

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

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

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 AM.

Members Present:	Lon Vredeveld	DDA Chair
	Marianne Boerigter	Director, Newaygo County Council for the Arts
	Kim Deur	Downtown Property/Business Owner
	Lorna Kosztowny	Downtown Property Owner
	Rebecca Laing-Austin	Downtown Business Owner
	Gerry Rich	Downtown Business/Property Owner
	James M. Rynberg	Fremont Mayor
	Ron Vliem	Executive Director, Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce
	Rob Zeldenrust	Main Street Business Operator
Members Absent:	Dusty Bitson	Downtown Business Owner
	Tom Schuiteman	Downtown Business/Property Owner
Staff Present:	Richard Rought	Fremont Zoning Administrator
	Michele Ribant	Fremont Neighborhood & Economic Development Director
	Chris A. Yonker	Fremont City Manager
Consultant Present:	Rick Stout	Fleis & Vandenbrink
	Teresa Nelson	Fleis & Vandenbrink

Welcoming Remarks

Chair Vredeveld welcomed Rebecca Laing-Austin as a new member of the Fremont DDA. Rick Stout introduced his associate, Teresa Nelson, landscape architect, to the DDA.

At the beginning of the meeting, there was a general discussion, and the following points were made:

- We should try to use firms/companies for our DDA projects that are located in Michigan or at least in the Mid-west.
- We should make sure that the street furniture the DDA selects for Fremont is not the same design as the street furniture selected by Newaygo.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the minutes from the May 17, 2006 DDA meeting and the June 1, 2006 DDA Façade/Historic Preservation Subcommittee meeting.

Update on Fremont Museum Economic Feasibility Study

Mayor Rynberg reported that the Museum Committee is looking to establish a Museum Board to spearhead the establishment of a local history museum in Fremont. Based on the recommendation in the

Fremont Museum Economic Feasibility Study, Mayor Rynberg indicated that the Board may choose to establish an Interpretive Center, which is a non-collecting museum. He said that a major focus of the Interpretive Center will be to provide dynamic programming, especially for school children. He also said that the challenge for the Museum Board, like many similar ventures, is to determine how the museum will be funded. He informed the DDA that at the next Museum Committee meeting, the Museum Committee will select a Museum Board.

Establishing a Downtown Historic District in Downtown Fremont

Lon Vredevelde indicated that at the June 1, 2006 DDA Façade/Historic Preservation Subcommittee meeting, the Subcommittee discussed whether it would be in the City's best interest to establish a Historic District downtown Fremont. Michele Ribant reported that the Subcommittee's recommendation to the full DDA is that the City should work to nominate the four block commercial core on Main Street between Merchant and Mechanic Avenues as a historic district in the National Register of Historic Places. Michele Ribant said that the Subcommittee decided that establishing a historic district would do the following:

- Stimulate interest in and increase public awareness of our City's historic resources
- Encourage economic development (Property owners in the Historic District would be eligible for state and federal tax credit programs to help rehabilitate historic buildings.)
- Enhance or at least help maintain local property values

A motion was then made, seconded and carried to recommend to the Fremont City Council that the City work to nominate the four block commercial core on Main Street between Merchant and Mechanic Avenues as a historic district in the National Register of Historic Places.

Michele Ribant indicated that City staff would coordinate the nomination process for listing in the National Register but that many volunteers would be needed to do the research.

Consideration of the Proposed Fremont Façade Improvement Program Guidelines

Lon Vredevelde reported that the Façade/Historic Preservation Subcommittee also reviewed the proposed Fremont Façade Improvement Program Guidelines at its June 1, 2006 Subcommittee meeting. Michele Ribant explained that the purpose of the Program is to provide grant funding to encourage downtown property owners to make needed exterior building façade improvements. She indicated that funding for the program would be subject to appropriations each fiscal year by the Fremont City Council. She said that for the 2006/07 fiscal year, \$40,000 in funding is being recommended with a maximum of \$10,000 per project being available to downtown property owners to renovate their facades.

Ms. Ribant reviewed the draft Guidelines with the DDA. She concluded by saying that her colleague, Richard Rought, recommended that reference to canopies be deleted from the Guidelines since the new draft zoning ordinance will not permit canopies. She said he also recommended that payment to the property owner should be provided only after a final **approved** inspection by Newaygo County is performed, if an inspection is required.

The DDA then made a motion to approve the proposed Fremont Façade Improvement Program Guidelines with the changes recommended by Richard Rought; the motion was seconded, and it carried.

Discussion on Downtown Fremont Enhancement Plan Pattern Book

Rick Stout reviewed with the DDA the draft Fremont Pattern Book for the Downtown Fremont Enhancement Project. As part of the discussion on the Pattern Book, he outlined possible funding sources for the project.

Marianne Boerigter recommended that the site plan for the northeast downtown parking area should delete reference to the “Arts Lot”. She indicated it should be labeled the “NE Parking Area”, similar to how the site plans for the other three downtown parking lots are labeled. The DDA concurred.

Rick Stout indicated he would give a power-point presentation at the public forum to highlight the various elements of the Downtown Fremont Enhancement Plan as outlined in the Pattern Book. He said that the Pattern Book would be finalized after we receive public input.

2006/2007 DDA Budget Presentation

Chris Yonker reviewed the proposed 2006/2007 DDA budget with the DDA. He handed out the following documents:

- Proposed Operating/Capital Budget
- Fremont DDA Tax Capture Report

He indicated that the Downtown Fremont Enhancement Plan alone is estimated at \$4.5 million dollars, which does not include extras, such as decorative walls, fencing, art work, etc. He went on to say that according to his understanding of the DDA’s desires, which is to show results of their efforts in spearheading the Blueprint Revitalization Plan, the following are priority projects for the DDA:

- Decorative Seasonal Banners
- Façade Improvement Program
- Downtown Rental Housing Rehabilitation Program
- Wayfinding Signage
- Farmers Market Pavilion
- Parking lot improvements for the Northeast Parking Area downtown Fremont

He indicated that the 2006/2007 budget reflects these priorities. The DDA concurred.

Next Meeting

The next DDA meeting dates are as follows:

Public Art Subcommittee
Wednesday, June 14, 2006
7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

DDA Meeting (Public Forum on Downtown Fremont Enhancement Plan)
Wednesday, June 21, 2006
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Michele Ribant said she would promote the public forum in the *Times Indicator*. She also said she would develop a flyer to promote it; she asked the block captains to distribute the flyer.

Adjournment

There being no further business of the Board, the DDA adjourned at 9:26 AM.