

**ADA TOWNSHIP
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES OF THE JUNE 14, 2012 MEETING**

A regular meeting of the Open Space Preservation Advisory Board was held on Thursday, June 14, 2012. The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by Chairperson Betty Jo Crosby at the Ada Township Offices, 7330 Thornapple River Dr., Ada, MI.

PRESENT: Dan Bergman, Betty Jo Crosby, George Haga, Jamie Ladd, Paul Leblanc, Rick Steketee

ABSENT: Randy Damstra, Elise Roe, Jeff VandenBerge

STAFF PRESENT: Jim Ferro, Planning Director
Mark Fitzpatrick, Parks Director
Jessica Ennis, Parks Summer Intern

PUBLIC PRESENT: Three

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MAY 10, 2012 MEETING

It was moved by Bergman, seconded by Steketee, to approve the minutes of the May 10 meeting as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

STATUS OF PROJECTS.

Carl Creek Crossing Property

Ferro reported that the property identification sign has been installed on the Fulton St. frontage of the Carl Creek Crossing Preserve, and distributed photos of the sign. He also reported that the Country Homes of Ada irrigation contractor has not yet prepared a cost estimate for relocation of the water pumping system on the Preserve property.

Cooper Property on Bailey Dr.

Ferro reported he met recently with Dick Cooper, and Cooper informed him he is considering entering into an oil and gas exploration lease on the property. Cooper will provide us with a copy of the lease agreement, so that we can review its terms for possible conflict with a conservation easement.

Vanderboon Property at 1780 Grand River Dr.

Ferro reported on the site visit to the Vanderboon property conducted by him, Crosby and Fitzpatrick, and the results of the evaluation and rating sheets prepared by each for the property. Ferro noted that the average rating on the Advisory Board's point system was slightly below the average for all properties that have been evaluated in the past.

Fitzpatrick described the character of existing vegetation on the property, and stated that if the property is incorporated into Roselle Park, he would want to manage it as natural area, introduce native plantings into areas of the site that have been maintained as mowed lawn, and establish a planted visual border between the park property and the remainder of the Vanderboon property.

Leblanc asked if there is potential for expansion of public ownership along the riverfront to the north. Fitzpatrick stated yes, although there are many narrow parcels to the north.

Leblanc pointed out that land along the Grand River corridor is the highest priority for acquisition in our open space planning, and stated we should take advantage of opportunities to expand public ownership when they arise.

Ferro pointed out that the property owner has indicated he is looking for a purchase price per acre similar to what the Township paid for the adjacent 17.5 acres from the Ada Hospital for Animals in 2006.

He also distributed the results of an in-house appraisal prepared by the Assessor, noting that it was based on 2 comparable sales, one of which was the Township's 2006 acquisition, with an average sale price of \$7, 130 per acre.

Fitzpatrick pointed out that Open Space Preservation Funds contributed to the acquisition of the 17.5 acres from the Ada Hospital for Animals.

Following discussion, it was moved by Haga, seconded by Leblanc, to recommend that the Township pursue entering into an Option Agreement to purchase approximately 3.6 acres of the Vanderboon property, with a purchase price of \$7,130 per acre.

Motion passed unanimously.

Following additional discussion, it was moved by Haga, seconded by Bergman, to recommend that the acquisition of the Vanderboon property be funded entirely from the Open Space Preservation fund.

Motion passed unanimously.

MASTER PLANS FOR CARL CREEK CROSSING PRESERVE AND CARL CREEK WETLAND PRESERVE

Ferro stated a meeting of the Subcommittee consisting of Roe, Crosby and Steketee with the consultant on this project is scheduled for next week.

Crosby asked Dan Bergman if he could participate in this meeting, as Roe will not be able to attend. Bergman stated he would participate if his schedule allows.

ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY AT 4950 KNAPP ST.

Ferro reported on recent price negotiations to acquire the Racine property at 4950 Knapp St., with the most recent activity being a counter-offer from the owner to sell the property for \$60,000. Ferro presented information on the history of price negotiations on the property.

The Board discussed a potential counteroffer, and to what extent open space preservation funds should contribute to this acquisition if it occurs. Haga stated he is willing to consider providing 42% of the Township's share of the acquisition cost from Township general funds, as a substitute for the percentage of the parks and land preservation millage revenues that are allocated to parks.

Leblanc stated he would not support paying more than \$55,000 for the property, especially considering the damage that has been done by removal of the siding from the home.

Haga stated that prior to any acquisition, an evaluation of the property using our point system should be carried out.

Crosby commented that this property would probably rank very low on our rating system.

Following discussion, it was moved by Ladd, seconded by Steketee, to recommend that a counter-offer of \$57,500 be made.

In discussion of the motion, Ladd suggested the possibility of the Open Space Fund contribution being limited based on a \$55,000 purchase price, and the balance needed to acquire the property for \$57,500 be sought from neighborhood contributions.

After discussion, Ladd withdrew the fund-raising suggestion from being included in his motion.

Motion passed by 5-1 vote, with Leblanc voting no.

MARKETING/PROMOTION COMMITTEE REPORT

Crosby reported a meeting of this Committee is scheduled for late June.

MEMBER AND STAFF COMMENTS/REPORTS

Crosby noted she will have a draft of the Advisory Board's annual report to the Township Board completed by the end of the month.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ferro referred the Board to email correspondence from Jennifer Hall, 8889 Vergennes St., in support of the Township's efforts to preserve open space, and encouraging the Township to provide a way for more citizens to provide public input to the Advisory Board.

Crosby called on public in attendance whether they would like to comment.

David Rein, Conservation St. resident, introduced his son, Auden Rein. Auden stated he is from Boy Scout Troop 345, and is present as part of his effort to earn a merit badge.

ADJOURNMENT

Crosby mentioned that the next meeting is scheduled for July 12.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Burton
Township Clerk
RS: jf