

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

**Wednesday, January 24, 2007
7:30 AM – 9:00 AM
Fremont City Hall
Council Chambers**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 a.m.

Members Present:	Lon Vredeveld	DDA Chair
	Dusty Bitson	Downtown Business Owner
	Marianne Boerigter	Director, Newaygo County Council for the Arts
	Lorna Kosztowny	Downtown Property Owner
	Gerry Rich	Downtown Business/Property Owner
	James M. Rynberg	Fremont Mayor
Members Absent:	Kim Deur	Downtown Property/Business Owner
	Rebecca Laing-Austin	Downtown Business Owner
	Tom Schuiteman	Downtown Business Owner
	Ron Vleim	Executive Director, Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce
	Rob Zeldenrust	Main Street Business Operator
Staff Present:	Michele Ribant	Fremont Neighborhood & Economic Development Director

Welcoming Remarks

Chair Vredeveld welcomed the DDA.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Dusty Bitson, seconded by Marianne Boerigter, and carried to approve the minutes from the September 6, 2006 DDA meeting, as submitted.

The DDA accepted the following sets of minutes for information:

- Public Art Subcommittee (9-18-06)
- Public Art Subcommittee (9-26-06)
- Joint Meeting of Public Art and Marketing Subcommittees (10-23-06)
- Parking Subcommittee (10-31-06)
- Public Art Subcommittee (11-20-06)
- Joint Public Art and Marketing Subcommittees (12-04-06)
- Public Art Subcommittee (1-08-07)
- DDA Ad Hoc Group Meeting – Progress Report No. 1 (1-10-07)
- Parking Subcommittee (1-15-07)
- Joint Public Art and Marketing Subcommittees (1-16-07)

Update on Downtown NE Public Parking Lot & Market Pavilion Construction Project

Chair Vredevelde informed the DDA that funding for a public restroom was approved as part of the Downtown Fremont NE Public Parking Lot Reconstruction project where the Market Pavilion will be erected.

Each DDA member was provided with a copy of the Downtown Fremont Enhancement Scope Definition & Pattern Book with his/her agenda. Chair Vredevelde indicated that the DDA members should use this Book as a guide as they serve on the DDA and its subcommittees, especially when it comes to making selections for such things as benches, signage, etc.

Michele Ribant indicated that there have been concerns from some business owners about the impact that construction project in the Downtown NE parking lot has had on their business. She indicated that if there is something the City can do to ease the inconvenience during construction, she has tried to do that. For example, she informed the DDA that she obtained permission to use the Christian Science Church parking lot just east of City Hall for parking for City employees during the construction period so that patrons of Downtown businesses may use the City parking lot. She indicated that the short-term inconvenience to the business owners should be worth the long-term positive impact of the newly constructed parking lot.

Update on Rental Rehabilitation Program

Michele Ribant reported that there are four downtown property owners who are participants in the Downtown Fremont Rental Rehabilitation Program and that the Program is at a critical stage. She indicated that bids from general contractors were provided to the property owners and that the owners are in the process of working with one or two contractors to try to get the cost of the project to a level in which they can accept. She indicated that the renovation work is to be completed by December of 2007.

Marianne Boerigter, a Rental Rehab participant, indicated that the 51% of the units being rehabbed through the program must be affordable for 5 years. She went on to point out that the affordable units must be rented to tenants whose gross income projected for twelve months must not exceed 80% of area median income.

Update on Subcommittee Work

Parking Subcommittee

Michele Ribant passed out a handout entitled, "Downtown Residential Parking Program", which was a more specific plan to deal with downtown residential parking than the one that was provided with the agenda packet. She indicated that the Police Department performed more research on instituting a downtown parking program for residents; and therefore, the Parking Program was amended based on the research. There was much discussion on the Program. Some of the issues discussed included the following:

- Cost of permit fees (\$25.00 per permit was recommended; some felt it was too high; some felt it was not high enough.)
- Who should pay for the permits – building owners or tenants?
- How should parking for guests of Downtown tenants be handled? Where should they park? How much, if anything, should they pay?

After much discussion, Chair Vredevelde asked that the issues concerning the Parking Program be sent back to the DDA Parking Subcommittee for further study. The following should be presented to the DDA once the Parking Subcommittee has reviewed the issue and made recommendations:

- An updated copy of the Downtown Residential Parking Program
- A color coded map showing exactly where different groups (employees, residents, etc.) should park in Downtown Fremont
- An educational flyer/brochure that can be provided to employers to give to their employees to make their employees understand why their parking habits in Downtown are important.

Public Art Subcommittee

Marianne Boerigter, chair of the Public Art Subcommittee, reported that the Subcommittee has identified the following three locations downtown for public art as priorities:

1. AT&T Building (front and rear facades): Murals designed by local artist, Renae Wallace
2. Fremont Post Office Site: Subcommittee working with local artist, David Anderson
3. Fifth Third Bank Site: Subcommittee working with local artist, Cara O'Brien

Ms. Boerigter reported that AT&T would not fund the murals on its building; however, she went on to say that AT&T granted permission to allow the City to place the murals on the building, subject to execution of a license agreement.

Michele Ribant indicated that the Public Art Subcommittee came up with a variety of fundraising ideas at its last meeting and that they must make a decision as to which idea or ideas they want to pursue.

Chair Vredevelde indicated that the Downtown Fremont Public Art Program Guidelines and the Downtown Fremont Public Art Placement Plan were included in the agenda packets and that these are the documents the Subcommittee is recommending be adopted in order to establish the Downtown Fremont Public Art Program.

A motion was made by Marianne Boerigter, seconded by Dusty Bitson, and carried to recommend to the Fremont City Council approval of the Downtown Fremont Public Art Program Guidelines and the Downtown Fremont Public Art Placement Plan.

Marketing Subcommittee

City Column – Times Indicator

Mayor Rynberg, on behalf of the Marketing Subcommittee chair, Bonnie Erber, reported the work of the Marketing Subcommittee. Mayor Rynberg reported that he has arranged to have a monthly column in the *Times Indicator*. He said that it would not be the “Mayor’s” column, but it would be a City column where all the news of interest to the community could be outlined throughout the year. He said that he would write some of the articles and that City staff would also write them depending on the issues of interest within the community at the time. He indicated that it was a way of getting the word out as to what the City is working on and accomplishing.

Community Calendar

Mayor Rynberg also indicated that last year the DDA had talked about some entity within the community having a community calendar. He indicated that Ron Vliem was consulted and that the Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce would continue to put a community calendar on its website. Michele Ribant reported that the City has a new calendar on its website and that the City will not duplicate the efforts of the Chamber; she said the City’s website links to the Chamber’s site. She

did report that the new City calendar lists all the City meetings and that the DDA can go on-line to see when their meetings will be held.

Downtown Fremont Marketing Plan and the "WOW" Factor

Michele Ribant reported that the Downtown Fremont Marketing Plan was created to outline the strategies the City will use to sell its Downtown to the community and others. She indicated that one of the strategies was to create the "WOW" Factor, which Bonnie Erber outlined is what the Fremont Downtown needs. The "WOW" Factor is trying to get people to have that response - "WOW" - when they are in our Downtown. It is creating a sense of place, a place where people want to be.

A motion was made by Marianne Boerigter, seconded by Dusty Bitson, and carried to recommend to the Fremont City Council approval of the Downtown Fremont Marketing Plan.

Façade/Historic Preservation Subcommittee

Façade Improvement Program

Chair Vredevelde indicated that there were an ample number of people at the presentation on the Downtown Fremont Façade Program at the Fremont Area District Library, which took place on Monday, January 15, 2007. He indicated that the work that the architects for the project are recommending be performed on the downtown facades is reasonable in terms of what it would require of property owners to have the work done. He said the illustrations give property owners an idea of what their building could look like and that no property owner is required to make the changes.

Michele Ribant indicated that presentation boards illustrating how the front facades in the four commercial core blocks Downtown Fremont could look will be in the office by the week of January 28, 2007. She indicated that Downtown Fremont Design Guidelines need to be reviewed by the Façade/Historic Preservation Subcommittee some time in February, 2007. Chair Vredevelde indicated that this Subcommittee will play an important role in that they will be responsible for administering the Façade Program.

Windmill Garden

Michele Ribant reported that Jan Burton, daughter of the owner of Windmill Gardens, has informed her that the family is willing to allow the City to acquire the Ensley Tower. Ms. Burton is consulting her family as to whether they will donate it or request money. Ms. Ribant reported that Ms. Burton told her that she feels, based on research her father did, that they have the first school house in Fremont and that her family would donate that building to the City.

Downtown Fremont Historic District

Michele Ribant also reported that she is getting together two or three people to spear-head the project where the community works to list Downtown Fremont as a Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places.

Signage/Streetscape Subcommittee

Michele Ribant reported that it is time to convene the first meeting of the DDA Signage/Streetscape Subcommittee. She said that the Subcommittee will have to make decisions as to the design of the signage which will be placed on the Market Pavilion structure.

She also reported that Fremont Rotary Club has raised \$2,000.00 to be used for benches in the Downtown. The Subcommittee will make recommendations to the Fremont Rotary Club as to

where the benches could be located. The Subcommittee could also come up with a new streetscape idea on how the \$2,000.00 could be used to have a positive impact on Downtown Fremont and then present that idea to the Rotary Club.

Fremont Community & Business Expo 2007

Chair Vredevelde reported that the 2007 Fremont Community Business Expo will be held in March at the Fremont Public High School. The Expo will be held on Friday evening, March 23, 2007 and on Saturday, March 24, 2007.

Downtown Fremont Spring Clean-up Day

The Committee talked about whether to hold another Spring Clean-up Day this year. Chair Vredevelde said that last year it rained the entire weekend the clean up project was suppose to take place, so the event really did not have a lot of impact. The DDA made no decision as to whether they would have another one in 2007.

Next Meeting

The next DDA meeting will be scheduled on an as-needed basis.

Adjournment

There being no further business of the DDA, the DDA adjourned at 9:17 a.m.