

CITY OF FREMONT
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR FREMONT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, September 22, 2009
Fremont City Hall

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the Fremont Planning Commission was held in the Council Chambers at the Fremont City Hall on Tuesday, September 22, 2009. The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Planning Commission Chair Don Henry.

Fremont Planning Commission Members Present: Chair Don Henry and Commissioners Jack Butterick, Jane Drake, Marcia Eib, Jim Krouse, Jim Sloan and Lon Vredevelde

Fremont Planning Commission Members Absent: Dennis Caplis and Peg May

City Officials Present: Michele Ribant, Fremont Zoning Administrator

Review and Approval of the Meeting Agenda

A motion was made by Marcia Eib, seconded by Jim Krouse and carried to approve the agenda as presented for the September 22, 2009 meeting.

Approval of the Fremont Planning Commission Minutes

A motion was made by Jane Drake, seconded by Lon Vredevelde and carried to approve the minutes from the August 25, 2009 joint meeting of the Fremont Planning Commission and the Fremont City Council.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Discussion on Regulations in the Current Fremont Zoning Ordinance

The Commission considered language to allow sidewalk signs downtown Fremont for special events. After some discussion, the following motion was made:

A motion was made by Jane Drake, seconded by Marcia Eib and carried to recommend to the Fremont City Council that the first paragraph, in part, in Section 4.05 "Downtown Main Development Requirements" under the "Sidewalk Sign" section be amended to read as follows:

Sidewalk signs shall be limited to locations within ten (10) feet of the primary entrance to the use with which they are associated unless the sidewalk sign is for a special event that is taking place downtown. If the sidewalk sign is to advertise a special event taking place downtown, the sidewalk sign may be permitted if it satisfies all the other pertinent regulations and if the sign is placed in a location downtown that is approved by the Fremont Zoning Administrator via a special event permit.

Michele Ribant indicated she will publish for a public hearing on the matter.

Note: Changes to the Fremont Zoning Ordinance must be approved by the Fremont City Council.

Jim Sloan expressed a concern about regulations in the City's Zoning Code with respect to placement of garages in residential districts. It was expressed that the Code may be too restrictive in terms of where garages can be placed on a site. The Commission discussed whether Fremont's Zoning Code does and should allow garages to extend beyond the required building line (RBL) into the front yard. After much discussion, staff was asked to provide the Commission with language from the Code that outlines the existing regulations with regard to placement of garages, and the Commission will then decide at the next meeting if they want to propose changes to the Code on the matter.

Chair Henry asked if the Commission could be provided with data on the impact of some of the changes (garages, signage, neighborhood design etc.) proposed. Michele Ribant indicated that the American Planning Association has a research department which has information that may be disseminated upon request and that she will ask for the aforementioned data.

Discussion on Subdivision of Land Ordinance

Don Henry explained that a copy of the Subdivision of Land Ordinance was provided to each Commissioner so that everyone could start to read it before the October meeting. It was explained that the Subdivision Ordinance may need to be revised so that it is consistent with the new Fremont Zoning Ordinance. Don Henry said that at the next meeting the Commission will be provided with the proposed changes to the Subdivision of Land Ordinance for their consideration.

Jane Drake asked if the Joint Planning Commission has discussed the Subdivision of Land Ordinance, and Michele Ribant replied that they have not and that she would discuss the matter with Peter Lance, the Townships' zoning administrator."

Unfinished Business

Michele Ribant showed the Commission a picture of a sign with removable letters that looks very much like one of the portable signs that are not permitted in the City, but it was not on wheels and was a different size. She said she just wants the Commission to understand that such a sign could appear in the City if it were made to be permanent in terms of its structure and that it was acceptable from a Code perspective.

New Business

Michele Ribant outlined two scenarios where Fremont property owners were having issues with the selling of their homes based on a regulation in the current zoning ordinance relating to nonconforming structures and buildings. This regulation states that should a nonconforming building or structure be destroyed to an extent of more than 75% of its replacement value, exclusive of the foundation, it shall be reconstructed only in conformance with the provisions of the Ordinance. It was expressed that banks have not wanted to sign off on mortgages for structures that are nonconforming due to this regulation.

A motion was made by Jane Drake, seconded by Jack Butterick and carried to recommend to the Fremont City Council a change to the Fremont Zoning Ordinance concerning "Nonconforming Buildings and Structures" to allow non-conforming buildings or structures to be reconstructed in its previously nonconforming location if the restoration is started within 12 months from the time of destruction.

Michele Ribant indicated she will publish for a public hearing on the matter and have specific language that will accomplish the recommendation.

Note: Changes to the Fremont Zoning Ordinance must be approved by the Fremont City Council.

Commissioners' Discussion

Jane Drake informed the Commission about the Newaygo County Government Summit that will be held on Saturday, October 17, 2009. Michele Ribant said she would send out the agenda for the Summit and that Commissioners could receive education credits for attendance at the Summit.

Staff Update

The Commission was invited to attend the next Fremont Community Joint Planning Commission meeting. At that meeting Ryan Coffey from the MSU Extension Office will speak on Farmland Preservation. It was announced that 3 education credits will be given if a planning commissioner attends this meeting. The meeting information is as follows:

Fremont Community Joint Planning Meeting

Monday, September 28, 2009
5:00 p.m.
Sheridan Township Hall

Next Meeting

Fremont Planning Commission

October 27, 2009
Fremont City Hall
Council Chambers
4:00 PM

Adjournment

There being no further business of the Fremont Planning Commission, a motion was made by Jane Drake, seconded by Jack Butterick and carried to adjourn the meeting at 5:22 p.m.