

**ADA TOWNSHIP
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 11, 2010 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, Elise Roe, Rick Steketee, Mischelle Sytsma, Jeff Vandenberg, Randy VanDragt

ABSENT: None

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

PUBLIC PRESENT: Tom Rooks

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Crosby proposed revising the agenda by adding the following items:

- Item 3(e) Follow-up with Jeanne Bijkerk-Pippen
- Item 5(c) Open Space Preservation material on Township web site.
- Item 7 Other Business- Proposed FY 2010-11 Budget
- Item 7 Other Business – Management Plan for preserved properties
- Item 7 Other Business – Terms of Office of Current Members

It was moved by Roe, seconded by Sytsma, to approve the agenda as amended.

Motion approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 14, 2010 MEETING

It was moved by Steketee, seconded by Sytsma, to approve the minutes of the January 14 meeting.

Motion approved unanimously.

STATUS OF PROJECTS

1. 383 Pettis Ave. Property Acquisition

Ferro reported that all utility disconnects have been completed at the property, and the wells on the site have been properly abandoned. He stated he is working on completing bid specifications for demolition, so that demolition can be put out for bids in March and completed in the Spring.

Ferro also reported that he has discussed with the State the possibility of donating salvaged materials from the home to a local non-profit agency, and it appears it would be difficult to obtain State approval for this, since the grant administration guidelines encourage that the demolition contractor be given salvage rights, thereby obtaining lower price quotes for demolition.

Board members encouraged Ferro to pursue this further, with either Habitat for Humanity or Home Repair Services of Kent County.

2. Raymond Property on Pettis Ave.

Ferro reported that he and Tom Rooks have continued making progress on completing the proposed terms of a conservation easement on the Raymond property. He stated that Rooks was present to discuss with the Board his desire for an easement provision that would allow him to have the easement beneficiary transferred from Ada Township to the Land Conservancy of West Michigan in the future.

Rooks presented his reasons for preferring to have such a provision, and stated that he did not believe it would be detrimental to the Township's interest to have such a provision.

In discussion, several members expressed the view that the Township should not allow an easement that it has purchased with public funds to be transferred to another entity. It was pointed out that allowing such a transfer would ~~create a perception issue~~ not be perceived positively by the public. Ferro referred to provisions in the Open Space Preservation ordinance that place restrictions on the Township's ability to sell property interests that have been acquired with open space preservation funds, and pointed out that allowing an easement acquired with open space funds to be transferred to another entity might conflict with these restrictions.

Alternative approaches that might address the concerns of both Rooks and the Township were suggested, such as the Township contracting with the Land Conservancy of West Michigan for easement monitoring services, the possibility of allowing for transfer of the easement at the time of sale of the property, if the original easement purchase price is paid back to the Township.

The Board requested that Ferro contact the Land Conservancy regarding whether they have ever assumed responsibility for another party's conservation easement, or whether they have ever provided monitoring services for an easement that is held by another party.

3. Racine Property at 4950 Knapp St. NE

Ferro presented a proposed option agreement with the owner of the Racine property, in which the Township would pay the owner \$500 for a 120-day option to purchase the property. The proposed purchase price is \$70,000, with the provision that any costs for environmental due diligence in excess of \$20,000 incurred by the Township would be borne by the Seller, and deducted from the Seller's proceeds at closing.

Following discussion, it was moved by Damstra, seconded by Vandenberg, to recommend that Haga proceed with presenting the offer to the owner of the property.

Motion passed unanimously.

Note: Vandenberg left the meeting at this time.

4. Gilmore Property on Thornapple River

Ferro reported that we have not yet obtained a mortgage release for the property that was donated to the Township by John Gilmore.

5. Bijkerk-Pippen Property at Grand River Dr./Knapp

Ferro reported he has not yet spoken to Ms. Bijkerk-Pippen about her interest in a conservation easement.

MARKETING/PROMOTION

Crosby distributed copies of a design layout for the open space marketing brochure, using photos provided to the designer by the Township. Crosby encouraged members to review the layout and provide feedback on the design.

Crosby also stated she wished to obtain additional information on what can be done to update the Township's web site content regarding the open space preservation program.

Note: VanDragt and Roe left the meeting at this time.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Proposed Budget

The Board reviewed the proposed budget for the Open Space Preservation program for FY 2010-11. Ferro noted that it included projected revenue of \$358,413, with slightly over \$150,000 transferred to the Parks Fund. He noted that the budgeted expenditures included an expenditure of \$200,000 for an un-named property acquisition, and that this amount is budgeted in the event that a major acquisition opportunity arises during the course of the next year.

In discussion, the Advisory Board suggested that additional funds be budgeted for marketing/promotion efforts, including work on the open space content of the Township web site.

Haga noted that the new web site is designed to permit Township staff to update content as needed, and we have a web site maintenance contract in place for additional assistance, but that he would include \$10,000 in the Open Space budget for services.

2. Management Plan for preserved properties

This item was postponed.

3. Terms of Office of Current Members

Crosby asked for information regarding members' term expiration dates. Haga stated he would provide this information.

MEMBER AND STAFF COMMENTS

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Susan Burton
Ada Township Clerk
rs:jf