

Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board Meeting Minutes

August 6, 2014

Kent/MSU Extension

11:30 A.M.

Members Present: Candace Chivis (County Commissioner), 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) Carl Blough (Ag Interest)

Staff Present: Stacy Byers (Board Coordinator), Christian Smith (Assistant Program Coordinator) Kevin Travis (Administrator's Office)

Public Present: Christian Smith (Ag Preservation Assistant)

Meeting began at 11:37

1. **Welcome and Call to Order- Chair**
2. **Public Comment**
3. **Review Agenda and Declaration of Any Possible Conflict**
4. **Review and Adoption of July 2, 2014 Minutes**

Meeting minutes were reviewed by members present. **Motion by Slater and seconded by Vanhouten to adopt July 2, 2014 minutes. Motion passed.**

Old Business

- a. 2014 FRPP applications- update
Hall and Poulias were submitted, and while we have not heard back we are moving forward on closing so as to get done in a timely manner.
- b. 2013 FRPP Status- Frost and Vanoeffelen
Frost has closed but there is no update on Vanoeffelen.
 - i. Event update- press release
The event for the Frost and Vanoeffelen closings were postponed until this fall. The Frosts were at the Family Farm the first week of August and there was not sufficient time to coordinate and invite attendees. The current plan is to share the event in the fall. The press release will be drafted soon by a freelance writer and then sent through the AP wire. This should be done within the next week or two. The intent of the article is to show the success of the preservation program and to get information on the family to the public.
- c. 2014 Application Cycle- update
 - i. Score and Rank of properties
Have not received the GIS information, but will soon. Old rankings were passed out including new applications from Whittenbach and Momber. Scores were reviewed for Roth and Whittenbach and appraisal estimates were used to calculate easement values. Federal funds were discussed and disregarding the potential for owner donation an estimate was generated

for local funding obligation. The township, county, and state funding potentials, both future and present, were discussed. The funds needed to be raised will be close to \$240,000. Local foundations were discussed as potential funders, and their likelihood for funding: Wege, Fry, Grand Rapids Community Foundation. The Grand Rapids Community Foundation was discussed as a supporter, but only with the support of the County. The Wege Foundation will only fund in the Vergennes area, and this should be taken into account when deciding on PDRs. The potential for State level support was discussed, and methods for State level funding were articulated from other States: mileages and taxes. State funding has come to the floor, but the importance of having a representative from Ag Preservation was emphasized. National organization support was also discussed. The support from the statewide preservation organization and state staffer, and the potential for expanding preservation in other regions increases viability for a coalition, and single voice at the state level. A conference among preservation programs was suggested. Decision making procedure was explained, and the Roth property was discussed as the best option for funding. The new applicants will be included for next month, and this board can approve the ranking to be sent to the commissioners.

d. LCVEF update

The tour went well despite some and the next tour will be September 26th. It is a critical opportunity to educate decision makers and commissioners, and we hope to have 50 or more attendees. Next week save-the-date invites will be sent. A nominal fee was discussed to decrease the amount of confirmed attendee no-shows. Conservation Easement signage was discussed, and why family names are not included. The need for a generic sign template was also put forward.

5. New Business

Russ said it would be good for Theresa to come and talk with the board. He continued that Wendy Oblovy from the Watershed Board would be useful to bring in to talk about the Resource Conservation Program. Pictures from the bus tour will be added to the Facebook page. He also suggested a separate meeting for PA 116 and municipal master plan utility for regional control of the preservation process. The potential for the Meijer Foundation for donation to Ag Preservation was discussed.

6. Other

7. Public Comment

8. Adjournment Next Meeting September 3, 2014 at 11:30 A.M.

Candace moved to adjourn and Dennis seconded.