

**ADA TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 10, 2013 MEETING**

A regular meeting of the Open Space Preservation Advisory Board was held on Thursday, January 10, 2013. The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by Chairperson Betty Jo Crosby at the Ada Township Offices, 7330 Thornapple River Dr., Ada, MI.

PRESENT: Dan Bergman, Betty Jo Crosby, Randy Damstra, George Haga, Jamie Ladd, Elise Roe, Rick Steketee, Jeff VandenBerge

ABSENT: Paul Leblanc

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

PUBLIC PRESENT: 3

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 8, 2012 MEETING

It was moved by Roe, seconded by Steketee, to approve the minutes of the November 8, 2012 meeting as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

STATUS OF PROJECTS

a. 4950 Knapp St. – Status of Demolition/Site Restoration

Ferro reported demolition of the home on the 4950 Knapp St. property was completed at the end of November, and Road Commission crews completed site restoration shortly after. He also stated the Township has received reimbursement from the Road Commission for its share of the total project cost, and the Township Board is scheduled to approve granting an easement for additional road right-of-way to the County at the January 14 Township Board meeting. He stated the Road Commission is planning to complete an intersection improvement project next summer, including addition of a right-turn lane.

Ferro had no other information to report on current projects.

POTENTIAL ACQUISITION CANDIDATE SITE – 7567 FASE ST.

Crosby introduced Bruce Fase and his daughter Kim Hulst, who were present to discuss Bruce's property at 7567 Fase St., and their interest in selling the property.

Ferro presented mapping of the area showing the Fase property in relation to existing Township-owned park land and open space in the area. Ferro stated the Township has had a goal for many years of establishing a river corridor greenbelt and trail along the Thornapple River and the Grand River, extending from Leonard Field Park to the 100-acre Grand River Nature Preserve. The greenbelt/trail corridor concept has been included in the Township's park and recreation planning, open space planning and in Village planning as an outcome of the 2006 Village design charrette.

Ferro reviewed natural features of the property, noting that the entire property is within the regulated floodplain, and much of it is also in the regulatory floodway, where there are more stringent restrictions on placement of fill and structures. He noted that there may be potential for limited additional development on a portion of the property, if fill placed on the property is compensated for by an equal volume of earth removed from the floodplain, as was done in the adjacent Ada Moorings development. Ferro added that a large area behind the home extending to the Thornapple River has been maintained as mowed lawn by the owner, and there is also a large area of undisturbed wooded lowlands located on the far northeastern portion of the property, adjacent to the Grand River Nature Preserve.

Ferro stated if the Advisory Board believes the acquisition of the property merits further consideration, appropriate steps would be for a subcommittee to visit the site, with the owner's permission, and evaluate the site against our point rating system. Ferro stated consideration also needs to be given as to how an acceptable purchase price should be determined, and whether the Township should obtain a formal appraisal. Ferro provided information regarding estimated value of the property from the Township assessing records.

Discussion ensued regarding the property and potential next steps. Haga stated he believes acquisition of the property should be a priority. (Note: VandenBerge and Damstra arrived at this time, at 4:15 p.m.) Crosby noted that the property's location along the two rivers fits our highest priority category for acquisition, which is river corridor land. She stated that obtaining a formal appraisal should be considered. Ladd stated that it would also be advisable for the property owner to obtain his own appraisal, rather than relying on an appraisal obtained by the Township.

VandenBerge asked if the owner was interested in selling the entire property, or a portion of the property and retaining ownership of the home. Kim Hulst stated that they are interested in selling the entire property intact.

Board members discussed options for the Township, the property owner or both obtaining appraisals. Ferro stated that options to consider could include splitting the cost of obtaining a single appraisal, as was done with Eastbrook Homes in the past for the Grand River Nature Preserve property, or including provisions for possible multiple appraisals in a purchase option, as was done with the owner of the property on the Thornapple River backwater which the Township considered purchasing several years ago.

Bergman asked if the owner had a timeframe in mind for selling the property. Kim Hulst responded that they were interested in selling in the late spring.

Following discussion, a committee consisting of ~~Haga Ferro~~, Crosby and Bergman was assigned to conduct a site visit and continue discussions with the property owner.

Eric Piehl, Township resident, commented that the Grand River Nature Preserve and its trails are currently not easy to access, and many people are not aware of the Preserve and its trails. He stated that acquiring property to establish a trail connection from Leonard Field to the Nature Preserve would be a great connection to make.

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FY 2013-14

Ferro presented a draft budget for the fiscal year starting April 1. Haga noted that the budget needs to be revised to reflect the planned \$150,000 transfer from the Open Space fund to the Parks and Recreation fund, as Open Space participation in the cost of the Roselle Park resource building, as previously approved by the Advisory Board. In addition, there is a \$100 expenditure for insurance that needs to be added.

Park Director Fitzpatrick brought up the need for funding to be budgeted for the costs of open space stewardship activities, noting that in the past these costs have been borne by the Parks and Rec. budget.

Fitzpatrick and Ferro were requested to prepare a budget for stewardship costs, and include this in the proposed Open Space budget.

Ladd stated he believed the budgeted costs for appraisals and surveys may be too low. Haga noted that the budget could be amended at a later date if the need arises.

Ladd also commented that the budget description of open space expenditures as being in the "parks and arboretum" department was confusing and misleading.

Following discussion, it was moved by Haga, supported by Damstra, to approve the proposed Open Space budget for Fiscal Year 2013-14, subject to addition of a \$150,000 transfer to the Parks and Recreation fund as

participation in the Roselle Park resource building project, addition of \$100 expenditure for insurance, and addition of funding for costs of open space preserve stewardship activities, as developed by Ferro and Fitzpatrick. Motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION OF TERM LIMIT POLICY

Crosby brought to the Board's attention that the open space preservation ordinance contains provisions that limit Advisory Board members' terms to no more than two consecutive 4-year terms. She stated this appears to have been overlooked, and that in view of the fact that the Township Board recently removed term limits for Planning Commission and Zoning Board members, this should also be considered for the Open Space Advisory Board.

Following discussion, it was moved by Roe, seconded by VandenBerge, to recommend that the Township Board amend the open space ordinance to remove term limit provisions for Advisory Board members. Motion passed unanimously.

MEMBER AND STAFF COMMENTS/REPORTS

a. Update on Discussions with Calvin College for Video Production Project in 2nd Semester

Ferro reported he and Crosby would be meeting at the end of the month with Jake Bosmeijer and a group of students to discuss the proposed project.

b. Master Plans for Carl Creek Wetland Preserve and Carl Creek Crossing Preserve Properties

Ferro stated that the subcommittee needs to complete work on the Master Plans, and that a meeting with the Road Commission needs to be held to discuss standards for any driveway improvements we wish to make.

c. Riparian Protection Rules Subcommittee – Crosby and VandenBerge

Ferro stated the Planning Commission subcommittee has not yet met on this matter.

d. Update of Roselle Park Master Plans.

Fitzpatrick distributed the color renderings of the proposed update to the Roselle Park Master Plan, and noted that the changes include reducing the number of playground areas in the plan, and revising the layout of the proposed resource building, parking area and driveway.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Burton
Township
Clerk
RS: jf