

**ADA TOWNSHIP  
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD  
MINUTES OF THE JUNE 14, 2007 MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Betty Jo Crosby, Greg Forbes (arrived at 4:40), George Haga, Bette Roberts, Elise Roe, Mischelle Sytsma.

**ABSENT:** Jamie Ladd, Matt Nygren, and Randy VanDragt

**STAFF PRESENT:** Planning Director Jim Ferro and Parks Director Wendy Tatar

**DISCUSSION WITH SPECIAL GUEST**

Crosby introduced Craig Crebessa, representing the NWF Certified Community Wildlife Habitat program in Belding. Craig explained that Belding decided to participate in this program to create a theme for the community and assist them with grant funding. He explained that it was a three-year process to get enough participation to become certified.

Belding developed a non-profit organization to be in charge of the program. The organization was at first funded by the city but is now on its own. They produce a quarterly newsletter and have a 7-member board. There is a \$10 yearly or \$600 lifetime fee to be a member of the organization. They currently have 30 – 35 members. The NWF requires that a certain number of businesses, schools, multi-family households, single family households participate in the project, based on community participation. They also require a certain number of public displays be produced in the community. Craig explained some of the public displays that were installed and events that were created to support the displays. Currently there are only 22 communities in the nation that are certified.

Certification has to be renewed every year and Craig stated that it is difficult keeping the families interested in participating.

Members thanked Craig for coming to the meeting and asked if we could contact him if we had any questions. Craig stated that he would be happy to help.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Moved by Haga, seconded by Roberts, to approve the minutes of the May 10, 2007 meeting.

Motion passed unanimously.

**STATUS REPORT – PROPERTIES OF INTEREST:**

383 Pettis Avenue – Ferro reported that there had been a personnel change at the State level. He also reported that there is a new realtor and that the realtor is going to try to get the mortgage holders on the property to accept an offer of less than 100% of the outstanding debt as payment in full.

MDOT property on Fulton Street – Ferro stated that our legal counsel has found everyone that needs to sign off on quit claim deeds for the the property. Signed documents have not been received yet.

5686 Forest Bend Dr. – Ferro handed out copies of the screening forms that he and Forbes had completed after visiting the property on June 12. Ferro reported that the quality of the creek bottom is gravelly – a positive sign for the health of the creek. He also reported that, because of the long fingers of upland that project into the wetland area, there is a long linear boundary between the upland area and the wetland. This condition makes the wetland area particularly vulnerable to activities that take place on the upland

area. Mr. Jaarda has taken the property off the market for now. There was discussion regarding the past interest from neighboring property owners to contribute funds to the Twp. to purchase the land.

Moved by Haga, seconded by Roe, that based upon the continued interest by members of the Advisory Board in the possible acquisition of the property at 5686 Forest Bend Dr. for open space protection purposes, that contact should be made with neighbors of said property to determine their interest in contributing funding.

Motion passed unanimously.

Crosby stated that she would contact Sue Stekedee, one of the neighboring residents.

Other Properties of Interest – Ferro informed members that a billboard company has acquired an option to purchase property for a billboard on the east side of the M-21 bridge. He spoke to the owner of the sign company and the option to buy is pending the approval of the billboard. He noted that this is a Grand River frontage site, with high visibility.

**MARKETING/PROMOTION:**

Crosby stated that there was a delay in obtaining the needed liability waiver language from the Kent County Legal Dept., in order to move ahead with volunteer invasive species removal efforts at Seidman Park.

Haga stated that he would contact Roger Sabine.

Crosby informed members that there have been entries received in both the photography contest and the Champion tree contest.

**SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING:**

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, July 12, at 4:00 pm

**MEMBER COMMENT:**

Tatar passed out copies of an article entitled “Riparian Zones in Danger!” that was published in Parks & Rec Business magazine.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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Deborah Ensing Millhuff, CMC  
Ada Township Clerk

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