

**ADA TOWNSHIP
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES OF THE MARCH 11, 2010 MEETING**

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

PRESENT: Betty Jo Crosby, George Haga, Jamie Ladd, Elise Roe, Rick Steketee, Randy VanDragt

ABSENT: Randy Damstra, Mischelle Sytsma, Jeff Vandenberg

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

PUBLIC PRESENT: None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 11, 2010 MEETING

Ladd stated that the draft minutes did not adequately reflect the concerns members expressed with the option of allowing a conservation easement on the Raymond property purchased by the Township to be transferred by the property owner in the future to another entity, such as the Land Conservancy.

Ferro suggested adding language to clarify that concern was expressed with using public funds to purchase a property right that the Township might lose, and changing the phrase "create a perception issue" to "not be perceived positively by the public."

It was moved by Ladd, seconded by Roe, to approve the minutes of the February 11 meeting, with the amendments as suggested by Ferro.

Motion approved unanimously.

STATUS OF PROJECTS

1. 383 Pettis Ave. Property Acquisition

Ferro reported that the Township has received written confirmation of the extension of our project completion deadline from the State. He stated that even though we only requested extension until mid-summer, FEMA has approved a 1-year extension.

Ferro also distributed correspondence from the State confirming that if the Township donates salvageable materials from the home to a non-profit organization such as Habitat for Humanity, the value of the donated materials would be deducted from the total project cost against which FEMA would calculate our grant reimbursement, thereby reducing the amount of reimbursement from the grant.

The consensus of the Board was to not allow removal of salvageable materials from the home by non-profit organizations, and to instead include language in the demolition specifications to encourage the contractor to salvage usable items for re-sale by the contractor or donation.

2. Raymond Property on Pettis Ave.

Ferro reported that discussions with Tom Rooks regarding his potential purchase of the Raymond property as a conservation buyer have come to an end. Ferro suggested the possibility of providing a letter of intent to the Raymond family, expressing our continued interest in purchasing a conservation easement on the property, so that the Raymonds can provide this information to any potential buyers who may have interest in purchasing the property with a conservation easement on it.

It was moved by VanDragt, seconded by Haga, to direct staff to provide a letter of intent to the owners of the property, expressing our interest in purchasing an easement, subject to Township Board approval of a purchase.

Motion passed unanimously.

3. Racine Property at 4950 Knapp St. NE

Ferro and Haga reported that the owner of the Racine property has declined our offer to purchase the property. Ferro also reported that the title insurance commitment obtained by the Township indicated that there are issues with clear title to the property that the owner needs to clear up.

4. Gilmore Property on Thornapple River

Ferro reported there has been no action on this since last month, and that a mortgage release is still needed to obtain clear title to the property. He noted that Mr. Gilmore's legal representative, Rick Rankin, recently returned to town from an extended absence. Board members encouraged Ferro to contact Mr. Gilmore directly on this matter if needed.

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

Ferro reported he has spoken to Ms. Bijkerk-Pippen about her interest in a conservation easement, and has provided her with a sample conservation easement to review. He stated he also provided her with contact information for several appraisers, at her request. He stated he would be following up with her in the next few weeks.

Members discussed the pros and cons of purchasing a conservation easement on this property. Crosby pointed out that the property is not highly vulnerable to development because of its floodplain status, which in her mind reduces the benefit of purchasing an easement. Ferro pointed out that the floodplain status also reduces the value of the easement rights that would be purchased, and that the Township would not necessarily offer a high price for an easement.

MARKETING/PROMOTION

Members reviewed copies of the final layout of the open space marketing brochure. Ferro stated that the final art work has been sent to the printer. Crosby stated we should have the finished product in time for distribution at the Forest Hills Community Expo on March 20.

Steketee commended Crosby's efforts in getting this project completed.

REVIEW OF TERMS OF OFFICE OF CURRENT MEMBERS

Haga stated he had not yet pulled together information on term ending dates for Board members.

MEMBER AND STAFF COMMENTS

Ladd asked if members had seen the Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds (LGROW) insert in the Sunday newspaper. Most members indicated they had not. VanDragt commented that reprints can be purchased and that Calvin College may be purchasing a large quantity.

Crosby asked for volunteers to help staff the Open Space Protection display at the Forest Hills Community Expo on March 20. Elise Roe volunteered. Haga indicated he would be there for part of the day. Ferro stated he would be there most of the day and would take a shift at the booth.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m. It was noted that the next meeting will be on April 8 at 4:00 p.m. Ladd and Roe both noted they will not be able to attend.

Respectfully submitted:

Susan Burton
Ada Township Clerk
rs:jf