

Porta-Rota-Call

by Jen Maynard

March 27, 2024

President Josh Goodlock called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Rotarians and guests recited The Pledge of Allegiance.

Rotarians and guests recited The Four Way Test.

Chris Buckley gave our invocation.

Our greeter Ginny Dell introduced our visitors: Matt Copp (guest of Chad Schuring/new member applicant) and Rotarian Jim Cupper.

Randy Orwig introduced our speaker, Dan Jaqua to share the Strength of our Region.

There are six areas people assess our area on – housing, economic development, community development, education, community strength, and quality of life. Quick shout out and thank you to Jessica Kugler for preparing this presentation and supporting our Super Bowl ticket fundraiser sales. Housing discussion began with current mortgage rates, projected mortgage rate changes, change in home prices (year-over-year), and lack of inventory. Jaqua had its fourth best year in terms of volume. Current average price of a home in our area is \$300,000 and is expected to increase to \$400,000 in 2024. Fewer houses started in 2023, but condominiums have risen.

For economic development, the Ford BlueOval Battery Pack is anticipated to be complete in 2026 to add 1700 jobs in their \$2.5B Ford electric vehicle battery plant. Palisades Nuclear Power Plant in South Haven is reopening with a \$2B investment to create another source of energy. Zoetis is investing in the area. Whirlpool invested another \$60M. DENSO is the largest employer in Battle Creek. Kellogg Company retains 170 jobs and creates forty-three new positions into Wk Kellogg Co and Kellonova. Duncan Aviation is expanding at the Battle Creek executive airport. Industrial Partners USA is building industrial space in Fort Custer. Shupan & Sons Inc. is continuing to invest and grow. \$2.6M investment in Bell's Brewery to boost packaging automation capacity to produce more variety packs. Micro-LAM & N Depatie Fluid Power Company (WMU professor startup) will bring another one hundred jobs to the area. JRS USA in Schoolcraft is expanding. C2Dx is creating thirty-five high-wage jobs. IAC North America is creating new jobs. Tekmoto is creating sixty new jobs. There are many more highlights too!

For education, the KRESA Career Tech Center is a \$100M facility to host high school career and technical education projects. Battle Creek Public Schools is offering higher education, like the Kalamazoo Promise. Five new bonds were passed in local school districts. Otsego added an Aquatic Center. The Derek Jeter Foundation supported field renovations in Kalamazoo. Western Michigan has a lot going on. Student Center and Dunbar Hall are set to open. Kalamazoo College received a \$30M gift (largest ever) to support the construction of a new dorm and other initiatives. The Kalamazoo Event Center is partnering with WMU. Seven hundred new jobs expected. Gun Lake Casino is focusing on family with a waterpark. Acrisure Amphitheater is a new outdoor, riverfront, world class entertainment venue expected to open in 2026.

Community development continue to transform downtown Kalamazoo to add more residents and housing options, including affordable housing. Authentix Kalamazoo by Wings West is under

construction. Tall Timbers at Greenspire is adding apartments. Story Point South for senior housing is starting development soon.

Community strength includes highlights for behavioral and mental health, Boys and Girls Club, YWCA Kalamazoo, lead water service replacements, National Guard base entrance, MichiKal construction, i-94 interchange is done, and business loop interchange.

Quality of life highlights include West Lake Public green space, Bishop's Bog, new Nature Preserve at the old Boy Scout camp, Portage Farmer's Market, Kalamazoo Farmer's Market – Phase 2, and Texas Township too.

Barrio Tacos + Tequila + Whiskey is open, Wild Bull is back open, Compass + Cleaver opened in 2023, A La Ferme (former Beacon Club) is open, Sly's Seafood and Co. is open, and the Kalamazoo Country Club is expanding too.

Thank you! Tell somebody, be proud, be energized! We have a wonderful community!

Announcements

- Jim Cupper announced the Rotary is for Reading program, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Kalamazoo, has openings for reading volunteers. Look for an email from Jim Cupper to sign up. Two Rotarians each visit a second-grade classroom in the Kalamazoo Public Schools during the school district's college awareness week.
- Blood drive signup for Thursday, **April 18**
- Saturday, **April 20**, Earth Day volunteer opportunity for Kalamazoo River cleanup from 11 am – 2 pm. Several groups will be assisting to clean the river from Jackson to Douglass.
- Our next show is Jurassic World Live for our Miller Auditorium fundraiser. We must sell ten tickets to each show to make \$10 per ticket. Be sure to use the QR code on the flyer.
- Memorial Day parade for Monday, **May 27**
- Marathon volunteer signups for Sunday, **May 5**
- Our 2024 Rotary Hero for Rotary Club of Portage is Emily Turner Hollman.
- Daisey Dollars are here! \$20 each. Pick them up from AJ Srmek or Roy Dangle.
- Please complete your survey that Randy Orwig emailed to each member ASAP.
- Check your Rotary email to register for the 2024 District Conference at the Radisson in downtown Kalamazoo on **May 3-4**. All registrations include a free Rotary t-shirt. The deadline for registration is **April 19**. All District 6360 Rotarians are invited to attend. Highlights include:
 - o Interact conference on Friday morning
 - o Edison neighborhood urban garden fruit tree planting Friday afternoon
 - o Taco bar party and art hop presentation, art hop, and pub crawl Friday night
 - o Yoga on Saturday morning
 - o Mental health awareness walk on Saturday morning
 - o Lunch and sessions, including Rotaract, Youth services – community impact and membership growth, DEI education, and strategic doing on Saturday afternoon
 - o Dinner with Rotary Club Heroes and club awards on Saturday night
 - o Register today!
- We are sponsoring a Taste of Portage gift basket and are collecting items for the basket to raffle during the conference. Connect with Jen Maynard to donate, thanks!

- Rotary District 6360 is collecting these essential items after our Stepping Up to Save Lives Mental Health Walk during the District Conference for Ministry with Community. Walk is 9:30-11:00 am on **Saturday, May 4**. Please bring donations to Jen Maynard during our weekly Wednesday meetings. Last Wednesday to donate is **Wednesday, May 1**. *Thank you for helping!*
 - o Deodorant (travel size) – 100 needed per week
 - o Shampoo (travel size) – 280 needed per week
 - o Conditioner (travel size) – 280 needed per week
 - o Lotion (travel size) – 200 needed per week
 - o Toothpaste (travel size) – 280 needed per week
 - o Bar soap (travel size) – 280 needed per week
 - o Tampons and pads – 200 needed per week
 - o Two-blade razors – 150 needed per week
 - o Toothbrushes (individually packaged) – 100 needed per week
 - o Shaving cream – 50 needed per week
- Support the 2024 Salute to Veterans to help honor veterans and active duty military. Sponsor a personalized light-pole banner with a photo of your veteran for \$200. The city will display the banners from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Proceeds benefit veterans' services at the Portage Zhang Senior Center. Only twenty-five banners are available and will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. The deadline to claim your banner and submit a photo of your veteran is **April 26**. To reserve a banner, visit PortageMI.gov and go to the City Manager page to complete and submit the Portage Salute to Veterans Banner Program application.
- Still reading? Send an email to Jen to let her know. There may be a fun surprise for you next Wednesday. 😊

Sargeant at arms Bill Kauffman collected happy bucks from Jim Pearson, Chad Schuring, Dan Jaqua, Jim Cuppers, Art Roberts, Jim Pearson, Sarah Gerstner, Ginny Dell, Roy Dangel, and Dave Morgan.

50/50 drawing: Dick Hewitt won \$32!

Ace of spades drawing: Jessica Kugler did not draw the ace of spades.

Our next meeting is **April 3** features Mark Bielang sharing his trip to Rwanda including his experiences with the gorillas! A proud silverback is always an impressive sight, especially when you are on foot in their home. An awe-inspiring wildlife experience!!

Meeting adjourned at 12:57 pm by President Josh Goodlock.

Notice: An Application for Membership in the Portage Rotary Club has been submitted by Matt Copp. He is sponsored by Chad Schuring and his classification would be **Marketing Executive**. Any member wishing to comment on this Application should do so in writing, either by mail addressed to the Secretary at PO Box 55, Portage, MI 49081 or email addressed to the Secretary at wmu jose@gmail.com. The comment period will close seven days after the second publication of this Notice.