

**ADA TOWNSHIP
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 8, 2007 MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Betty Jo Crosby, Greg Forbes, George Haga, Jamie Ladd, Elise Roe, Mischelle Sytsma.

ABSENT: Matt Nygren, Bette Roberts, and Randy VanDragt

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director Jim Ferro and Parks Director Wendy Tatar

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Moved by Roe, seconded by Ladd, to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2007 meeting.

Motion passed unanimously.

STATUS REPORT – PROPERTIES OF INTEREST:

383 Pettis Avenue – Nothing new to report from the State or FEMA. Ferro stated that the owner had contacted him to find out the status. The property is again listed with a realtor (not the same as before) for \$180,000. Crosby read a copy of the memo Ferro had received on November 29 from the State. Ladd suggested that Vern Ehlers office be contacted to help facilitate FEMA funding. Haga offered to contact the Representatives office.

MDOT property on Fulton Street – Ferro stated that the Title Company that is researching ownership has not started yet. Ladd suggested that paying them a fee might give them incentive to get the work done. Ferro will follow up on this.

Other Properties of Interest –

Pettis property on Grand River – Ferro reported the County has been offered DNR grant funds to purchase the property, but no purchase agreement has been approved with the owner yet.

VanAndel property on Grand River – Ladd will send owner information on tax incentives.

Ferro stated that Kendra Wills from the Kent County Agriculture Preservation Board contacted him regarding the Jakeway property. She wondered if the Township was interested in providing more money to the PDR program since the program didn't get funding from the State or Federal Governments. This led to a discussion of the new Federal and State tax incentives for conservation easements. Ladd stated that the Township should offer to the Land Conservancy to provide stewardship on Ada Township properties. Roe commented that the Land Conservancy is concerned that the tax incentives may overload their staff resources this year.

Roe will talk to April at the Land Conservancy regarding Township assistance. Ferro stated he will speak to the Jakeway family to see if there is any interest in discussing a conservation easement transaction with the Township, in light of the new tax incentives.

STATUS OF NATURAL FEATURES INVENTORY:

Ferro stated that the final report is not done yet. He spoke to Dave Warners and was told that the Township will have the report by the end of the month.

Members were given a copy of the “thank you” letter that was sent to the property owners (list provided also) that participated in the inventory. This letter was sent on behalf of the OSPAB and included

information on the new tax incentives. Crosby requested that the Township send out a public service announcement once the final report has been received.

MARKETING/PROMOTION:

Discussion of the National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat Program. Crosby stated that she had spoken to the gentleman that was responsible for getting Belding certified. His reasons for starting the program were: preserving what the community had and economic development. The entire process took Belding 3.5 years. Crosby stated that he would be happy to come speak to the OSPAB. Haga suggested that the OSPAB go to Belding when spring arrives to see what they've done. All agreed that someone other than an OSPAB member needed to spearhead the program and there was much discussion of possible candidates. It was mentioned that Cannon Township attempted to participate in this program but backed out.

Crosby stated that the Eastern Townships group met on February 1. They want to hold a photo contest in September that will become a traveling exhibit, going to each township. The top two photos from each township will be put together to produce a calendar.

SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, March 8, at 4:00 pm

MEMBER COMMENT:

Forbes asked whether there has been any follow-up contact with the owner of the property on Thornapple River Drive at the intersection of Buttrick. Ferro stated that there has been no additional contact since the meeting between Haga, Ferro and the realtor for the property. Forbes asked that an effort be made to meet directly with the owner.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Deborah Ensing Millhuff, CMC
Ada Township Clerk

rs:wt