

**ADA TOWNSHIP
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES OF THE JULY 9, 2009 MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairperson Betty Jo Crosby.

PRESENT: Betty Jo Crosby, George Haga, Elise Roe, Rick Steketee, Mischelle Sytsma, Jeff VandenBerge (at 4:12), Randy VanDragt

ABSENT: Randy Damstra, Jamie Ladd

STAFF PRESENT: Jim Ferro, Planning Director, Mark Fitzpatrick, Parks Director

PUBLIC PRESENT: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JUNE 11, 2009 MEETING

It was moved by Sytsma, seconded by Steketee, to approve the minutes of the June 11 meeting.

Motion approved by 6-0 vote.

Jeff VandenBerge arrived at this time.

APPROVAL OF ANNUAL REPORT TO TOWNSHIP BOARD

The final draft of the Annual Report was reviewed and minor corrections were made. Crosby noted that the zoning application for a commercial sports center in Vergennes Township, near the Ada Township border, that was referenced in the report had been officially withdrawn by the applicant, according to a newspaper story.

It was moved by Sytsma, seconded by VanDragt, to approve the Annual Report to the Township Board.

Motion passed by 7-0 vote.

STATUS REPORT ON OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION PROJECTS

a. 383 Pettis Ave. Property Acquisition

Ferro reported an updated assessment of market value has been submitted to the State for review and approval. Once approved, a new offer will be submitted to the owner. Ferro stated if the new offer is not accepted by the owner, the owner may obtain its own appraisal for submittal to the State, which then makes a determination as to the fair compensation. Question was raised whether the Township may offer a higher price than the price approved by the State, and pay the difference out of its own funds, without grant participation. Ferro indicated he would inquire about this.

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

Ferro reported he had no new information, and has not spoken with Gilmore or his representative since last month, at which time he was assured that Mr. Gilmore will get this matter resolved.

c. Raymond Property Appraisal.

Ferro reported that the Township Board has approved obtaining an appraisal, and Yankee Appraisal has been given the assignment, which will be completed within a month.

d. VanderWarf Family Trust Property at 2025 and 2200 Honey Creek Ave.

Ferro reported he is in the process of contacting neighbors regarding their possible interest in contributing funds toward making a new offer to the VanderWarf family.

e. Roberts Property at 2455 Pettis Ave. – Status of Site Visit

Ferro reported that a site visit has not yet been conducted.

MARKETING/PROMOTION

Elise Roe reported that photographs are needed for the new open space brochure. Ferro stated that he would provide a few. Elise stated the Committee would continue to work on the brochure.

REPORT ON OPEN SPACE FUNDING

Haga distributed preliminary audit data concerning the status of the open space preservation fund as of March 31, 2009. He reported that a joint committee with representation from both the Parks Committee and Open Space Preservation Advisory Board has recommended that the parks and land preservation millage revenue continue to be allocated on the basis of a 58% Open Space/42% Parks formula.

Based on the preliminary audit data, the open space fund balance was \$876,515 as of March 31.

In discussion, Advisory Board members urged that the data be presented in an easy to understand manner.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ferro distributed copies of a letter received from Ron Isbeque, with input regarding criteria for evaluating candidate open space acquisition sites. In discussion, it was suggested that it would be a good idea to re-examine our open space protection priorities in coming months, since it has been some time since they were reviewed.

MEMBER AND STAFF COMMENTS

Mark Fitzpatrick stated that he anticipates a need to review and update the Action Plan component of the adopted Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan prior to the end of the year. This is necessary in order to prepare for possible submission of a DNR grant application in April, 2010.

Mark also pointed out that the current 5-year Parks millage will expire in 2010, and if the Township desires to have a renewable approved, we will need to have easily understood information available for the public.

PUBLIC COMMENT.

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Crosby noted that the next meeting is scheduled for August 13. VanDragt stated he would be absent.

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

Respectfully submitted:

Susan Burton
Ada Township Clerk
rs:jf