

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Fremont Downtown Development Authority (DDA)**

**Wednesday, February 25, 2009**  
**7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.**  
**Fremont City Hall**  
**Council Chambers**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 a.m. by chair Lon Vredeveld.

<b>Members Present:</b>	Lon Vredeveld Marianne Boerigter  Merle Ross James M. Rynberg Bob Stehouwer Ron Vliem	DDA Chair Executive Director, Newwaygo County Council for the Arts Downtown Business Owner Fremont Mayor Downtown Business/Property Owner Executive Director, Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce
<b>Members Absent:</b>	Kim Deur Gerry Rich Chris Youker Rob Zeldenrust	Downtown Business/Property Owner Downtown Property Owner Downtown Business Owner DDA District Business Manager
<b>Staff Present:</b>	Bryan Gruesbeck Todd Blake Michele Ribant	Fremont City Manager Fremont Finance Director/City Clerk Fremont Neighborhood & Economic Development Authority
<b>Others Present:</b>	Bonnie Erber	Marketing Subcommittee Chair

**Opening Remarks**

Chair Vredeveld welcomed everyone to the meeting. He indicated that Becky Laing-Austin resigned because her office moved, and she no longer is a business owner in the DDA District. Chair Vredeveld encouraged the DDA to contact the Mayor, Michele Ribant or him if anyone had recommendations as to who could serve as her replacement. Chair Vredeveld acknowledged her dedicated service.

**Approval of Minutes**

Marianne Boerigter indicated that the September 4, 2008 and the February 18, 2009 Marketing Subcommittee minutes both had “3:00 AM – 4:00 AM” outlined in the minutes as to when the

meeting took place. The actual time should have read “3:00 PM – 4:00 PM” on both sets of Marketing Subcommittee minutes.

A motion was made by Ron Vliem, seconded by Marianne Boerigter and carried to approve the September 9, 2008 DDA minutes and to receive the following DDA Subcommittee minutes:

- Public Art Subcommittee Minutes (September 25, 2008)
- Way-Finding Selection Committee (October 15, 2008)
- Streetscape/Signage Subcommittee Minutes (November 11, 2008)
- Parking Subcommittee (November 11, 2008)
- Façade/Historic Preservation Subcommittee Minutes (October 2, 2008)
- Façade/Historic Preservation Subcommittee (October 30, 2008)
- Marketing Subcommittee (September 4, 2008)
- Marketing Subcommittee (February 18, 2009)

### **Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce Update**

Ron Vliem informed the DDA that the Dorcas Mortland Award was just bestowed upon Bonnie Erber for all the work she does for the betterment of the community. He went on to say that the Business Expo will take place on March 20 – 21. He informed the DDA that the 2009 Baby Food Festival will run from Wednesday to Saturday rather than from the traditional Tuesday to Saturday.

### **Update on the Fremont Farmers’ Market**

Ron Vliem informed the DDA that the City, MSU Extension and the Chamber will still work together on the Fremont Farmers’ Market but that the Chamber will manage the operations. He indicated that John Mellema will still serve as the market master. He went on to say that opening day is Saturday, July 4 in 2009.

### **NCCA and Dogwood Center Update**

Marianne Boerigter indicated that the youth photography class that was in honor of Chris Caris was a big success at NCCA. She indicated that the attendance at Dogwood Center events was up. She indicated that both organizations have not been impacted by the cuts in state funding.

### **Public Art Subcommittee**

Marianne Boerigter indicated that the Moose has to come before the Art Subcommittee/Façade-Historic Preservation Subcommittee and present its plan for artwork for the two west windows on the front façade.

She went on to say that last fall the community celebrated the new glass on glass art piece for the Market Place pavilion that was beautifully designed by Deb Emerick. She thanked the Erbers for graciously funding the art piece. She went on to say that a coin drive, which was spear-headed by Bonnie Erber, raised \$1,500 for the mural that is to be painted on the Fremont Cooperative Produce Co. building. She said that between the coin drive and three other grants the Subcommittee has raised over \$12,000 for the mural. She indicated that other grant opportunities are being pursued.

### **Façade/Historic Preservation Subcommittee**

Marianne Boerigter said that the improvements made to the Moose facades through the Façade Improvement program have generated a lot of excitement in the City. She said others (Country Squire and Celebration Floral) have performed work that is noticeable as well. She also indicated that this past year Ted Caris made improvements to his side façade, which is visible from the walkway. The DDA agreed with Ms. Boerigter's comments that the more facades that are improved, the more it encourages others to make improvements.

### **Marketing Subcommittee**

Bonnie Erber informed the DDA that community kiosks are being placed throughout the City. She indicated that the Library will have a large wall kiosk and that the Chamber will have two small wall kiosks and that one large kiosk on pedestals will be put up at Wal-Mart, if approved, or some other busy location in the City. She informed the DDA that the Chamber will be responsible for keeping the information up-to-date on the kiosks. Ron Vliem is to provide the Marketing Subcommittee with a mock up of what could possibly be included as information on the kiosks so that together the Subcommittee can decide what information is appropriate based on what will fit.

Bonnie Erber recognized the work of Kris Vredeveld and her eighth grade class for the time they took to outline what they liked about Fremont and what Fremont needs to improve on. Ms. Erber said she was impressed by some of their comments because they recognized the public art that is placed throughout Fremont.

Ms. Erber informed the DDA that she plans to organize a service project to rip out old landscaping and put in fresh landscaping at the intersection of Main Street and Division Avenue. She stressed that flowers and a fresh coat of paint for businesses can go a long way to create the "WOW" factor the DDA is striving to create.

### **Streetscape/Signage Subcommittee**

Lon Vredeveld informed the DDA that new city entryway signs will be erected this summer in the following locations:

- East of the City by Michigan Works
- South of the City by Stitches and More
- West of the City past Green – Site yet to be determined

He indicated that the signs will read, "Welcome to Fremont".

The chair then directed everyone to their agenda packets that contained updated pictures of the way-finding signage and other miscellaneous signs. He indicated that these signs should be up by Memorial Day.

### **Parking Subcommittee**

Lon Vredevelde indicated that there are now two common refuse containers on each downtown city block and for the most part the operation seems to be working fine. He said the City is looking into recycling for the downtown, and it looks like there may be a charge for that service since the market for cardboard and paper has gone south.

Michele Ribant reported that the students at NC RESA designed a bike rack for use in the downtown public parking lots. She indicated that three (3) bike racks should be completed by the end of the school year.

### **Update on the Agricultural Processing Renaissance Zone**

Todd Blake explained that the establishment of the Agricultural Processing Renaissance Zone is a way to guarantee a Gerber/Nestle presence in Fremont for a period of 10 to 15 years. Todd Blake informed the DDA that at one of the upcoming meetings the DDA will be asked to amend the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Plan's jurisdiction to eliminate the property that is included in the Agricultural Processing Renaissance Zone. He said that usually the jurisdiction of the TIF District is the same as the jurisdiction of the DDA Development District and that our DDA was set up that way, but he said they don't have to be the same jurisdictions. He indicated that by excluding the Renaissance Zone area from the TIF District, it allows the DDA to still capture, so the DDA can fund some smaller projects during the period of the Renaissance Zone. He indicated that other properties may be added to the DDA/TIF Districts.

### **Update on the Economic Stimulus Package**

Bryan Gruesbeck informed the DDA that the City provided the state with a list of existing capital projects that fit the state's parameters with regard to funding through the economic stimulus package. He indicated that the funding will be provided from the Federal government to the State through the usual funding infrastructure/programs. He informed the DDA that the parking lot improvements for the three downtown public parking lots was the number one project on the priority list of capital projects submitted to the state for funding.

### **Discussion on the Proposed 2009/2010 DDA Budget**

Chair Vredevelde asked the DDA to look at the following list of possible projects that could be funded in the 2009/2010 DDA budget:

#### Possible Projects

- Banners (\$20,000 or \$5,000 per season)
- City Hall Sign (\$25,000)
- Consultant (Tree/DT Landscaping) (\$5,000)
- Community Signs (\$25,000 per sign)
- DT Parking Lots
  - NW Parking Lot (\$1,025,000)
  - SW Parking Lot (\$961,175)
  - SE Parking Lot (\$734,550)
  - Total: \$2,720,725 – July 2006 estimates

- Façade Program (\$40,000)
- Flowers including hardware for hanging plants (\$6,000)
- Signage (e.g., Downtown street signs) (\$35,000)
- Trash Containers ( \$25 ,000)

It was pointed out that other projects could also be suggested. After some discussion, a motion was made by Merle Ross, seconded by Marianne Boerigter and carried to recommend to the Fremont City Council that the 2008/2009 DDA Budget be adjusted to allow up to \$16,000 that was to be used for the Façade Program to be used for the following projects:

- \$5,000 for summer banners
- \$5,000 for consultant (Tree/DT Landscaping)
- \$6,000 for flowers including hardware for hanging plants and other DT flowers

Note: The Façade Program had \$40,000 budgeted in the 2008/2009 DDA budget. To date \$8,623 has been spent. Re-allocating \$16,000 for the aforementioned projects would leave \$15,377 for use in grant funding for the 2008/2009 Façade Program.

The DDA felt it was important to communicate to the community that our City is doing fine during these tough economic times. They felt that having fresh banners and flowers would help create the “WOW” factor.

Chair Vredevelde indicated that the following could be considered for implementation in the 2009/2010 fiscal year:

Possible 2009/2010 DDA Projects

- Banners (\$15,000)
- City Hall Sign (\$25,000)
- Community Signs (\$25,000 per sign)
- Façade Program (\$40,000)
- Signage (e.g., Downtown street signs) (\$35,000)
- Trash Containers ( \$25 ,000)

Chair Vredevelde indicated that funding the improvements to the downtown parking lots would have to be evaluated once we understand the impact of such things as the stimulus package, etc. The estimated costs of the parking lot projects were estimated to be as follows:

- DT Parking Lots
  - NW Parking Lot (\$1,025,000)
  - SW Parking Lot (\$961,175)
  - SE Parking Lot (\$734,550)
  - Total: \$2,720,725 – July 2006 estimates

Bryan Gruesbeck informed the DDA that the City is obtaining estimates for preliminary engineering for the parking lot projects.

**Update on Enforcement of Downtown Zoning Regulations Pertaining to Sandwich Board Signs**

Chair Vredevelde said the City will be enforcing the use of sandwich board signs in the downtown. It was brought up that many of the merchants rely on the sandwich board signs for advertisement purposes. Michele Ribant indicated that they could still use sandwich board signs, but they had to complete a permit required by the Michigan Department of Transportation, and the sign had to be in keeping with design regulations as outlined in the Fremont Zoning Ordinance.

### **New Business**

Chair Vredevelde suggested that a meeting of the Downtown business owners be called to inform them of the work of the DDA and to get their ideas on programs the DDA/City is working on. It was suggested that the meeting be held at 7:30 a.m. and that breakfast be provided.

Michele Ribant informed the DDA that on Friday, August 21 and Saturday, August 22, a “Pilots for Christ” convention will be in town, which could bring in 1000 people. Ruth Graham will be the speaker on Saturday night at the Wesleyan Church. Ms. Ribant wanted to get the word out so that business owners can make plans.

### **Adjournment**

There being no other business of the DDA, the meeting adjourned at 9:14 a.m.