

CITY OF FREMONT
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, February 24, 2009
Fremont City Hall

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the City of Fremont Planning Commission was held in the Council Chambers at the Fremont City Hall on Tuesday, February 24 2009. The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.

Present: Chair Don Henry and Commissioners Jack Butterick, Dennis Caplis, Jane Drake, Marcia Eib, Jim Krouse, Peg May, Jim Sloan and Lon Vredeveld

City Officials Present: James M. Rynberg, Fremont Mayor
Bryan Gruesbeck, Fremont City Manager
Michele Ribant, Fremont Zoning Administrator

Approval of the Fremont Planning Commission Minutes

A motion was made by Jack Butterick, seconded by Lon Vredeveld and carried to approve the minutes from the January 27, 2009 Regular Planning Commission meeting.

Amended Site Plan Review – Gerber Life Call Center (445 State Street)

Dean Dekryger of DK Design Group on behalf of Gerber Life presented the amended site plan for the Gerber Life Call Center for the Commission’s consideration. He explained that the amended site plan eliminates the landscape islands and new asphalt in the existing parking lot, and he went on to say that the new parking lots will satisfy all Code requirements. He said the number of parking spaces would remain the same as what was approved with the original site plan. He went on to say that new lighting will be provided as originally approved in the existing and new parking lots and that landscaping around the foundation of the building has been added.

The Commission reviewed the responses to the conditions that would allow the Commission to approve a site plan without a complete upgrade of all site elements. After some discussion, the Commission concluded that the petitioner’s responses to the standards/conditions were acceptable. The conditions and the responses to those conditions are outlined below:

- a. *The applicant is proposing reasonable site improvements on the overall site in relation to the scale and construction cost of the building improvements or expansion.***

The new parking lot, which is already under construction to the west, has landscaped islands as required by the Ordinance. Also, none of the existing trees around the perimeter of the existing north lot will be removed and the building will be landscaped around its perimeter.

b. *The applicant has addressed safety related site issues on the overall site.*

The traffic flow, both pedestrian and vehicular, has been laid out with the safety of each in mind.

c. *The improvements or minor expansion will not increase noncompliance with site requirements.*

The level of noncompliance with the new landscaping requirements will not be increased in this existing parking lot by the elimination of the proposed landscaping islands. In actuality, the building construction itself will break the existing large parking lot into smaller sections, decreasing the “openness” of the lot, which is in keeping with the intent of the Ordinance.

d. *The applicant has upgraded the overall site landscaping consistent with the Ordinance.*

With the addition of the landscaping islands in the new lot and the building footprint in the existing lot, the applicant has upgraded the site consistent with the intent of the Ordinance.

e. *Driveways that do not conform to the access management requirements of the Ordinance shall be eliminated, provided that the minimum reasonable access shall be maintained, as determined by the requirements of this Ordinance.*

This site has no driveways that do not conform to access management requirements of the Ordinance.

A motion was made by Jane Drake, seconded by Jack Butterick and carried to approve the amended site plan dated 1-5-09 based on the aforementioned conditions/standards regarding nonconforming site elements being satisfied.

Discussion on Uses in the Downtown Main District

Chair Henry explained that at the last meeting the Commission directed staff to look into ways to accommodate new offices downtown and yet still promote retail. Michele Ribant provided the Commission with an excerpt from the East Grand Rapids Zoning Ordinance that lists some offices as special uses in their C-1 District. Ms. Ribant indicated that Fremont could require that a new office be a special use and that conditions/standards could be developed. Some suggested standards were as follows:

- That the structure containing the office use shall maintain a retail character.
- That employees be required to park in the public parking lots – not in on-street parking spaces.
- That only a certain percentage of the downtown buildings be allowed to be used for offices.

Ms. Ribant was directed to come to the next meeting with proposed language to handle new offices as special uses in the Downtown Main District. Ms. Ribant would look into the long-term impact of allowing special uses for offices.

Unfinished Business - Update on the Fremont Metal and Paper Plan

Michele Ribant reported that an amended site plan for Fremont Metal and Paper has been submitted to the City. She said the owner decided to hold off in bringing the site plan to the Commission until the option of moving his company to the Fremont Industrial Park had been explored.

New Business

Staff was directed to develop a Code of Conduct for public participation at Planning Commission meetings.

Michele Ribant indicated she would look into bringing in a speaker to cover educational planning topics and that she would invite the Township officials.

Next Meeting

March 24, 2008
Fremont City Hall
Council Chambers
4:00 PM

Adjournment

There being no further business of the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.