

**ADA TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES OF THE MARCH 5, 2015 SPECIAL MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00pm by Chairperson Crosby.

Members present: Bergman, Crosby, Haga, Roe, Steketee

Members absent: Damstra, Ladd, LeBlanc, VandenBerge

Staff present: Parks Director Fitzpatrick, Planning Director Ferro

Public present: David Contant, BDR Homes, Roger Sabine, Kent County Parks, April Scholtz, Land Conservancy of West Michigan

REQUEST FROM KENT COUNTY PARKS FOR CONTRIBUTION OF OPEN SPACE FUNDS AS LOCAL MATCHING FUNDS FOR A KENT COUNTY APPLICATION FOR DNR GRANT FUNDING TO ACQUIRE LAND FOR EXPANSION OF CHIEF HAZY CLOUD PARK

Ferro provided an overview of the request from Kent County Parks for \$300,000 in matching funds toward a total local match of \$615,000 sought as part of an application for Michigan Natural Resources Trust grant funding being submitted by Kent County, for funds to acquire 143 acres of land along the Grand River currently owned by Rieth Riley Construction Co. Ferro pointed out the Rieth Riley property is currently under contract to potentially be acquired by BDR Acquisitions, LLC, and BDR is working in cooperation with the County on the grant proposal.

Roger Sabine, Kent County Parks, stated that in addition to the contribution he is seeking from the Township, he is seeking local match funding from private donors. Sabine stated there is currently no County funding available to commit to the project, and that nearly all of the land acquisition projects that have been undertaken by the County have had the local funding generated from sources outside County government. Sabine noted that if grant funding is approved, the grant agreement with the State would not be entered into until late spring, 2016, and closing would occur after that.

April Scholtz, from the Land Conservancy of West Michigan, stated that the Conservancy's dedicated "Ada Fund" for land protection projects has a balance of \$60,350, and that the Conservancy Board would probably look favorably on use of that fund as a contributor to the project.

Ferro stated that the acquisition of this property for public park/open space use ranks highly against our adopted open space protection priorities, which assign highest priority to Grand River corridor lands. Ferro noted that the property is directly across the river from the 100-acre conservation easement held by the Land Conservancy on the Gilmore property.

Ferro also pointed out that there is an existing conservation easement held by the Township on the floodplain portion of the Rieth Riley property and a 100-foot wide public access easement along the riverfront that were negotiated as part of the settlement of the litigation with Rieth Riley. Ferro stated that these easements place restrictions on the property that may have an impact on the valuation of the property by an appraiser.

Ferro presented a draft motion that recommends approval of a \$300,000 expenditure from the Open Space Preservation Fund for contribution to the County as local match for the grant, subject to a couple of limitations that would reduce the contribution by 1) any amount contributed from the Land Conservancy's "Ada Fund," and 2) reduced proportionately to any reduction in the approved grant amount by the DNR from the amount applied for.

Following discussion, it was moved by Haga, seconded by Steketee, to recommend that the Township commit to providing funding from the Open Space Preservation Fund to Kent County, as part of the local matching fund commitment for a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant application for funding to acquire approximately 143 acres of land between Pettis Ave and the Grand River currently owned by Rieth Riley Construction Co., subject to the following limitations:

1. The amount of the Township's contribution shall not exceed \$300,000, reduced by any amounts contributed to the County by the Land Conservancy of West Michigan, from its designated "Ada Fund."
2. The amount of the Township's contribution shall be reduced in proportion to any reduction in the approved grant amount below the requested amount of \$1,435,000.

Motion passed by 5-0 vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Burton Township Clerk
RS: bjc