

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

**Tuesday, June 19, 2007
7:30 AM – 9:00 AM
Fremont City Hall
Council Chambers**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 a.m.

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| Members Present: | Lon Vredeveld | DDA Chair |
| | Marianne Boerigter | Executive Director, Newaygo County Council for the Arts |
| | Kim Deur | Downtown Property/Business Owner |
| | Rebecca Laing-Austin | Downtown Business Owner |
| | Lorna Kosztowny | Downtown Property Owner |
| | Gerry Rich | Downtown Business/Property Owner |
| | James M. Rynberg | Fremont Mayor |
| Members Absent: | Dusty Bitson | Downtown Business Owner |
| | Ron Vliem | Executive Director, Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce |
| | Rob Zeldenrust | Downtown Property/Business Owner |
| Staff Present: | Chris Yonker | Fremont City Manager |
| | Michele Ribant | Fremont Neighborhood & Economic Development Director |
| Guests Present: | Bonnie Erber | DDA Marketing Subcommittee Chair |

Welcoming Remarks

Chair Vredeveld welcomed the DDA and thanked Bonnie Erber for taking pictures of the members of the DDA. Chair Vredeveld acknowledged the addition of the Yahaba sculpture to our public art collection within the City.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Marianne Boerigter, seconded by Lorna Kosztowny and carried to approve the minutes from the May 23, 2007 DDA meeting, as submitted, and to accept the following sets of minutes for information:

- Public Art Subcommittee minutes (6-8-07)
- Streetscape/Signage Subcommittee minutes (5-23-07)
- Streetscape/Signage Subcommittee minutes (6-6-07)
- Façade/Historic Preservation Subcommittee (5-21-07)
- DDA Progress Report #8
- DDA Progress Report #9
- DDA Progress Report #10
- DDA Progress Report #11

Update on Downtown NE Public Parking Lot & Market Pavilion Construction

It was reported that the construction in the NE Downtown public parking lot was due to be completed by July 4, 2007. Chair Vredeveld announced that the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new market pavilion, the Fremont Market Place, will be on Thursday, July 26, 2007 at 4:30 p.m. at the Market Place and that all DDA members are invited.

Update on DDA Subcommittee Work

Marketing Subcommittee

Bonnie Erber, chair of the Marketing Subcommittee, outlined the following:

- Stephanie Zinn from Gerber Memorial Health Services will be at the next Marketing Subcommittee meeting (June 20, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. at the Chamber office) to give advice on the Subcommittee's ideas on how to market our City.
- Banners will be installed on the decorative lights in the NE Downtown Parking lot.
- Funding in the amount of \$10,000 was obtained via a grant to contract with a professional consultant who specializes in place branding. The consultant can help the City decide what we should promote about our City.
- Through a \$20,000 grant, a professional who specializes in retail will present ideas and evaluate downtown retailers' businesses and give them advice on how to promote, merchandise and improve their business.
- The Marketing Subcommittee is working on getting the word out about the happenings in Fremont. Ms. Erber stressed that we need to get press releases to the Muskegon Chronicle and the Grand Rapids Press in addition to the Times Indicator.
- Ms. Erber said she would like to get different organizations, etc. in the community to work together, especially on special events (Fall Harvest Festival, Holiday market etc.). Lon Vredeveld reminded the DDA that one of the events we need to promote is the agricultural fair.

Public Art Subcommittee

Marianne Boerigter, chair of the Public Art Subcommittee, reported that a Call for Artists was sent to artists within Newaygo County with a request for designs for a public art piece for the wall of the outside public restroom located next to the new Market Place pavilion. She said that the Fremont Rotary Club has been generous and is funding the art piece. She indicated that the Call for Artists is being promoted through the Artsplace Newsletter and the City Newsletter as well as on both websites.

Marianne Boerigter said that grant funding was obtained to allow a local artist, Renae Wallace, to paint murals on the front and rear facades of the AT&T building and that this art project should get into motion soon.

Façade/Historic Preservation Subcommittee

Marianne Boerigter, chair of the Façade/Historic Preservation Subcommittee, reported that two downtown property owners made application for funding for façade improvements through the Façade Improvement Program. Ms. Boerigter informed the DDA that the owners of 12 W. Main Street in Fremont want to make façade improvements to both their

front and rear facades with the work for the front façade estimated to be \$22,972.78, and the work for the rear façade estimated to be \$18,675.23.

A motion was made by Marianne Boerigter, seconded by Mayor Rynberg and carried to approve funding to the owners of the building located at 12 W. Main Street in Fremont, MI through the Downtown Fremont Façade Improvement Grant Program for the renovation of the front façade in the amount of \$8,500.00 and the renovation of the rear façade in the amount of \$8,500.00 for a total cost of \$17,000.00, subject to fund availability approved by the City Council.

Since Gerry Rich is the contractor for the owners of 12 W. Main Street, he recused himself from the vote.

Marianne Boerigter also informed the Subcommittee that an application from owners of 11 E. Main Street was submitted with a request for \$8,500.00 for renovations to the front façade. Ms. Boerigter reported that according to the estimate, the work on the front façade as detailed in their written proposal was estimated to be \$24,850.00.

A motion was made by Marianne Boerigter, seconded by Mayor Rynberg and carried to approve funding to the owners of the building located at 11 E. Main Street in Fremont, MI through the Downtown Fremont Façade Improvement Grant Program for the renovation of the front façade in the amount of \$8,500.00, subject to fund availability approved by the Fremont City Council.

It was expressed that both property owners will have to come before the DDA Façade/Historic Preservation Subcommittee and the DDA to explain their design before a contract will be entered into.

Signage/Streetscape Subcommittee – Michele Ribant

Michele Ribant reported that at the last Signage/Streetscape Subcommittee meeting representatives from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) informed the Subcommittee that no awnings, signage or lighting can project into the MDOT right-of-way. All the sidewalks downtown Fremont are in the MDOT right-of-way. Ms. Ribant reported that since that time, the City worked it out with MDOT so that awnings, signage or lighting can project in the MDOT right-of-way downtown Fremont as long as the City will be responsible to make sure that each of these elements are maintained properly and are not a safety hazard. Chris Yonker confirmed that at its June 18, 2007 meeting, the Fremont City Council approved resolution No R-07-15 “A resolution Relative to Installing Awnings, Signage and Lighting in a State Trunkline”.

Explanation of the 2007/2008 DDA Budget

Chris Yonker reviewed the 2007/2008 DDA Budget with the DDA. He indicated that the Building Authority Bonds issued in 1992 are paid off. He went on to say that in 2006, the City sold \$1.7 million of Capital Improvement Bonds to finance the first phase of construction of the downtown parking lots and alleys, the erection of new wayfinding and City entryway signage, and signage and environmental and recreational opportunities in the Fremont Industrial Park. He went on to say that debt service on the new bonds will be financed through TIF captures through the DDA and the Local Development Finance Authority (LDFA).

Mr. Yonker then went on to inform the DDA that a special assessment will be levied within a re-established Downtown Parking Maintenance District and that the downtown parking special assessment program will be based on the previous program where 2/3's of the cost will be

assessable annually to private property owners within the defined special assessment district and 1/3 of the cost will be covered by the public.

The DDA budget also included a DDA property tax millage of 0.15 mills. Mr. Yonker indicated that the DDA tax millage was to be levied in 2006/2007 but that it did not happen because of the timing of the notice requirements; therefore, the City is taking the appropriate action to levy the tax for the coming fiscal year. It was reported that the DDA millage was being levied to cover \$31,000 of the \$62,000 needed for DDA District Maintenance. He said that non-school TIF captures and the Fremont Beautification Fund were being used to cover the other half of the DDA maintenance costs.

Chair Vredevelde expressed a concern that the Fremont Beautification Fund has been used to cover such items as banners and the Yahaba art sculpture, yet the intent of the Fund was that it be used for DDA maintenance. Bonnie Erber indicated that it was her recollection that the fund was to be used for maintenance of the Veterans Memorial Park. Chris Yonker said the fund had not been tapped into for a number of years, and the principal had grown to approximately \$400,000 and that the City may use approximately 5% a year without depleting principal and that the City plans to maintain the principal. Mr. Yonker concurred that it was his understanding too that the Fund be used for DDA maintenance.

Mr. Yonker said that in accordance with state statute the City Council approved the 2007/2008 City budget including the DDA budget and that the DDA is to vote on the DDA budget after City Council approval.

Chair Vredevelde then opened the discussion on the budget by indicating that he was strongly opposed to the DDA millage and that this has not been part of the discussion in relation to the upcoming fiscal year. He indicated that many of the downtown business owners have experienced some financial hardship the past six months due to the affect of the downtown construction project on their business, so he felt the timing of the millage as well as the implementation of the parking assessment was not good.

Ms. Boerigter indicated that she took time to read the budget to prepare for the meeting only to find out that the vote on it is a rubber stamp. Many other committee members expressed their displeasure in the fact that they did not get an opportunity to review the budget and provide input before the City Council approved it. It was made clear that next year a draft budget should be prepared based on the DDA's input and given to them for input before it is voted on by the Fremont City Council.

After much discussion, a motion was made by Gerry Rich, seconded by Marianne Boerigter and carried to adopt the 2007/2008 DDA budget as approved by the Fremont City Council.

Lon Vredevelde abstained from voting based on his disappointment that the DDA Budget was not communicated in an appropriate way.

Rebecca Laing-Austin left the meeting after this vote.

Michele Ribant indicated that the DDA also would need to vote on the DDA Millage Resolution. Again, Lon Vredevelde expressed his disappointment in that the DDA millage was passed by the Council, and yet he had concerns about whether it should be levied at all. Some of the DDA members indicated that they needed to have a better explanation as to what the millage was for and what the financial impact would be on the DDA District property owners. Chris Yonker indicated that in order for the millage to pass it would require both the vote of the Council and the DDA. Since the meeting was running long, it was decided that a special meeting be called to discuss the DDA millage and that a vote can be taken on the DDA millage resolution at the

special meeting. It was also decided that all DDA subcommittee members and all City Council members would be invited to the special meeting. The special meeting was set for Monday, June 25, 2007 at 7:30 a.m. in the Council Chambers at the Fremont City Hall.

Adjournment

There being no further business of the DDA, the meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.