

**ADA TOWNSHIP
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES OF THE APRIL 10, 2008 MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 4:50 p.m., by Chairperson Betty Jo Crosby.

PRESENT: Betty Jo Crosby, George Haga,, Matt Nygren, Elise Roe, Mischelle Sytsma, Randy VanDragt

ABSENT: Greg Forbes, Jamie Ladd

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director Jim Ferro
Parks Director Mark Fitzpatrick

PUBLIC PRESENT: None

APPROVAL OF MARCH 13, 2008 MEETING MINUTES

It was moved by Sytsma,, seconded by Roe, to approve the minutes of the March 13 minutes, as presented.

Motion passed unanimously.

STATUS OF PROJECTS

Conservation Easement for Carl Creek Property

Ferro reported that we are still waiting for the final easement document from April Scholtz at the Land Conservancy. She was committed to working on other projects that were tax deadline-related until recently. Roe noted that April was recently committed to another tax-related issue. Ferro pointed out that he has provided the Conservancy with additional property inventory photos, to document baseline conditions.

Ferro also reported on the boundary marking work that he and Betty Jo Crosby had accomplished last week. He noted there is more work to be done, to place permanent markers at intervals along the property boundary that will provide clear information on the boundary location to all of the neighbors. He stated it appears that the surveyors staked only the property corners, and did not place stakes at intervals along the property line on the north boundary. He stated we can either ask the surveyors to return and place additional stakes, or perhaps the boundary could be visually identified with a large group of people visually sighting the line between corners. A date of April 23, at 5:00 p.m. was set for a group effort to mark the north property boundary.

Crosby noted that the Land Conservancy also has small easement boundary identification signs that can be attached to the marker posts.

Crosby and Ferro noted that they encountered several locations where there may be adjacent property owner encroachment. Tree waste was observed pushed into the wetland area near the boundary, as well as a Christmas tree. There is also one yard and daffodils very close to the boundary.

Ferro noted that we will need to send information to all of the neighbors regarding proper stewardship of 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 all of the needed quit claim deeds have been signed and recorded, and the Assessor is in the process of combining this property with the adjacent land already owned by the Township. There still is a mortgage release needed from John Gilmore, that Ferro stated he has discussed with Rick Rankin.

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

Haga reported that the Land Conservancy has presented the Township with funds in the amount of \$124,435, which is contributions from over 60 donors toward the purchase of the property at 7980 East Fulton. He noted that this information would be provided to the Township Board on Monday night.

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. Flooding on the Grand River and poor weather has resulted in this being delayed.

Crosby noted she made a courtesy call to Roger Sabine to let him know that we wished to walk the property.

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Haga referenced the resignation letter received from Bette Roberts, copies of which are in the Board members packets. Haga distributed a public service application form received from Rick Steketee, and letter expressing interest in serving on the Advisory Board. He noted that the Supervisor is responsible for recommending appointments to the Township Board, but wished to invite input from the current members.

The consensus was that Mr. Steketee has excellent credentials for service on the Advisory Board. Haga stated he would be recommending Rick's appointment to the Township Board at its April 28 meeting.

MARKETING/PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

Ferro distributed the final draft of the Land "Preservation Guide" prepared by United Growth, which we have agreed to sponsor for \$500. It was noted that the brochure will be a useful tool for us in our open space preservation efforts. It was also noted that the brochure is expected to be printed and available at the "Land Preservation Celebration" at the Franciscans Center in Vergennes Township on April 19.

Schedules and plans for several upcoming events were discussed, including the Community Garlic Mustard Pull in Ada Park on May 3, from 10 till noon, a presentation on invasive species by Melanie Good from the Land Conservancy at Ada Park on April 24, at 7:00 p.m., and the Conservation Expo at the Wittenbach Center in Lowell on April 19. Mark Fitzpatrick noted he will be at the Expo event for the entire event, and that he has recruited several volunteers to also attend.

Mark Fitzpatrick gave an update on the status of the NWF Community Wildlife Habitat Certification Program, and noted that there are a couple of information events scheduled, both during the day and in the evening. Work is also progressing on establishing several demonstration areas, at Roselle Park, Ada Park and the Historical Museum.

MEMBER AND STAFF COMMENTS

Haga reported that he is initiating a joint committee of the Parks Committee and Open Space Advisory Board, to work on developing an agreed-upon method for allocation of the parks and land preservation millage funds between parks and open space budgets. This is an initiative that was called for in the 2007 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, and in the Parks Strategic Plan. The membership he has suggested includes himself, Clerk Millhuff, Trustee Damstra, Greg Forbes and Betty Jo Crosby.

Haga also mentioned that he has been contacted by John Postma as to whether the Township would be interested in purchasing the property that was previously considered for purchase on the Thornapple River backwater, at a price reduced from the previous option price.

The consensus of the Board was that there was no interest in pursuing that acquisition, without having water access.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

SET NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting was set for Thursday, May 8, at 4:45 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Deborah Ensing Millhuff, CMC
Ada Township Clerk
rs:jf