

Approved Minutes
Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board
July 2, 2014
Location: Kent/MSU Extension

Members Present: Candace Chivis (County Commissioner), Carl Blough (Ag Interest), Dennis Heffron (Ag Interest), Russ Slater (Ag Interest) and Michele Van Houten (Conservation Interest)

Members Absent: Suzie Reinbold (Real Estate Interest), Ed Robinette (Township Interest)

Staff Present: Stacy Byers (Board Coordinator via phone), Debbie Green (Kent/MSU Extension Staff) and Kevin Travis (Administrator's Office)

Public Present: Lillia Pimpleton (GVSU Student), Connie Redding (Kent Conservation District)

Meeting began at 11:35 a.m.

- I. **Welcome and Call to Order** - Chair, Dennis Heffron
- II. **Public Comment** – Everyone around the table introduced themselves and their purpose for being at the meeting.
- III. **Review Agenda and Declaration of Any Possible Conflict of Interest** – None
- IV. **Review and Adoption of April 2, 2014 Minutes** – Meeting minutes were reviewed by members present. **Motion by Van Houten and seconded by Slater to adopt June 4, 2014 minutes. Motion passed.**
- V. **Old Business**
 - a) 2014 FRPP applications – update
Stacy informed members present that Brian Thomas, FRPP Coordinator is close to determining the standards for receiving funds for the Hall and Poulias farms. This should happen by the end of summer. There is more money available for funding, but now conservancies and land trusts are in the same group as farmland preservation trying to get matching dollars.
 - b) 2013 FRPP Status – Frost and Van Oeffelen
The Frost property is finally closing and Van Oeffelen paperwork is sitting on Brian's desk waiting for the appraisal and easement approvals.

Van Houten asked about any publicity in a news release or a celebration at the Frost farm to let people know that another farm has been preserved. It was decided that there should be a celebration/ceremony in August (first week or two) possibly when the family flies home for a family reunion in Michigan to announce the closing on the property. People who should be invited include: WEGE Foundation, Grand Rapids Foundation, Freye Foundation, Kent County Commissioners, Township officials and Congress representatives.

c) 2014 Application Cycle - update

There are two new applications in Sparta Township that have been received and Dan Momber (70-80 acres) in one of them. Heffron discussed other possible farms eligible for preservation. Heffron has already been in contact with the Osbourne farm and Ray Wittenbach. The Osbourne property is 1,000 acres and is next to the Poulias farm in Grattan Township. Ray Wittenbach property is 120 acres in Grattan Township. Tom Burns property is approximately 200 acres in Grattan Township. The Wilcox property is about 500-600 acres in Vergennes Township. Ken Roth property is about 600-700 acres in Vergennes Township.

d) LCVEF Update

The League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (LCVEF) has a bus tour scheduled for July 23 and the Land Use Conference is planned for the second week in December.

VI. **New Business**

Connie Redding from the Kent Conservation District and United Growth Board Member was in attendance to discuss the RCPP Program (Regional Conservation Protection Program) as a possible source of funds for the FRPP (Farm and Ranch Property Protection) Program. There is about \$200,000 divided into three pots of money: Federal, State and CCA (Critical Conservation Area). Deadline for pre-proposals are due Monday, July 14. Stacy will meet with Connie to discuss the possibilities of applying for funds.

VII. **Other - None**

VIII. **Public Comment**

Blough mentioned that the Kent County Fair is trying to raise money so they can move the fairgrounds.

Van Houten asked about what is happening with the Consumers Energy Event "101 Days of Summer". It was decided that the board would not be staffing a booth at this event.

Chivis mentioned an event, Strawberry Jamboree at the Baxter Community Center as being a place to promote Farmland Preservation to the general public.

IX. **Adjournment** - Meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

Next Meeting August 6, 2014 at 11:30 a.m. at the Kent/MSU Extension Office