

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

**Monday, March 10, 2008
Fremont City Hall
Training Room**

Meeting of the Marketing Subcommittee

Call to Order

The Marketing Subcommittee meeting was called to order at 4:07 p.m. by Lon Vredevel.

Marketing Subcommittee

Members Present: Lon Vredevel (Acting chair)
Shari Paulsen, Community Member
Jim Rynberg, Fremont Mayor
Ron Vliem, Executive Director, Fremont Area Chamber
of Commerce

Members Absent: Jeff Barnes, Community Member
Bonnie Erber, Marketing Subcommittee chair

Guests Present: Bill Ebert, Manager, Gerber Guest House
Lorna Kosztowny, DDA Member

Staff Present: Michele Ribant, Fremont Neighborhood & Economic
Development Director

Opening Remarks

Lon Vredevel welcomed the Subcommittee and asked everyone to introduce themselves since guests were present.

Discussion on Kiosks

The Subcommittee decided that we need kiosks in Downtown Fremont to direct community members and visitors to various business establishments. The Subcommittee agreed that it is very important to have a kiosk at the Market Place Pavilion. Other possible locations for kiosks included the following:

- In front of the Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce
- In Veterans Memorial Park

Ron Vliem said the Chamber would consider being responsible for keeping the information current on the kiosks, depending on the cost involved in maintaining them.

Discussion on Customer Service Seminar

Lon Vredevelde informed the Subcommittee that Bonnie Erber has arranged to have Rita Van Boven conduct a Customer Service Seminar for businesses within the Fremont Community. Everyone agreed that many businesses could benefit from some fresh customer service ideas. The Customer Service Seminar is scheduled as follows:

Customer Service Seminar
Thursday, April 24, 2008
6:00 p.m.
Fremont Area District Library
Community Room

Mr. Vredevelde indicated that not only employees from retail businesses should be invited but that employees from the City, Library, etc. should also be invited. Ron Vliem indicated that he would invite the Chamber members including those in downtown Fremont. Michele Ribant said she would have a flyer ready for distribution by the end of March. Mr. Vliem said the Chamber would distribute them. Lon Vredevelde asked that Mr. Vliem ask for the assistance of the block captains, so the captains can encourage people to attend the seminar. Ron Vliem suggested that we also invite others outside of Fremont – some of our regional neighbors. The Subcommittee was open to it, and it was specifically suggested that the Newwaygo Chamber members be invited. The Mayor suggested that the local Mayors be notified of the seminar, so they may promote it within their City.

Mr. Vredevelde indicated that the presenter, Rita Van Boven, is excellent at customer service; she has created programs for the Gerber Company as well as for Gerber Memorial Health Services. Michele Ribant said she would call Ms. Van Boven and develop an agenda. It was suggested that the seminar be promoted in the local newspaper and through the Chamber list serve.

Discussion on Business Booth at Farmers Market

Lon Vredevelde informed the Subcommittee that there will be a booth that is to be located in the center of the market pavilion during the Fremont Farmers Market and that it can be used to promote other businesses within the community. The Subcommittee will have to spend time at a future meeting deciding how the booth should be run.

Discussion on Downtown Marketing Plan

Lon Vredevelde indicated that there are many ideas outlined in the Downtown Marketing Plan on how to promote our City, and the ideas came from a variety of sources (e.g.,

Peppertree Consulting Firm). He asked the Subcommittee to expound on any of the ideas. He specifically asked Lorna Kosztowny to share her idea on branding.

Branding

Ms. Kosztowny said she thought the DDA should consider branding or at least sub-branding the City of Fremont as a “Healthy Place to Visit, Work and Play”. She indicated that there are many different entities in the City that already promote healthy lifestyles in a physical and spiritual way. She mentioned a myriad of health related entities and venues, including the Tamarac, the Town & Country Path, the Skate Board Park, the Farmers Market, etc. After a very impressive presentation by Ms. Kosztowny many members indicated that it was a great idea and that more thought should be given as to how we start to brand or sub-brand the City and how we incorporate retail businesses under this brand or sub-brand. Ron Vliem said the idea could be taken even further; we could promote the City as a “green” community; we could encourage recycling, etc.. He indicated that the since the Arts are becoming so important in our community that we could promote our City as one that supports the “Mind, Body and Soul”. Overall, the Subcommittee had a positive conversation about Ms. Kosztowny’s branding idea.

Involving Youth in DDA Decision Making

It was decided the DDA needs to involve more youth in the DDA decision-making process, so we obtain their most valuable input. Michele Ribant was directed to set up a plan to involve the youth by perhaps providing disposable cameras to select classes in the grade school, middle school and high school and to ask them to take pictures of things they value within our community. The DDA would then meet with them to find out why these places are important to them and ask them what types of venues are important to them, yet we may not have it in Fremont. It was suggested that the DDA go to their school rather than have them come to City Hall. It was also suggested that we ask for input from the senior population as well.

Lon Vredevelde indicated we will talk in more depth about the Marketing Plan at future meetings.

Adjournment

There being no more business, the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.