

FREMONT AREA JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 14, 2005
4:45 PM – 6:30 PM
Fremont City Hall
Council Chambers

Members Present: Dayton Township: Chuck Witteveen, Planning Commissioner
Dayton Township: Shirley Hooker, Dayton Township Trustee
Sheridan Township: Jack Taylor, Planning Commissioner

Members Absent: City of Fremont: Chuck Whitman, Planning Commissioner
City of Fremont: Robert Goscicki, Planning Commissioner
Sheridan Township: Bernard Church, Planning Commissioner

Other Officials Present: Joan Obits, Sherman Township Supervisor
Robert Sullivan, Sherman Township Planning Commission Chair
Dave Lue, Sheridan Township Supervisor
Peter Lance, Sheridan/Dayton Township Zoning Administrator
James Rynberg, Fremont Mayor
James Breinling, Fremont Mayor Pro Tem
Chris A. Yonker, Fremont City Manager
Todd Blake, Fremont City Clerk
Richard Rought, Fremont Zoning Administrator
Michele Ribant, Fremont City Director of Neighborhood & Economic Development

Guest Speaker: Joe VanderMeulen, Executive Director, Land Information Access Association

I. Call to Order.

Chairman Witteveen called the meeting to order at 4:47 PM; a quorum was not present.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the Monday, February 14, 2005 Fremont Area Joint Planning Committee (FAJPC) were not approved because there was no quorum. The minutes from the November 29, 2004, the January 20, 2005 and the February 14, 2005 FAJPC meetings must be voted on for approval at the next meeting.

III. Presentation by Joe VanderMeulen, Executive Director, Land Information Access Association

Chairman Witteveen introduced the speaker, Joe VanderMeulen, Executive Director of the Land Information Access Association (LIAA) who came to speak to the Committee about grant opportunities available through the *Partnerships for Change* program. Mr. VanderMeulen presented a power-point presentation in which he indicated that the *Partnerships for Change* program is a new multi-jurisdictional planning assistance program developed by LIAA, the Michigan Municipal League, the Michigan Townships Association, the Michigan State University Extension Office and the Michigan Society of Planning. He explained that the mission of the program is to foster new and expanded cooperation between cities, townships and villages in developing local land use policies that contribute to the preservation of cultural and natural resources. He explained that these policies should encourage urban redevelopment and discourage urban sprawl. Mr. VanderMeulen explained that any grant proposal submitted

through the *Partnerships for Change* program should be one that would promote the mission of the Program.

Mr. VanderMeulen indicated that the next deadline for submission of grant proposals would be May 23, 2005. He indicated that there will most likely be another round of grant proposals accepted in November or December, 2005. He explained that a 20% cash match from the municipalities involved is required as part of the program requirements. He provided the Committee and all others in attendance with the following three handouts:

1. “*Partnerships for Change: Request for Proposals – Second Round*”
2. “*Partnerships for Change: Developing an Agreement/Ordinance for Joint Planning – Key Questions to Answer*”
3. “*An Example of Discussion – Joint Municipal Planning Commission, Anywhere, Michigan.*”

Mr. VanderMeulen explained that there are three levels of assistance available and that LIAA wants communities to outline to them what type of project and the level of assistance they desire from LIAA. He indicated that they would work with us to fine-tune any request. For example, if the Committee proposes a project at level three, but LIAA thinks that we only need the resources at level two, they would communicate that to us. He stressed that LIAA wants the *communities* to outline their desire for assistance.

IV. Discussion on Creating a Joint Planning Arrangement in the Fremont Area

Chairman Witteveen explained that the FAJPC is currently an advisory committee and does not have binding authority. He pointed out that if this group decides to create a joint agreement for planning purposes, the group would most likely be reconstituted and become a Commission. Mr. Witteveen indicated that three government units (City of Fremont, Sheridan Charter and Dayton Townships) are represented on the current Committee but that if a new group is formed, it could have up to five governmental units represented, which would also include Garfield and Sherman Townships.

Many of the officials present expressed that they were interested in pursuing a joint planning arrangement in the Fremont area but that in order for their respective government units to relinquish planning control, more information needed to be provided. It was suggested that the Committee develop a list of benefits of creating a joint planning arrangement, so the list can be shared with the City Council and the Township Boards. Mr. VanderMeulen indicated that this group may have to work through some issues by addressing them one at a time. Some of the issues may include the following:

- What do you want the Commission’s jurisdictional area to be?
- Which state planning act should be followed in terms of procedures?
- Which state zoning enabling act should the Commission follow in exercising such duties?
- What should be the composition of the Commission membership?
- What should be the terms of office for each commission member?
- How should the participating governments share the Commission’s operating costs?

Chairman Witteveen indicated that he would like to take some time at the meeting to come up with a model for the joint agreement. After much discussion, the committee came up with the following ideas for a model:

1. What will be the jurisdiction? The Committee agreed that it should be the Urban Growth Boundaries as established in the 2001 Fremont Area Joint Comprehensive Development & Growth Management Plan, with some modifications.

2. What Municipal Planning Act will be followed? The Committee agreed that the Township Planning Act should be used rather than the Municipal Planning Act because it is more recent and more flexible.
3. How should the City and Townships be represented on the Commission? There was much discussion on this. It was suggested that some commission members could be appointed and some elected. There was some talk about each government unit having a proportional vote. It was also expressed that each governmental unit would most likely want equal representation. The Committee did not come to a consensus on this topic.

It became obvious to the Committee as they tried to come up with the model that there were varying opinions on each issue. Mr. VanderMeulen indicated that the Committee could work in stages. He explained that the first stage may be just trying to explore exactly what we want to do together in terms of planning in the Fremont community. He commended the community on the success we have already had working together to create the 2001 Joint Plan. He indicated that the second stage could be an actual project and that the project could merely be updating the Joint Plan to include all five government units in the Fremont area. He also indicated that such a project might lead to establishing a Joint Planning Commission, which could have binding authority over the planning projects within a specific jurisdiction.

Chris Yonker indicated that all five government units really have the same goals, such as preserving agricultural land in the Fremont area and pursuing infill development before greenfield development. Therefore, he indicated that we should be able to work together to do planning. Peter Lance indicated that we need to educate all the officials involved in terms of the benefits of establishing a joint planning commission. It was suggested that any model that is developed provide choices. Mr. VanderMeulen indicated that we could apply for a grant to do education, which would be to “sell” the officials in the government units on the idea of joint planning. He indicated that perhaps the Committee could apply for a grant by May 23 for the educational component, and then later on, we could apply for another grant to actually help us create a joint agreement.

It was decided that a working subgroup of the FAJPC should meet to: 1) decide what project the FAJPC should pursue (an amended Joint Plan that would include all 5 governmental units or a Joint Cooperative Agreement that would establish a Commission with binding authority on planning matters within a certain area); 2) develop a model agreement that could be presented to each governmental unit’s Council/Boards; and 3) decide whether to pursue grant opportunities, and at which level, with LIAA through the *Partnerships for Change* program. The working subgroup will consist of Chuck Witteveen, Jack Taylor, Shirley Hooker, Joan Obits, Jim Breinling and Michele Ribant. The first meeting of the working subgroup will be on Monday, March 21 at 5:00 PM in the Court Room at City Hall.

V. Other Business

Chairman Witteveen indicated that in order for the FAJPC to be able to conduct business, it is essential that members of the Committee attend meetings. After some discussion, it was determined by consensus of the members present that the composition of the FAJPC be revised to include a Council/Board member from the City/Townships and one Planning Commission member from each governmental unit. Chairman Witteveen made it clear that Sherman and Garfield Townships were welcome to join the FAJPC. Representatives from Sherman were at the meeting and expressed an interest in joining the Committee, but they were going to take up the matter with their Board and report back. A Garfield representative was not present at the meeting.

VI. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Fremont Area Joint Planning Committee will be on Monday, April 25, 2005 from 4:45 PM – 6:00 PM in the City Council Chambers at City Hall.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:44 PM.