is located on a federally regulated superfund site, which has heightened environmental scrutiny for the owners and users. Entering into a purchase agreement and ultimately selling the remaining buildings to CAM is preferable over a long-term lease, as it removes the cities involvement in future repairs and remediation efforts within the buildings.

The City currently pays to maintain the buildings and receives no tax revenue from them. These buildings need significant renovation and remediation. The financial investment necessary to make the buildings usable in any form is significant, and necessitates the need to sell them for \$1. The value to the City will come in the form of development and putting the buildings on the tax rolls.

While the buildings are significant to Plainwell’s history, the City has not been able to attract any credible investors prior to Classic Auto Mill. CAM is willing to engage and invest in the community. We expect them to be good stewards of these important buildings, while bringing additional commerce to Plainwell.

Recommended action: Consider approving the sale of buildings located on the permanent parent parcel ID# of 55-030-076-01, subject to surveys, and authorizing the City Manager and City Clerk to enter into a purchase/sale agreement for the property. Further authorize the City Manager and City Clerk to execute any documents or

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other agreements necessary to close on the sale of the property. Further authorize the City Manager and City Attorney to take any steps reasonably necessary to effectuate the sale of the Property subject to this motion.

C. City – Consideration of Parking Use Agreement with Mill 17

Mill 17 has been working with the City to bring their wedding venue into the GHD building. Their most recent iteration of their designs includes moving their entire parking area onto the mill property directly in front of buildings 15 and 16. There were negotiations around having a parking lot built by Mill 17, however, we were unable to come to terms that were amenable to both Mill 17 and the City. They are now asking that instead of building a parking lot, they simply use the gravel area for parking. In exchange, they will plow and salt the parking area. Their specific proposal, which is included, asks that we not use the area for events or the Farmer's Market. The request that we never use the areas for any form of event seems unnecessary, and I do not want to prevent the City from doing so. As we do with any event that might affect businesses, we would work with Mill 17 on timing and logistics were such an event to come up. I believe a simple agreement allowing them to use that area for parking will give them the area that they need without binding the City.

Recommended action: Consider authorizing the City Manager to enter into a use agreement with Mill 17 for the purposes of parking on the Mill property in front of buildings 15 and 16.

Reminder of Upcoming Meetings:

- February 04, 2026 – Planning Commission – 6:30pm
- **February 09, 2026 – City Council – 7:00pm**
- February 10, 2026 – DDA/BRA/TIFA – 7:30am
- February 10, 2026 – Parks & Trees – 4:00pm
- February 18, 2026 – Planning Commission – 6:30pm

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