

**ADA TOWNSHIP  
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD  
MINUTES OF THE JUNE 10, 2010 MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by Chairperson Betty Jo Crosby.

**PRESENT:** Betty Jo Crosby, Randy Damstra, George Haga, Jamie Ladd, Rick Steketee, Mischelle Sytsma, Jeff VandenBerge

**ABSENT:** Elise Roe, Randy VanDragt

**STAFF PRESENT:** Jim Ferro, Planning Director

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Dr. Tom Reyburn  
Peter Loftis, MDOT Real Estate  
Art Green, MDOT, Grand Rapids Transportation Service Center  
Tom Korth, Planning Commission Chair

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was approved by consent.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MAY 13, 2010 MEETING**

It was moved by Ladd, seconded by Sytsma, to approve the minutes of the May 13, 2010 meeting.

Motion approved unanimously.

**REQUEST FROM MDOT FOR TEMPORARY GRADING EASEMENTS ACROSS OPEN SPACE PROPERTIES FOR M-21 BRIDGE RE-CONSTRUCTION PROJECT**

Haga stated that MDOT was present at the meeting to request temporary easements on Township open space land, to facilitate construction of a temporary bridge span across the river, during the M-21 bridge replacement project.

Art Green, MDOT engineer, stated that there is uncertainty regarding funding availability for this project, beyond the current fiscal year ending September 30, 2010. Therefore, MDOT is working toward a September, 2010 bid letting for this project. He stated they would like to the contractor to begin work in early September. If this schedule is met, lane closures on the highway would begin in October. Construction of the temporary bridge would take place through the winter, and traffic would be diverted on to the temporary bridge in April, 2011. Green stated that under the traffic routing plans they have developed, there would be no full closure of traffic across the river at any time. The only detoured traffic movement, which has always been assumed in the planning for the project, is southbound Pettis traffic on to eastbound Fulton St..

Green stated that the area of the grading permit on Township land that is being requested is 35 feet wide by about 200 feet long on the west side of the river, and a triangular area with a maximum width of 24 feet and a length of about 200 feet on the east side of the river.

Dr. Tom Reyburn asked whether the original bridge location across the river at Honey Creek Ave. could be considered for the temporary construction route, and become a permanent bridge after construction.

Green stated that a permanent bridge would be subject to more stringent permitting requirements for floodplain permitting, and would be much more expensive than the proposed temporary bridge. He stated that their current estimate for the cost of the temporary bridge is between \$2 and \$2 ½ million, not \$13 million as reported in the newspaper. He also noted that their objective all along has been to maintain traffic across the river during construction, which the temporary bridge alternative achieves.

Korth asked whether it would be feasible to keep the current bridge in service for 5-7 more years, while other alternatives for another bridge crossing are evaluated.

Green stated this could not occur without the Township having to take some ownership of the project, from a financial standpoint.

Green described the limits that would be imposed on the contractor with respect to how far beyond the limits of the temporary bridge span that tree removal could occur. He also described the proposed restoration plans, noting that trees removed for the construction would be replaced at a 2:1 ratio. The number and type of trees to be planted will not be known until an inventory of the existing trees is completed.

Discussion then ensued regarding MDOT's willingness to allow the Township to review and provide input on the plans for restoration. Green stated that the restoration plans would be provided to the Township for review.

Crosby thanked the MDOT representatives for attending.

## **STATUS OF PROJECTS**

### **1. 383 Pettis Ave. Property Acquisition**

Ferro reported that demolition of the home and restoration of the site are nearly completed.

### **2. Raymond Property on Pettis Ave.**

Ferro reported on a meeting he had with Brian and Melissa Gary, property owners adjacent to the Raymond property, about the possibility of purchasing a conservation easement on the property, in conjunction with a possible acquisition of the property by the Gary's. Ferro stated that there was no particular outcome from the meeting, other than providing information about possible tax benefits of a conservation easement, and options with respect to either demolishing the Raymond home, and combining the Raymond property with the Gary property into a single lot, or possibly splitting the property to allow the Raymond home to remain on the property on a separate lot, with the balance of the property combined with the Gary's homestead property.

### **3. Gilmore Property on Thornapple River**

Ferro reported there has been no new activity with regard to obtaining the needed mortgage release on this property.

### **4. Botruff Property on Winding Brook**

Ferro reported no new activity. He stated he would like to arrange a visit to the site by a few more members of the Advisory Board.

### **5. Racine Property at 4950 Knapp St. NE**

Ferro reported there has been no further activity on this property.

### **6. Cooper Property on Bailey Dr.**

Ferro reported on an inquiry received from Dick Cooper, for information regarding conservation easements. Ferro stated the inquiry was a result of the recent mailing of the new open space brochure to all households in the Township. Ferro stated he has provided Mr. Cooper with information regarding conservation easements, including a sample easement document. Cooper has extended an invitation to members to visit the property.

## **MEMBER AND STAFF COMMENTS/REPORTS**

Damstra mentioned the Rieth Riley property on Pettis Ave. as a possible acquisition candidate for the Board to consider.

Following discussion, Crosby requested that a Subcommittee consisting of Damstra, Ladd and Vandenberge initiate communication with Rieth Riley regarding the future of their property.

## **ANNUAL REPORT TO TOWNSHIP BOARD**

It was moved by Damstra, seconded by VandenBerge, to approve the Annual Report to the Township Board.

Motion passed unanimously.

## **CONSIDERATION OF MDOT REQUEST FOR TEMPORARY EASEMENTS**

Board members discussed the merits of granting the requested easements, versus alternative courses of action.

Following discussion, it was moved by Sytsma, seconded by VandenBerge, to recommend to the Township Board to grant the "Consent to Grade" easements requested by MDOT, subject to MDOT providing the opportunity to the Township to review and provide input on the proposed restoration plans.

Motion approved unanimously.

## **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

It was moved by Sytsma, seconded by Steketee, to re-elect current officers (Chairperson – Crosby, Vice-Chairperson – Roe) to their respective positions for the period through the March, 2011 meeting.

Motion passed unanimously.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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Susan Burton  
Ada Township Clerk  
rs:jf