

**ADA TOWNSHIP
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES OF THE MARCH 13, 2008 MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 4:07 p.m., by Chairperson Betty Jo Crosby.

PRESENT: Betty Jo Crosby, George Haga, Jamie Ladd, Matt Nygren, Elise Roe, Mischelle Sytsma

ABSENT: Greg Forbes, Randy Van Dragt, Bette Roberts

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director Jim Ferro

PUBLIC PRESENT: Marsha Wilcox, United Growth for Kent County

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 14, 2008 MEETING MINUTES

It was moved by Sytsma,, seconded by Roe, to approve the minutes of the February 14 minutes, with a correction to replace the word “them” with “the Conservancy,” regarding the source of the additional \$25,000 donation toward the Chief Hazy Cloud Park expansion land purchase.

Motion passed unanimously.

PRESENTATION BY MARSHA WILCOX, UNITED GROWTH FOR KENT COUNTY

Marsha Wilcox, representing United Growth for Kent County, presented information regarding the “Land Preservation Options” brochure that is being produced by United Growth, for distribution to owners of large acreage properties in Ada, Vergennes, Alpine and Sparta Townships. Wilcox stated that this is a pilot project that has potential to be used as a model on a state-wide basis in the future. United Growth is seeking partners to help pay for the cost of printing the brochure, and a contribution of \$500 is requested from Ada Township. Wilcox presented a mock-up of a draft of the brochure, which contains information regarding all of the various methods that are available to land owners to preserve natural and agricultural land. Marsha also stated that the United Growth Rural Committee will be making follow-up contact with property owners, following the mailing of the brochure.

Haga stated he had consulted with the Michigan Townships Association regarding whether the wording of our open space millage ballot proposal would permit use of millage revenues for this purpose, and the MTA responded that it does fall within the allowable uses of the funds, to promote open space preservation. Haga also requested that Marsha provide a written request for the funding assistance, for documentation in our files.

It was moved by Haga, seconded by Sytsma, to recommend expenditure of \$500 in open space preservation funds to be provided to United Growth for Kent County, to be used for the printing of the land preservation options brochure.

Motion approved unanimously.

Ferro pointed out that with regard to the Advisory Board’s own property owner outreach efforts, we could coordinate our contacts with the efforts of United Growth.

STATUS OF PROJECTS

Conservation Easement for Carl Creek Property

Ferro reported that we are still waiting to hear from the Land Conservancy regarding the final easement wording and getting the easement signed and recorded.

Ferro also mentioned that a volunteer effort needs to be organized to install permanent property line markers along the north property boundary, adjoining the lots in Forest Glen subdivision.

The need for signs identifying the area as protected natural area was also discussed. It was suggested that Ferro contact the Land Conservancy regarding their standard easement identification sign, and whether they wish to place signs on the property.

383 Pettis Ave. Property Acquisition

Ferro stated there has been no change in the status of the purchase agreement. He stated we are still waiting for the lenders to sign off on the proposed purchase price.

Gilmore/MDOT Property on former Thornapple River – Status of Title

Ferro reported that John Gilmore has provided funding to the Township to pay the costs of obtaining the remaining quit claim deed signature to obtain clear title to the property. The transaction to obtain this should be completed within the next week.

7980 East Fulton St. Property – Status of Private Fund-Raising

Bette Jo Crosby reported that the fund-raising effort should be complete within the next week.

Funding Contribution to Kent County for Chief Hazy Cloud Park Expansion

Ferro reported that the site evaluation for this property still needs to be completed, pending a site visit by Greg Forbes and Randy Van Dragt. Ferro distributed mapping from the REGIS system, the Open Space Plan and the 2006 Natural Features Inventory final report, showing floodplain and approximate wetland boundaries on the site, and identifying the site as an important component of the Township's green infrastructure network. Several members expressed an interest in walking the property. It was suggested that the County be contacted as a courtesy before we conduct the site visit. Crosby stated she would contact Forbes and VanDragt about scheduling a site visit.

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Haga requested that this item be moved up, as he needed to leave soon. Haga stated he had traded messages with Greg Forbes regarding his ability to attend meetings, and had discussed attendance with Matt Nygren as well. He suggested that the Township should begin keeping an attendance record for the Advisory Board. Haga distributed an application from a potential new Board appointee – Rick Steketee, from Forest Glen Dr., as a potential candidate to replace Bette Roberts, who has indicated her intent to resign.

Nygren stated that he wishes to remain on the Board, at least through the November elections.

Crosby noted we have not received a formal resignation from Bette Roberts yet, and stated she would contact Bette's daughter about obtaining one. Crosby stated that Jeff Vandenberg had also expressed interest in serving on the Board, and she suggested waiting a month until the status of members is determined before filling any vacancies. Haga stated that he was agreeable to postponing any appointments.

Haga left the meeting at this time.

MARKETING/PROMOTION COMMITTEE REPORT

The upcoming countywide stewardship day and the NWF Community Wildlife Habitat Certification Program were briefly discussed.

Jamie Ladd pointed out that at last evening's Land Conservancy annual membership meeting, Elise Roe was named the winner of the "Volunteer of the Year" award.

Matt Nygren noted that a student "Planeteers" group has been formed at the Forest Hills Eastern campus, and that we could possibly get them involved in our efforts.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Ferro pointed out that a meeting schedule for the balance of the year had not yet been set.

Crosby suggested that we set the date for the April meeting, but postpone action on the schedule for the balance of the year until we have more members present. Greg Forbes' schedule was discussed, and the consensus was to schedule the April meeting later in the afternoon, to hopefully allow his attendance.

The next meeting date was set for April 10 at 4:45 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Deborah Ensing Millhuff, CMC
Ada Township Clerk
rs:jf