

# FREMONT AREA JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 13, 2006  
5:00 – 6:30 PM  
Fremont City Hall

**Members Present:** Dayton Township: Chuck Witteveen, Planning Commissioner  
Dayton Township: Shirley Hooker, Supervisor  
Dayton Township: Barbara Popp, Board Member  
Dayton Township: Vern Staley, Planning Commissioner  
Dayton/Sheridan Townships: Peter Lance, Zoning Administrator  
Sheridan Charter Township: Dave Lue, Supervisor  
Sheridan Charter Township: Don Potter, Board Member  
Sheridan Charter Township: Jeff Wharton, Planning Commissioner  
Sheridan Charter Township: Jack Taylor, Planning Commissioner  
Sherman Township: Fran Derks, Board Member  
Sherman Township: Roman Miller, Zoning Administrator  
City of Fremont: Peg May, Planning Commissioner  
City of Fremont: Jim Breinling, Councilmember  
City of Fremont: Chuck Whitman, Planning Commissioner  
City of Fremont: Richard Rought, Zoning Administrator

**Members Absent:** Sherman Township: Joan Obits, Supervisor  
Sherman Township: Dean Van Ostenberg, Planning Commissioner  
Sherman Township: Randy Paulson, Planning Commissioner  
City of Fremont: Jim Rynberg, Mayor

**Alternates Present:** Sheridan Township: Jennifer Christenson, Board Member  
Sheridan Township: Sandy Vandenberg, Planning Commissioner

**Others Present:** Dayton Township: Vicki Kunnen, Treasurer  
Dayton Township: Bill Kunnen, Township Clerk  
City of Fremont: Chris Yonker, Fremont City Manager  
City of Fremont: Michele Ribant, Director of Neighborhood & Economic Development

**Consultant Present:** Land Information Access Association: Joe VanderMeulen, Executive Director

## Call to Order

Chair Chuck Witteveen called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM.

## Greetings

Mr. Witteveen welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## Review & Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Dave Lue, seconded by Shirley Hooker and carried to approve the minutes from the February 13, 2006 meeting.

## **Review Revised Draft Joint Planning Agreement**

### Discuss the Basis for the Agreement

Joe VanderMeulen reviewed the basis for which the Joint Planning Committee thought that creating a Joint Planning Agreement was a good idea. The following reasons were expressed:

- Planning service extensions
- Manage population density
- Townships agree that commerce belongs “near” City of Fremont
- Manage growth more efficiently
- Manage “Big Box” proposals (encourage better locations)
- Protect farmland and open spaces
- Common zoning
- Shared costs/reduced costs
- Recognize larger shared community
- Protection of natural resources

The Committee also expressed their thoughts on what would happen if we gave up on the idea of joint planning and continued doing planning in the same manner. The following ideas were expressed:

- Continue to make same mistakes
- Could lose income
- No way to stop inappropriate change
- In-fighting

It was expressed that what we do not want to have happen in the Fremont community is just about as important as what we do want in terms of joint planning.

### Review of the Language in the Agreement

Joe VanderMeulen reviewed the language in the Agreement by highlighting the key points in each section of the Agreement. The only change that was proposed was that in the chart under Section 6 “Operating Budget” reference to “Sheridan Township” should be changed to “Sheridan Charter Township”.

### Consideration of the Budgeting for Proposed Planning Commission

Chairman Witteveen explained that a Budget Subcommittee, consisting of the Township Supervisors and Todd Blake and Michele Ribant from the City, met on March 3, 2006 to fine-tune the proposed budget for the Fremont Community Joint Planning Commission. The Subcommittee deleted reference to zoning in the budget, and the Subcommittee reduced the budget from \$78,110.00 to \$31,671.99. The Committee expressed no opposition to the budget nor did they propose any changes.

It was noted that the salary of a zoning administrator was not included in the budget. Further, it was expressed that as the newly formed Commission evolves, the salary of the zoning administrator will most likely be added. Mr. VanderMeulen stated that the cost of planning in the Fremont community should be less if all four (4) governmental units work together. He reviewed with the Committee a handout that he provided which illustrated that a substantial savings could be realized over a five year period if one joint planning commission existed rather than four (4) separate planning commissions.

## **Discussion on Transition Process**

### Describe Current Processes for Planning & Zoning Administration

It was suggested that a subcommittee be convened before the April 10, 2006 Joint Planning Committee meeting; the subcommittee would be charged with outlining the current processes for planning and zoning within each governmental unit. The members of the subcommittee are to consist of the zoning administrators and Township Supervisors/Mayor of each governmental unit and Chuck Witteveen and Michele Ribant. It was felt that we could create a more effective transition plan if we understood exactly how each governmental unit currently handles its planning and zoning functions.

### Discuss the Transition Steps to Shared Planning & Zoning

There was much discussion on the various views of how the Joint Planning Agreement should be implemented and how the Fremont Community would transition from four (4) separate planning commissions to one joint planning commission. Joe VanderMeulen provided a handout on one transitional approach, which outlined that the transition could take four (4) years. The Committee discussed the following transitional approaches:

1. The Fremont Community Joint Planning Commission could expand to include all members of all four (4) governmental units' Planning Commissions until such a time as a joint zoning ordinance is adopted, and then the Joint Planning Commission could transition to a thirteen (13) member Joint Planning Commission.
2. The Committee could wait to create the Joint Planning Commission until the legislature makes amendments to the Joint Municipal Planning Act that would provide more direction and authority to local units of government regarding the transition process.
3. The Fremont Community Joint Planning Commission's composition could consist of thirteen (13) members as proposed in the Joint Planning Agreement, and subcommittees from each governmental unit could be formed to address issues that directly impact the respective governmental unit, and the subcommittees would remain in place until such a time as a joint comprehensive plan and a joint zoning ordinance are adopted. It is thought that the subcommittees would make recommendations to the full Joint Planning Commission.

The Committee voted unanimously to adopt transitional approach # three (3) as outlined above. It was suggested that an inter-local governmental agreement that outlines the transition plan be created in addition to the Joint Planning Agreement. The inter-local governmental agreement would outline how the transfer of functions would be handled.

## **Planning for Public Information & Education Efforts**

It was decided that the Committee is not ready to plan our public information and education efforts just yet. However, it was suggested that when the education materials are created, they should illustrate in the form of a flow chart the transition from four (4) planning commissions to one joint planning commission.

The Committee was encouraged to invite their respective planning commissions to the next Joint Planning meeting in April.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business of the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 6:48 PM.