

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

**Wednesday, February 23, 2011
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. Lon Vredeveld welcomed Sheryl Miller to the DDA.

Members Present:	Lon Vredeveld	DDA Chair
	Marianne Boerigter	Executive Director, Newaygo County Council for the Arts
	Sheryl Miller	Downtown Business/Property 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
	Gail Warnement	Executive Director, Newaygo Conservation District
	Randy Stasik	Chief Executive Officer, Spectrum Health – Gerber Memorial

Staff Present:	Michele Ribant	Fremont Neighborhood & Economic Development Director
	Todd Blake	Fremont City Clerk/Finance Director
	Bryan Gruesbeck	Fremont City Manager

Oath of Office

Todd Blake administered the Oath of Office to Sheryl Miller.

Approval of DDA Minutes

A motion was made by Marianne Boerigter, seconded by Bob Stehouwer and carried to approve the minutes from the October 27, 2011 DDA meeting.

Vote on Proposed Amendments to the 2010/2011 DDA Operating Budget

Lon Vredevelde explained to the DDA that grant funding from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), if awarded, would have enabled the City to make improvements to the southeast downtown public parking lot but that did not work out. Therefore, the cost of improving that parking lot without MEDC grant funding would be too costly at this time. It was pointed out that the northwest downtown parking lot is in much need of repair, so the recommendation brought before the DDA was to fund the following basic improvements to the northwest downtown parking lot in the current fiscal year (2010/11), which would require a budget amendment:

- Replace alleyway surface with decorative concrete – not stamped concrete like what is in the alley in the northeast parking lot, because of maintenance problems
- Repave sidewalks and space directly behind businesses
- Improve parking lot with surface treatment
- Replace curbing as necessary

It was pointed out that aesthetic improvements (street lights, landscaping, etc.) to the northwest parking lot could be phased in but for now the focus is to make improvements that would ensure its functionality. Some improvements (new landscaping, fencing, etc.) to the northwest downtown public parking lot could be included in the 2011/12 DDA budget with the installation to be completed in August 2011 after the Baby Food Festival. It was also suggested that the cost of some improvements to the southeast downtown parking lot (new alleyway and concrete private space behind the buildings) could be included in the 2010/11 DDA budget.

It was the consensus of the DDA that the work should be coordinated so that the City is not ripping up work already performed in an early stage of a project in order to install additional improvements in a later stage. The example given was that wiring for the decorative streetlights should be performed when the ground is torn up at an early stage so as not to have to tear up the ground again when the lights are installed.

Todd Blake explained that the DDA's budget for 2010/11 includes an amount (\$484,208 of which \$275,103 was for the parking lot improvement) that would have been captured to cover the cost of the southeast downtown parking lot improvements and since instead the DDA is looking to make improvements on a smaller scale to the northwest downtown parking lot, the capture amount needed to cover the cost will be reduced to \$350,000 with \$90,000 of it to be used for the improvements proposed to the northwest downtown parking lot. He explained the TIF capture amount not only includes the cost of the NW parking lot improvement, but it also includes the cost of the district maintenance, the downtown parking maintenance, the debt service on the bonds for the work performed in the northeast downtown parking lot and other miscellaneous projects (downtown signage and Co-op streetscape project).

It was explained that it is estimated that the improvements which are proposed to be made to the northwest downtown parking lot this fiscal year – before July 1, 2011 will cost \$150,000. The grant award from USDA Rural Development in the amount of \$60,000, which was originally slated to cover the costs of improvements to the southeast downtown parking lot, will be used to cover some of the costs for the northwest downtown parking lot improvements, subject to USDA Rural Development approval. The other \$90,000 needed for improvements to the NW downtown parking lot is proposed to be covered through TIF capture.

With regard to other information regarding the current year (2010/11) budget, Michele Ribant indicated that the budget includes \$30,000 to complete the streetscape project near the Fremont Cooperative Produce Company. Specifically, the cost is to cover the installation of the sidewalk over the railroad. Michele Ribant said that the DDA budget also includes \$5,000 to be used for a landscape/art plan for the corner of Stewart and Main Street. She said that since the current high school property will be re-purposed and it will be some time before we know what that purpose will be, the Public Art Subcommittee is holding off on placing public art at that corner. Therefore, she said if there are cost overruns on the streetscape/sidewalk project, she would like to be able to use the \$5,000 allocated for the landscape/art plan to finish up the Cooperative Streetscape project. No objections were raised.

A motion was made by Rob Zeldenrust, seconded by Bob Stehouwer and carried to make recommendations to the Fremont City Council to amend the 2010/11 DDA operating budget and DDA 2010 Tax Capture Report to decrease the amount captured from \$484,208 to \$350,000 in order to capture only the necessary amount to cover the costs to be incurred by the DDA in the 2010/11 fiscal year.

Discussion on Projects/Plans Accomplished and on Possible Projects for Coming Year and for Five Years Out

Chair Vredevelde invited the DDA to share what they liked about the work the DDA has accomplished in the past and what project – however small or large – they would like to pursue in the future.

Marianne Boerigter indicated she thought the Façade Program has made a significant positive impact on the downtown, and she would encourage the Program's continuation. She said that the façade program and the improvements to the downtown parking lot are projects that she feels are valued by the community the most.

Rob Zeldenrust indicated that the quality of development that has been performed in the City to date has been very high and that while he understands we may have to handle some projects (e.g., parking lot improvements) in phases, he does not want us to sacrifice or forego quality. He went on to say that we have a lot to be proud of in Fremont. Comments were made that the flowers, banners, etc. really help Fremont stand out.

Rob Zeldenrust asked if there was something the DDA could do to address property maintenance issues downtown so that the integrity of the downtown buildings is not compromised. No ideas to address this issue were identified.

Lon Vredevelde said he would like there to be some kind of attention paid to the west end of town along Main Street since those properties are also in the DDA. It was suggested that new landscaping in the west commercial corridor, such along the berm by Gerber, could be installed. It was also suggested that we work with the LIONS Club on the flag program and that flags and flag hardware could be purchased.

Bryan Gruesbeck said that while the cost may be prohibitive, he likes the idea of burying utility lines along the west commercial corridor.

Todd Blake indicated that this year the City will really have to work hard to develop a viable City budget because we will be down \$200,000, \$75,000 of it through loss of revenue sharing dollars and \$125,000 through loss due to property devaluations. He went on to say that the proposed

budget for 2011/12 fiscal year in the agenda packets includes \$40,000 from the General Fund for the Façade Improvement Grant Program, which may or may not be approved by the City Council, but no other special projects are included in the proposed budget. He cautioned that any other projects the DDA wants implemented next year will have to be through tax capture, which may result in an increase in the overall City millage.

Downtown Recycling

It was reported that the City plans to contract with Mark Ramsey to conduct pick-up service for the downtown recycling program. The service will be performed free for one year. At this time, cardboard is the only item that will be recycled as part of the downtown recycling program but other items hopefully will be recycled in the future. Mr. Ramsey will pick-up cardboard that is located in bins for recycling located in the downtown common trash enclosures.

Report of the Façade/Historic Preservation Subcommittee

It was reported that the \$40,000 allocated in the 2010/2011 DDA budget for the Fremont Improvement Grant Program may all be spent this fiscal year. There is one pending grant request that if funded could use the balance of the funds.

Report of the Public Art Subcommittee

Lon Vredevelde indicated that the Public Art Subcommittee is working with the art teachers and their students to develop ideas for a public art piece to be placed in Veterans' Memorial Park.

Update on the Fremont Rental Rehabilitation Program

It was reported that rental rehabilitation projects underway as part of the Fremont Rental Rehabilitation Program should be completed by December 2011.

Update of the Cooperative Streetscape Program

Michele Ribant reported that the sidewalk along Main Street by the Fremont Co-operative will be installed this spring, but it will be made of asphalt – not cement.

2011 Downtown Landscaping/Flowers

It was reported that all the day lilies in the downtown landscape islands on Main Street will be taken out this spring and transplanted to various locations (e.g., parks) and that annuals will be planted in their place. Michele Ribant said that in coming years some of those annuals can be replaced with perennials in accordance with the downtown landscape plan. She also said that this year the tree in front of 25 W. Main Street will be taken down and a planter with flowers will be placed there instead. She said that the DDA may want to consider in a future budget year purchasing permanent, attractive planters for the space along Main Street from 25 W. Main Street down to Havemen Hardware.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

There was no new business.

Next Meeting

Fremont DDA Meeting
Wednesday, March 23, 2011
Fremont Council Chambers
Fremont City Council
7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Adjournment

There being no other business of the DDA, the meeting adjourned at 9:03 a.m.