

**FREMONT AREA JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, January 20, 2005 – 5:45 PM
Fremont Area District Library

Chairman Chuck Witteveen called the meeting to order at 5:52 PM.

Members Present: City of Fremont: Chuck Whitman, Planning Commissioner
 Dayton Township: Chuck Witteveen, Planning Commissioner
 Sheridan Township: Jack Taylor, Planning Commissioner

Members Absent: City of Fremont: Robert Goscicki, Planning Commissioner
 Dayton Township: Harold Johnson, Planning Commissioner
 Sheridan Township: Bernard Church, Planning Commissioner

Other Officials Present: Rob Kinniburgh, Garfield Township Trustee
 George Suchy, Jr., Garfield Township Supervisor
 Joan Obits, Sherman Township Supervisor
 Roman Miller, Sherman Township Zoning Administrator
 Shirley Hooker, Dayton Township Trustee
 Larry Hasselman, Dayton Township Planning Commissioner
 Vicki Kunnen, Dayton Township Trustee
 Dave Lue, Sheridan Township Supervisor
 Peter Lance, Sheridan/Dayton Township Zoning Administrator
 James Rynberg, Fremont Mayor
 Jane Drake, Fremont City Councilmember
 James Breinling, Fremont Mayor Pro Tem
 Dave Byrne, Fremont City Planning Commissioner
 Chris Yonker, Fremont City Manager
 Richard Rought, Fremont City Zoning Administrator
 Michele Ribant, Fremont City Director of Neighborhood & Economic
 Development, City of Fremont

Guests: Kay Cummings, County Extension Director, Newaygo County MSU-
 Extension Office

Speaker: Kurt H. Schindler, Wexford County Extension Director, MSU-Ext.

Chairman Witteveen welcomed the officials from Sherman, Garfield, Dayton and Sheridan Townships and the City of Fremont. He thanked them for attending and indicated how pleased he was that representatives from all five municipalities were present.

Chairman Witteveen gave a brief introduction of the evening's topic, which was the Joint Municipal Planning Act, Michigan P.A. 226 of 2003. He then introduced the evening's speaker, Mr. Kurt Schindler, Wexford County Extension Director, Land Use Expert with the Michigan State University Extension Office.

Mr. Schindler began by commending the municipalities in the Fremont Area because they are ahead of the curve in the State with respect to joint planning efforts. The community has taken the initiative to prepare a *Joint Comprehensive Development and Growth Management Plan*, even before the Joint Planning Act was enacted.

He informed the Fremont Area officials that if they want to continue to work together on joint projects to accomplish area goals, there is a new multi-jurisdictional planning assistance program, the *Partnerships for Change* program, which would be a valuable resource. He indicated that the Program was developed by the Land Information Access Association (LIAA), the Michigan Municipal League (MML), the Michigan Townships Association (MTA), and the Michigan Society of Planning Officials (MSPO). The Program's mission is to foster new and expanded cooperation amongst cities, townships and villages in developing and carrying out local land use policies that contribute to the preservation of cultural and natural resources. He encouraged the group to look into grants and opportunities provided through the *Partnerships for Change* program. He also indicated that Joe VanderMeulen, LIAA's Executive Director, is heading up the Program and that he should be contacted if a decision is made to pursue such an opportunity.

Mr. Schindler explained that the Joint Municipal Planning Act applied to cities, villages and townships but not counties. The new legislation permits two or more units of local government (excluding counties) to create a single joint planning commission to address planning issues in all or part of the territory of the participating local units. The Act also allows the units to jointly exercise any of the powers they currently exercise separately. However, he indicated they must choose one of the planning and/or zoning enabling acts to guide their actions.

A legal agreement must be adopted that would include specific components (composition, sharing of operating budget, etc.) He stressed that municipalities have a lot of latitude in terms of the way these agreements are structured. For example, a Joint Planning Commission could handle the zoning function for the area but not the planning function, or they could handle the planning function and not the zoning function. He concluded by encouraging the group to consider establishing such an agreement in order to work together to solve many planning and zoning issues in the area.

Chairman Witteveen thanked Mr. Schindler for his very valuable presentation. The Chairman asked each member of the Fremont Area Joint Planning Commission to come prepared to the next meeting to discuss the information that was presented that evening and the information outlined in the handouts. The handouts included the following:

- "All Communities to Benefit from New Land Use Legislation", *Planning & Zoning News*; Planning & Zoning Center, Inc.; December 2003, pp 5-8
- P.A. 226 of 2003, *being the Joint Municipal Planning Act, M.C.L. 125.131 et seq.* (HB4284, effective December 18, 2003).
- *Joint Municipal Planning Act*; House Legislative Analysis Section; HB 4284 (7-16-03)

Chairman Witteveen also suggested that each member of the Joint Planning Commission review the *Partnerships for Change* website at www.partnershipsforchange.cc/ before the next meeting to familiarize themselves with the types of grants and opportunities available through this

program. The website contains ideas on joint projects that could be created in the Fremont Area. Mr. Witteveen specifically asked each member to go back to their municipality and have a conversation with their officials and come prepared to the next meeting to discuss what type of joint committee, if any, each municipality would like to form.

Chairman Witteveen indicated that the Fremont Area Joint Planning Commission, the body that worked together to develop the *Joint Comprehensive Development and Growth Management Plan* for the Fremont Area, was formed before the Joint Planning Act became law. The group serves more as an advisory body than an official body that would be held to the regulations outlined in the Joint Municipal Planning Act. Therefore, he indicated that the group, which has been referred to as the “Fremont Area Joint Planning **Commission**” should now be called the “Fremont Area Joint Planning **Committee**”, which would more accurately reflect its role. The Chairman asked if there were any objections, and there were none.

The next meeting of the Joint Area Planning Committee was set as follows:

Monday, February 14, 2005
4:30 PM – 6:00 PM
Fremont City Hall
City Council Chambers

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Rought
Acting Secretary