



## Rotary Club of Battle Creek RotoScoop

February 5, 2024

Ted Dearing, Assistant City Manager  
Housing Development in Battle Creek



Left to right: Jill Anderson, Ted Dearing, and Talia (Dearing) Champlin

Creating more housing options is a top priority for the City of Battle Creek, reports Ted Dearing, Assistant City Manager. There are needs across the whole spectrum of housing from permanent supportive housing, apartments, to multifamily and single-family homes. Unfortunately, the combination of interest rates and high construction costs are not motivating builders and developers to build.

At any one time, approximately 470 households are looking for a place to live around Battle Creek. Folks in the annual salary range of \$25,000 to \$42,500 are looking for houses in the \$200,000-\$240,000 price range. Households making \$32,000 a year, more often than not, are looking to rent somewhere. Dearing estimates that the city is short 1,400 rental units. When the Blue Oval factory opens, that shortage will double to 2,800 units needed. The market for homes and condominium will also double or triple at that time.

The city has plenty of space that could be developed for multifamily housing, but the market is not attractive to builders. The city is exploring a number of different strategies to make it easier and feasible to develop housing, such as:

1. Reviewing planning and zoning ordinances so that they are less restrictive and encourage building in single-family neighborhoods.
2. Providing pre-approved house plans to speed up inspections and compliance issues.
3. Establishing a housing trust which would need a reliable and ongoing source of revenue.
4. Exploring interest in starting a community land trust to make land for housing more affordable.

5. Expanding home repair and development programs in the area to convert dilapidated living spaces.
6. Encouraging more down payment programs or rental subsidies, such as the one BC Public Schools has implemented to attract talent.

Dearing thought the most effective incentives are tax abatements for builders and developers. He named at least four projects that have requested tax abatements from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). We need them all to be funded to start making a difference in the housing crisis.

## Other News

### Guests and Potential Members Attending Monday's Meeting:

Nathan Hunt joined us again on Monday and is working on his membership application. Hunt works as the Communication Director at BCPS.

### Member Spotlight: Derek Chism

Dereck Chism joined the club in January 2022. He has worked at Commerica Bank for 18 years. He has two daughters, ages 15 and 16. He is the leader of the 4H Poultry Club. He enjoys hunting, fishing, and the outdoors.



### Rotary Clubs Place Third in Red Kettle Contest

The Battle Creek, Cereal City, and Marshall Rotary Club together raised \$6782.99 during the Salvation Army's Red Kettle Contest. We placed third overall, with the American Legion taking first by raising over \$8000.00.



Lisa Ridgeway shares the Red Kettle Certificate with Club President Jill Anderson.

## Service Opportunities



District 6360 is looking for help with its First Ever District-Wide "Dream Career" Event! THIS IS AN ONLINE EVENT. High school sophomores and juniors are the target audience. We are looking for Rotarians to be 'Mentors' and 'Hosts.' Contact Margie Haas, Coordinator at 269-838-3392 if you are interested. Click [HERE](#) to get a downloadable PDF of the flyer to share.



## Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA)

The District is looking for some help with RYLA this year. The camp is scheduled for July 12- 14, 2024. A register is needed to coordinate applications and a nurse is needed to attend camp sessions. For more information, please contact Don Deibler, RYLA Camp Director, at 269/599-1341 or [donalddeibler@yahoo.com](mailto:donalddeibler@yahoo.com)

## Service Clubs to Collaborate on New Signs

Several members have expressed interest in refreshing the Service Club signs that greet people as they enter the city. There are three signs placed on the main thoroughfares into the city. They are weathered and damaged and don't reflect the pride we have in our city. Talks with other service clubs have started and some have expressed interest in participating in a joint effort. Contact President [Jill Anderson](#) if you would like to contribute to this effort in some way.

## Upcoming Speakers and Events

02 12 2024	Michael Armitage, Calhoun County Consolidated Dispatch
02 19 2024	Presidents' Day - No Meeting
02 26 2024	Quincy Jones, BC Fire Dept. Student of the Month
03 04 2024	Will Haenni - WWMT AMS Certified Broadcast Meteorologist

Contact [Chuck Asher](#), [Talia Champlin](#), or [Chad Kyger](#) if you have any ideas for programming.

## Rotary Vision Statement

**Together** we see a world where **people** unite and take action to **create** lasting **change** across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.

**Board of Directors July 2023- 2024**

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