

Boyne City Manager Michael Cain's comments at Redevelopment Ready Certification event on December 7, 2015:

It has just been a little over three years since Boyne City began its redevelopment ready journey.

In late November 2012 Jennifer came up to the NLEA's offices here in town and introduced to a new MEDC program that had already borne fruit in some other communities in southeastern Michigan. It wasn't quite as warm then.

She got us interested and we took the matter to our City Commission. There was the question of why. Why did Boyne City, which have made it through the great recession fairly well positioned and coming off some business growth successes in our Business Park and our downtown. There were also some concerns that Boyne City didn't want to go down a path were the State was telling us what type of community we should be. We want to be the best Boyne City we can be, for all our Citizens and businesses. Assured that great needs still remained and that our goals were aligned the City Commission said yes and our journey officially began.

Being the best Boyne City is exactly what the Redevelopment Ready Communities program is all about. It's been all helping us look at ourselves and our processes to make sure that we were putting our best foot forward, not standing in our own way as we sought to achieve our goals. It has given us a great opportunity to take an honest look in the mirror to make sure we see how we really appear to others, and not just what we think we are projecting ourselves as.

It has also been very helpful in putting in place practices and procedures that will hopefully stand the test of time and be sustainable in the long term, not just during the term of our Planning Director, Main Street Manager, City Manager or City Commission. Where we have good practices we want to make sure we keeping them going, and where we had weak practices we wanted to improve them. The Redevelopment Ready Communities program has helped us with that but so much more.

From the very beginning the Redevelopment Ready Communities program has been providing benefits to our community. A couple of examples:

*The Bus Tour: When potential developers were brought to Boyne City and we had the opportunity, as a team, to spend the day with them, practice selling ourselves and learning what was, and what wasn't important to them.

*The Public Participation Review: We always thought this was one of our strong points, encouraging public participation. But going through this process showed us that we could do a better job in getting the word out there and as a result, almost immediately, we added new (to us) social media components of twitter and Facebook to help encourage greater communications with our customers. It's been paying benefits ever since.

*Peter Allen and his UM students: What a burst of energy and fresh perspective they provided us. If that had been the only thing we had gotten from this process it would have been well worth it but the plans, concepts and contacts they provided were outstanding. I think we all came away from that process believe that better things were possible and actually within our grasp.

That project I believe was the catalyst that helped Catt Developments' new South Lake Street project become the reality that it almost is. Hopefully in May you will all come back and help us celebrate the

new life that is being breathed into that portion of our downtown with a toast of your beverage from the new Seven Monks Taproom establishment.

Real work, real benefits, real projects. That is what the Redevelopment Ready Communities program has meant to us so far, and were only just getting started.

With the tools and practices you have helped us establish I am confident that you will continue to see us building a better Boyne.

This process is a lot of work. And while it has been a real team effort our true team leader that kept us going and on track has been our Planning Director Scott McPherson. He and his department have borne the brunt of this effort, working with Jennifer and Joe Meyers, to make sure that this day came. It finally has and for that I say thank you very much Scott.

I also need to say a few words about the MEDC. Boyne City has enjoyed a special and very positive working relationship with the MEDC, especially since we began our journey as a Main Street Community with them back in 2003. That was basically a new State program then that we were since then we have taken on many difficult projects together, infrastructure improvements, facades, business developments, blight elimination, with very successful results. Together we have done an amazing amount of work leveraging our limited state and local resources in a way that I think most taxpayers would be proud of. We have been very careful with the public's resources that have been entrusted to us and used them wisely in ways that will be paying off dividends for decades to come. The MEDC has been a very real and positive partner with the City of Boyne City as we've worked to expand existing businesses, develop new businesses and provide meaningful employment opportunities for not only our residents, but all of this region. For that let me extend a very sincere Thank You.

Thank you for being such a great partner with Boyne City, for giving us the opportunities, like with the Redevelopment Ready Communities program achievement that we celebrate here today, to help us to become the vibrant, well positioned community we always knew we could be.

Thank you.