

**ADA TOWNSHIP
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 8, 2009 MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairperson Betty Jo Crosby.

PRESENT: Betty Jo Crosby, Randy Damstra, George Haga, Jamie Ladd, Rick Steketee, Mischelle Sytsma (4:50 p.m.), Jeff Vandenberg, Randy VanDragt, Elise Roe

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Jim Ferro, Planning Director, Mark Fitzpatrick, Parks Director

PUBLIC PRESENT: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 11, 2008 MEETING

It was moved by Steketee, seconded by VanDragt, to approve the minutes of the December 11 meeting. Motion approved unanimously.

STATUS REPORT ON OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION PROJECTS

1. 383 Pettis Ave. Property Acquisition

Ferro reported there has been no change in the status of the acquisition, and the inability of the owner to obtain mortgage company approval of the Township's offering price.

Ladd asked whether Ferro had looked into whether the septic holding tank system has been inspected. Ferro reported he had talked to the Kent County Health Department inspector, who stated that he takes a look at the tank lid in the front yard from his vehicle whenever he drives by the site, and he has not observed any evidence of overflows from the tank lid.

Ferro stated he would also take a look at the site.

2. Gilmore/MDOT Property on former Thornapple River – Status of Title

Ferro reported we have not yet obtained the mortgage release on the property donated to the Township by John Gilmore.

3. Conservation Easement at Raj and Sunita Agrawal Property at 3201 Egypt Valley Ave.

Ferro reported that the Agrawal's have not signed the conservation easement document that was approved by the Township Board, since they were not able to obtain an appraisal prior to the end of the year. Ferro added that he does not know if the Agrawal's intend to complete the easement in 2009.

STATUS OF POTENTIAL PROJECTS

1. Conservation Easement on Vanderwarf Family Trust Property at 2025 and 2200 Honey Creek.

The final appraisals for the Vanderwarf property were discussed. Ferro suggested the formation of a Subcommittee to develop a recommended offer to the VanderWarf's, which could possibly include optional offers that vary the number of allowed lot splits and amount of land excluded from the proposed conservation easement.

It was moved by Damstra, seconded by Haga, to refer the matter of developing a recommended offer to the VanderWarf's to a Subcommittee.

Motion approved unanimously.

Haga, Ladd and Vandenbergre agreed to serve on the Subcommittee.

Crosby referenced Haga's comments at the December meeting stating that he had asked the Assessor to provide input on the impact of a conservation easement on property assessment for tax purposes, and whether this information had been obtained. Haga stated he had not received this information yet, but that it will be pursued, with regard to both the Vanderwarf and Agrawal properties.

2. Nominated Property at 5504 Ada Dr. and Roberts Property at 2455 Pettis Ave.

It was noted that on site evaluation of these two properties will be accomplished in the Spring.

MARKETING/PROMOTION

1. Joint Public Information Meeting with Vergennes Township and United Growth for Kent County

Crosby reported that she and Ferro had met with Kendra Wills from United Growth and with Kate Dernocoeur and Marsha Wilcox from Vergennes Township to discuss the possible format and content of a public information event on land preservation options. Saturday, March 21 was targeted as the date for the event.

Mark Fitzpatrick noted that this is the same day as the Forest Hills Community Expo organized by the Ada Business Association.

2. Map of Grand River Corridor Properties.

Overall land protection priorities, public education and outreach efforts to property owners were discussed.

Ferro was asked to provide an inventory map of Amway-owned properties for the February meeting. Ferro will also prepare an inventory of large open space properties in the Township.

(Sytsma arrived at the meeting at this time.)

Randy Damstra suggested involving Amway and its employees in public education efforts, since the company has a strong interest in this area.

The need for a comprehensive public education plan and message was discussed. Betty Jo Crosby suggested that a Subcommittee be charged with developing such a plan. Rick Steketee and Elise Roe agreed to serve, and Randy VanDragt agreed to prepare a draft statement of important components of a public education message, from a scientific perspective.

Haga stated that he would include \$5,000 in funding in the new Township budget for open space public education.

Ferro stated he would look into the availability of grant funds for public education efforts.

3. March 10 Workshop at Ada Township Park on NWF Backyard Habitat Certification Program

Mark Fitzpatrick reported on planning for the March 10 workshop. He also reported on his plans to attend the Stewardship Network Annual Meeting in March, and the Network's work on scheduling workshops for 2009.

2009 MEETING SCHEDULE

It was agreed that meetings for the coming year would be held on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 4:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Susan Burton
Ada Township Clerk
rs:jf