

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

**Wednesday, March 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 7:32 a.m. by chair Lon Vredeveld.

Members Present:	Lon Vredeveld	DDA Chair
	Marianne Boerigter	Executive Director, Newaygo County Council for the Arts
	Merle Ross	Downtown Business Owner
	James M. Rynberg	Fremont Mayor
	Bob Stehouwer	Downtown Business/Property Owner
	Ron Vliem	Executive Director, Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce
	Chris Youker	Downtown Business Owner
	Rob Zeldenrust	DDA District Business Manager
Members Absent:	Kim Deur	Downtown Business/Property Owner
	Gerry Rich	Downtown Property Owner
	Randy Stacik	Chief Executive Officer, Gerber Memorial Health Services
Staff Present:	Bryan Gruesbeck	Fremont City Manager
	Todd Blake	Fremont Finance Director/City Clerk
	Michele Ribant	Fremont Neighborhood & Economic Development Authority

Update on DDA Membership

Chair Vredeveld welcomed everyone to the meeting. He gave an update on the DDA membership. He indicated that Randy Stacik, the CEO of Gerber Memorial Health Services, is a new member of the DDA.

Approval of Minutes

Michele Ribant informed the DDA that minutes of the February 25, 2009 DDA meeting need to be changed to reflect that Bryan Gruesbeck, the Fremont City Manager, was in attendance and that Todd Blake was in attendance as the Fremont Finance Director/City Clerk – not as the acting City Manager.

A motion was made by Ron Vliem, seconded by Marianne Boerigter, and carried to approve the minutes from the February 25, 2009 DDA meeting with the corrections as noted above and to accept the March 16, 2009 minutes of the DDA Joint Façade/Historic Preservation Subcommittee and Public Art Subcommittee.

Discussion on New DDA Subcommittee (Green/Healthy Communities Subcommittee)

Lon Vredevelt asked the DDA for input on the idea of establishing a Green/Healthy Communities Subcommittee under the auspices of the DDA. He indicated that members of the Subcommittee do not necessarily have to be on the full DDA. He said that the DDA could take a leadership role in the community in promoting such things as recycling, green buildings, healthy lifestyle activities, etc. The DDA expressed their support in establishing the new subcommittee.

Joint Façade/Historic Preservation Subcommittee and Public Art Subcommittee Update

Marianne Boerigter reported that the Vliems are proposing façade work to 3 West Main Street, where the business Hair by Joan & Co. resides. She informed the DDA that on the east façade the owner plans to replace the old metal side door with a glass door and that on the front façade the owner plans to do the following:

- Replace wood door to second floor
- Repair wood siding on front of building
- Wash, prime & paint front façade using colors from the Fremont Façade Improvement Program color palette

Ms. Boerigter informed the DDA that the subject owner also is updating the interior of the salon so that it has a more upscale look.

A motion was made by Merle Ross, seconded by Rob Zeldenrust and carried to recommend to the Fremont City Council approval of the \$3,230.29 funding request (\$962.79 for side façade and \$2,267.50 for front façade) through the Fremont Façade Improvement Program to fund a new glass side door, the replacement of the front wood door, the repair of the wood siding on the front façade and the painting of the front façade using the colors in the Façade Improvement Program color palette for the building located at 3 W. Main Street.

Ron Vliem abstained from the vote.

Ms. Boerigter indicated that the Moose is being asked to provide the Subcommittees with an electronic version of the artwork they would like to install on the west windows on the front façade of the Moose building.

Breakfast Meeting with DT Business Owners on DDA Matters

Lon Vredevelt reminded the DDA that they are hosting a meeting of the Downtown business/property owners on Tuesday March 31, 2009 from 7:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. at the Fremont City Hall. He indicated that there will be a breakfast and that a power-point presentation will be made outlining the work of the DDA. He asked the DDA to encourage DT owners to attend.

Update on the Fremont Cooperative Produce Co. and the Agricultural Community

Rob Zeldenrust gave an update on the business of the Cooperative. He said he appreciated the relationship the Co-op has with the City and that they strive to be good community partners. He said the Cooperative through a grant and through an investment of their own had work performed on the railroad tracks and that, as a result, it not only benefitted their business but it benefitted the community as well since it practically eliminated the need for freight to stop traffic on Main Street during the noon hour. He said the Co-op has been a part of bringing the Methane Digester project to the Fremont Industrial Park and that many other companies (e.g., Restaurant Recycling Inc.) in the area stand to benefit.

In terms of the agricultural community in general he indicated that recently there have been a number of farms (e.g., milk producers) that have gone out of business. He said that we may be seeing larger farms and that some of the smaller farms may go by the wayside. He also said that the agricultural community is going through a difficult period just like the rest of the nation.

In terms of the Fremont Cooperative Streetscape project, he indicated that they plan to take down the white building along Main Street this spring. Michele Ribant reported that in terms of the plan for the streetscape project, the City has worked out issues with MDOT in terms of curb cuts off the right-of-way along Main Street. However, she said that the City is still trying to work out issues with the railroad. She said the cost to put a walkway across the railroad is turning out to be much more expensive than originally anticipated.

Update on RFP for Tree/Landscaping Consultant

It was reported that the RFP for the Tree/Landscaping Consultant will be provided to the DDA in its next agenda packet, so DDA members can review the RFP to make sure it addresses all the issues important to them.

Update on Flowers and Banners

It was reported that the DDA voted at its last meeting to re-allocate funds in the DDA budget to cover the cost of new summer banners. Marianne Boerigter said the Public Art Subcommittee viewed many banner designs, and they narrowed the design selection down to two choices and that a decision was made to go with the purple banner with the kites rather than the blue banner with a glass of lemonade. It was stated that the color blue was not appealing. Ms. Boerigter showed the DDA a picture of the banner, and she said the banner can read one of the following ways:

1. Enjoy!
2. Enjoy Summer!
3. Enjoy Fremont!

The DDA decided the banner should read, "Enjoy Fremont!"

Michele Ribant reported that hanging flower baskets will be hung on the large light poles this summer from Main & Stewart to Main & Weaver. She indicated that Bonnie Erber has worked it out so that the four landscape islands at Main & Division will be revamped; the old day lilies will be taken out and fresh landscaping will be planted. It was suggested that the day lilies be re-planted in one of the parks along a creek or that they be given away to residents.

Discussion on Community Clock

Chair Vredevelt reported that Huntington Bank had informed the City two weeks ago that they wanted to donate \$5,000 towards a community clock; however, he went on to say that the City was recently informed that the offer was retracted due to the tough economic times. It was acknowledged that they had good intentions in being good community partners.

Review of Preliminary Plans for the DT Parking Lots

Michele Ribant reviewed the preliminary plans for the DT parking lots (NW, SE & SW) with the DDA. She indicated that some drive openings will be closed and that the number of parking spaces will be reduced. She provided the DDA with the preliminary costs for each of the parking lots. It was the consensus of the DDA that the City should construct and fund the SE DT parking lot as the next DDA project.

Update on Modification to the TIF District to Accommodate the Renaissance Zone

Todd Blake indicated that the DDA may want 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 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. Mr. Blake directed the DDA to the map outlining which area would be excluded from the TIF District. He indicated that changing the TIF District will require a public hearing, which should take place in April.

Discussion on the Proposed 2009/2010 DDA Budget

Todd Blake reviewed the proposed 2009/2010 DDA Budget with the DDA. The DDA was referred to the list of projects that were included in the proposed DDA budget:

- Banners (\$11,000 fall, winter and spring seasons)
- Co-operative Streetscape Project (\$20,000)
- Community Clock (\$25,000) (\$5,000 from donations)
- Façade Program (\$40,000)
- Holiday Lights (\$2,000)
- Signage (e.g., Downtown street signs) (\$25,000)

The DDA acknowledged that the funding for the community clock should be taken out of the budget since Huntington Bank was not able to contribute towards it. They also asked staff to evaluate if \$2,000 was enough to fund the holiday lights for the downtown trees.

In terms of the items that the DDA was considering at its last meeting but were not included in the budget, the following reasons were given:

- City Hall Sign (\$25,000): The City should fund this sign.
- Community Signs (\$25,000 per sign): The DDA may consider funding this sign next year.
- Trash Containers (\$25,000): The DDA may consider funding these trash containers next year.

Newaygo County Economic Development Office Update

Andy Lofgren gave an update on the work of the Newaygo County Economic Development Office (NCEDO). He started out by saying over the past year NCEDO was very involved in establishing the Gerber Renaissance Zone and that job retention is a core activity of NCEDO. He said that the SCORE Program is available and that it provides business mentoring and counseling. He said that NCEDO offers various training sessions throughout the year, such as Zing Training. He mentioned that NCEDO is involved in the WIRED program. He explained the role of the Newaygo County Brownfield Authority and said they are exploring the possibility of establishing a Land Bank Authority.

Adjournment

There being no other business of the DDA, the meeting adjourned at 9:07 a.m.