

**MEETING MINUTES
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)**

**Wednesday, February 1, 2006
7:30 AM – 9:00 AM
Fremont City Hall
Council Chambers**

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 AM.

Members Present:	Lon Vredeveld	DDA Chair
	Marianne Boerigter	Director, Newaygo County Council for the Arts
	Kim Deur	Downtown Business Owner
	Ryan McNally	Downtown Attorney
	James M. Rynberg	Fremont Mayor
Members Absent:	Ron Vliem	Executive Director, Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce
	Ric Zahrt	Fremont Business Owner
	Rob Zeldenrust	Main Street Business Operator
Others Present:	Lorna Kostowny	Downtown Fremont Property Owner
Staff Present:	Richard Rought	Fremont Zoning Administrator
	Michele Ribant	Fremont Neighborhood & Economic Development Director
	Chris Yonker	Fremont City Manager
Consultants Present:	Rick Stout	Fleis & Vandenbrink

II. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Marianne Boerigter, seconded by Ryan McNally, to approve the minutes from the January 18, 2006 DDA meeting, and the motion carried.

III. Discussion on Downtown Fremont Enhancement Plan – Fleis & Vandenbrink

Rick Stout presented a power-point presentation that covered topics related to the following goals of the Downtown Enhancement Plan:

- Historical Context to Design
- Reinforce Pedestrian Scale and Walkability
- Unified Downtown Appearance
- Improve Over-all Lighting & Safety
- Promoting Downtown Businesses
- Improved Rear Store Appearances
- Enhance the Edges
- Mindful of Functionality and Cost

Some of the ideas expressed during the presentation included the following:

- We need to make the rear areas of downtown businesses as nice as the front of the businesses.
- We need to take steps to obtain easements from property owners as soon as we have the specifics available as to what the easements will be for.
- It was expressed that the paving bricks on the sidewalks are attractive, but they are slippery in inclement weather. It was suggested that in the future we use a material that would not be as hazardous (e.g., not settle as much) as the material that is currently used.
- It was noted that many people sit on the concrete seating areas by the crosswalks but rarely do you see anyone sit on the benches close to the street. It was suggested that we examine the reasons for this before we place streetscape furniture downtown.
- It was suggested that we have too many trees in the pedestrian's path downtown and that we could cut back on the number of trees or replace the ones that are in the walkway. It was noted that trees cost about \$1000 - \$1500 per tree.
- It was suggested that the City consider using planter pots for flowers rather than continue with the upkeep of some of the landscape islands downtown. The pots could be changed out throughout the seasons, and the pots would not require as much maintenance.
- The comment was made that the historical streetlights used throughout downtown Fremont are very attractive but costly. It was suggested that we identify lights that will complement the lights we currently have downtown but would not cost nearly as much.
- It was emphasized that the walls of buildings could be great canvases for artwork. Other artwork could come in the form of bike racks, etc.
- Rolled curbs could be used on the edges of the alleys to create a balance between pedestrian uses and commercial uses (e.g., deliveries).

In his presentation, Rick Stout provided the DDA with a range of prices for such things as park benches, trash receptacles, bollards, bike racks, fencing, etc. He indicated that at upcoming meetings, the DDA will be asked to make some choices as to what elements the DDA would like included in the enhancement plan and that providing the DDA with an idea of pricing will help them make appropriate decisions for the downtown.

Lon Vredevelde indicated that while the physical improvements that will result from the implementation of the Fremont Downtown Enhancement Plan are important to the economic revitalization of downtown Fremont, it is also important that we give attention to the business health of our downtown. He indicated that business retention visits need to be conducted. The business retention visits will allow us to learn which businesses are strong and which ones are struggling, so we can assist them if need be. He also indicated we can learn the desires and concerns of property owners who have had long-term vacancies.

IV. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 8, 2006 in the Council Chambers at City Hall from 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Lon Vredevelde indicated that the intent of this meeting is to inform downtown business and property owners of what is happening downtown Fremont and to try to involve them in the revitalization efforts. Marianne Boerigter indicated that both the business owners and the property owners should be invited to this meeting and that sending an invitation to the mailing address does not ensure that both types of owners will receive the

invitation. Michele Ribant indicated she would comply with Ms. Boerigter's recommendation that both sets of owners be invited to the February 8, 2006 DDA meeting.

Chairman Vredevelde asked if there were any issues that any of the DDA members wanted to include on the agenda for the next DDA meeting. The following ideas were suggested:

- Signs (sandwich boards)
- Snow removal
- Market site
- Spring clean-up

V. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:25 AM.