

Meeting Minutes
Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Meeting
Thursday, June 23, 2005
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM
Fremont City Hall
Council Chambers

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 PM.

Members Present:

Lon Vredeveld	DDA Chairman
James M. Rynberg	Fremont Mayor
Rob Zeldenrust	Main Street Business Operator
Ron Vliem	Executive Director, Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce
Marianne Boerigter	Director, Newaygo County Council for the Arts
Lee Ann Glaser	Head – Downtown Fremont Retailers Association
Ric Zhart	Fremont Business Owner
Ryan McNally	Downtown Fremont Attorney
Kim Deur	Downtown Business Owner

Staff Present: Michele Ribant Fremont Neighborhood & Economic Development Director

Members Absent:

Kevin Conley	Downtown Business Owner
Kristie Van Simaey	Downtown Business Owner

Staff Absent: Chris Yonker Fremont City Manager

The Mayor opened the meeting by thanking the DDA for their interest in serving. Mayor Rynberg then proceeded to indicate that the first order of business was to elect a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) chairman.

II. Nomination of the DDA Chairman

Rob Zeldenrust made a motion to nominate Lon Vredeveld as chairman of the Fremont Downtown Development Authority; the motion was seconded by Marianne Boerigter, and the motion carried.

III. Discussion on the Role of the DDA

Lon Vredeveld introduced himself as a downtown business owner of Vredeveld Shoes and past DDA chairman. Each DDA member then proceeded to introduce themselves and to share why they have an interest in serving on the DDA.

Chairman Vredevelde gave an extensive overview of the history of the Fremont DDA. He outlined all the improvements that have been made since the DDA's establishment. He then recommended that the DDA conduct site visits of other cities (Grand Haven, South Haven, Holland, Zeeland, etc.). He said that it would be a good way to generate ideas in terms of deciding what we want, especially in terms of physical improvements, in downtown Fremont. He encouraged the DDA to dream and think big!

IV. Adoption of the "Fremont Downtown Blueprint 2005" Document

Chairman Vredevelde explained that the City Council approved a resolution to formally adopt the Fremont Downtown Blueprint as the official guide for further economic enhancement of Downtown Fremont at its May 16, 2005 meeting. He indicated that the DDA was recommended by both the Blueprint Committee, which has disbanded, and the City Council as the group that would be responsible for coordinating and championing the implementation of the Fremont's Downtown Action Strategy. Marianne Boerigter made a motion to approve the resolution adopting the "Fremont Downtown Blueprint 2005" as the official guide for the further economic enhancement of Downtown; the motion was seconded by Rob Zeldenrust, and the motion carried.

V. Approval of the Fremont DDA Budget for Fiscal Year 2005/2006

Chairman Vredevelde gave a quick overview of the budget and explained that we would get into greater explanation of the budget at our next meeting. He went on to say that at our next meeting we will also discuss and prioritize the projects we want to complete. He asked the DDA to carefully review the Fremont Blueprint Document 2005 and the Amended Development & Tax Increment Financing Plan before the next meeting. Ryan McNally made a motion to approve the 2005/2006 DDA Budget; the motion was seconded by Marianne Boerigter, and the motion carried.

VI. New Business

- **Fremont Farmers Market**

Rob Zeldenrust explained that the Farmers Market Committee is trying to revitalize the Fremont Farmers Market. He indicated it was a recommendation from the Blueprint Program that a permanent location for the market be established. He went on to say that the Farmers Market Committee developed a "Wish List" outlining amenities that they wanted included in the design of any new farmers market facility. Mr. Zeldenrust said that if the Market is to be permanently housed near Veterans Memorial Park, the architecture of the new structure should be similar in style and material to the picnic pavilion currently located in the Park.

- **Museum**

It was explained that a group of interested people met to discuss the possibility of establishing a local history museum in Fremont which would include Native American history, logging, Gerber history, etc. The question arose as to whether the windmills from Windmill Gardens would be included in the museum. Michele Ribant indicated that she is trying to set up an appointment to see the windmills to determine what kind of shape they are in. She said that after determining the condition of the windmills, we can determine if we should include them in the planning for the museum.

Rental Rehabilitation Program

Michele Ribant informed the DDA that the City was working with NCCS Center for Nonprofit Housing on creating a Rental Rehabilitation Program for Downtown Fremont. She indicated that the City and CNH want to determine if there is any interest in the program by Downtown business owners who have upper floors. She explained that the idea was to convert the upper floors to rental apartments to not only provide affordable housing but to also help business owners generate revenue. She indicated that if we could get more life downtown both during the day and night, this will help grow downtown Fremont economically.

- **Fremont Polarfest**

The Mayor explained that the Polarfest is a day-long, winter-time community event that will be held on a Saturday in February. He indicated that the Polarfest Committee is just getting organized and that the Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce will most likely sponsor the event. Michele Ribant added that the Polarfest Committee decided that any proceeds made on the Polarfest event will be dedicated to some kind of downtown enhancement project.

VII. Meetings

It was determined that the next DDA meeting will be held on Thursday, July 28, 2005 at 3:00 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Chairman Vredevelde indicated that at the next meeting the DDA will decide when and how often the DDA will meet in the future.

Chairman Vredevelde indicated that before the next meeting, each DDA member should think about when the DDA should conduct site visits to see other west Michigan cities. He indicated that the site visits will give the DDA a chance to see the different types of physical improvements (public art, street furniture, trash compactors, etc.) other cities have incorporated in their downtowns.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:44 PM.