

**ADA TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD  
MINUTES OF THE JULY 10, 2014 MEETING**

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

Members present: Bergman, Crosby, Damstra, Haga, Ladd, Roe, Steketee and VandenBerge

Absent: LeBlanc

Staff present: Planning Director Ferro, Parks Director Fitzpatrick

Public present: None

**APPROVAL OF REVISED AGENDA:**

It was moved by Steketee, seconded by Ladd, to approve the revised agenda distributed by Ferro, which added "Review of Preliminary Plans for Roselle Park Resource Building" and "Review of Potential Preservation Project – 8835 Conservation St." to the agenda.

Motion passed unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JUNE 19, 2014 MEETING:**

It was moved by VandenBerge, seconded by Steketee, to approve the minutes of the June 19, 2014 meeting as presented. Motion passed by unanimously.

(Note: Damstra arrived at 4:05 p.m.)

**APPROVAL OF ANNUAL REPORT TO TOWNSHIP BOARD:**

It was moved by Steketee, seconded by Haga, to approve the draft annual report to the Township Board.

Motion passed unanimously.

(Note: Roe arrived at 4:10 p.m.)

**STATUS OF PROJECTS:**

a. Cooper Property Conservation Easement

Ferro reported that following the June meeting, he ~~proved~~ provided a copy of the appraisal report for the value of a possible conservation easement on a portion of the Cooper property to Mr. Cooper. After reviewing the appraisal report, Cooper met with his financial advisor, who has advised him to hold off making any decision on a conservation easement until the outcome of pending federal legislation that would permanently re-establish the "enhanced" income tax deduction provisions in the federal tax code for donated conservation easements.

Ferro stated his understanding is that this legislation was reported favorably out of a House Committee recently, and is expected to be taken up by the full House of Representatives soon. In addition, the bill has a sufficient number of co-sponsors to ensure its passage by the House, after which it would be considered by the Senate.

Crosby stated there is no action by the Advisory Board needed at this time.

(Note: Bergman arrived at 4:15 p.m.)

b. 970 Buttrick Ave. Property

Ferro stated this property is adjacent to the 980 Buttrick Ave property that was acquired last year. He stated he

recently spoke with the owner, and indicated to him that the Township would be unlikely to pay any more than \$20,000 for the 2-acre rear portion of the property, considering its wetland status, and the fact that the property owner would still retain sufficient acreage to divide it and create a second building site. Ferro stated this was far below the amount proposed to us by the property owner, which was about \$60,000. Ferro stated that the property owner's response was that he would probably just sit on the property for now.

c. 2231 Shady Dr. Property:

Ferro stated we would be closing soon on the acquisition of the 2231 Shady Dr. property, pending obtaining a title insurance commitment.

Ladd asked if the DNR had been contacted regarding obtaining the property, since it is adjacent to their property. Ferro stated that the County had offered it to the DNR, but obtained no response.

Ladd suggested that after closing on the property we contact the DNR ourselves to see if they would be interested in acquiring the property from the Township.

### **STATUS OF CARL CREEK CROSSING PRESERVE IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT AND CULVERT REPLACEMENT**

Ferro reported on the Subcommittee meeting held recently with Trevor Bosworth from Viridis Design Group. He noted that the Subcommittee gave direction to modify the plan to eliminate asphalt paving of the parking area, and use a gravel surface instead, and to substitute boulders that the Township has on hand at Ada Park instead of a raised sidewalk to define the edge of the parking area. In addition, Bosworth has submitted a request for a pre-application meeting with the DEQ concerning permitting for boardwalk crossings of the stream and adjacent wetlands.

### **REVIEW OF PRELIMINARY PLANS FOR ROSELLE PARK RESOURCE BUILDING**

Parks Director Fitzpatrick presented the preliminary plans and cost estimate for the Roselle Park Resource Building. He noted that there are still a few items in the scope of the project for which refined cost estimates are needed. He described some of the changes that have been made to the project to reduce cost, including removal of the proposed green roof on a portion of the building.

Roe stated that she would support adding the green roof back to the project scope, as she believes it would set an example of good environmental stewardship, and would have educational value.

Damstra stated he agreed with Roe's sentiment, and felt it was an item for which a donor could be found.

Ladd suggested including the green roof as a bid alternate, so we would know the cost and could seek a donor.

Fitzpatrick stated that we need to assemble a package of project components that interested donors could sponsor, and that the completed preliminary plan is needed to prepare a list of these items.

Jeff VandenBerge suggested the need for snow retention devices on the metal roof to protect areas adjacent to the building from sliding snow.

### **DISCUSSION OF ALLOCATION OF PARKS AND LAND PRESERVATION MILLAGE FUNDS**

Damstra stated that the discussion regarding the Resource Building design and cost estimate leads into a discussion of how to pay for the building. He stated he believes that with the upcoming expiration of the Parks and Land Preservation millage at the end of 2016, he believes that spending part of the open space

preservation fund balance on the building will enhance the ability to obtain voter approval of a renewal of the millage.

Ladd asked how much from the open space preservation fund has already been committed to the building. Haga responded \$150,000 was transferred from the open space fund in 2013, and an additional \$100,000 is budgeted to be transferred this year. Haga stated that a total of \$250,000 in General Fund money has also been designated for the project, so there is \$500,000 total set aside toward the \$1 million cost estimate for the building project.

Board members discussed the merits of allocating an additional \$500,000 in open space funds toward the project.

Ladd asked how much would remain in the open space fund balance if \$500,000 in additional funds were so allocated.

Ferro responded that based on the March 30, 2014 year-end fund balance of about \$1.3 million, and with an additional \$100,000 in open space funds allocated in this year's budget, this would leave approximately \$700,000, without accounting for this year's budgeted revenues and other expenditures.

VandenBerge stated he has reviewed the original ballot proposal language, and is comfortable that the ballot proposal wording does not interfere with allocation of additional funds for the proposed building. VandenBerge raised a question as to whether the provisions of the open space ordinance would permit this, however.

Ladd suggested that an opinion be sought from legal counsel regarding VandenBerge's question.

Following discussion, it was moved by Steketee, seconded by Haga, to recommend an additional transfer of funds not to exceed \$500,000 from the open space preservation fund to the Parks fund for the Roselle Park Resource Building, provided that such a transfer is determined to be in conformance with the provisions of the open space preservation ordinance, in the opinion of Township legal counsel.

In discussion of the motion, Damstra stated that he believes that there will be considerable interest by Township residents in making donations toward the cost of the building project.

Ladd asked whether the receipt of donations toward the costs of the project would be credited back to the open space preservation fund, to reduce the amount of needed open space funding.

Haga stated a credit back to the open space preservation fund could be made in the Township's accounts.

On a call for a vote on the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

## **REVIEW OF POTENTIAL PRESERVATION PROJECT – 8835 CONSERVATION ST.**

Ferro reported he and Crosby have been contacted by Tom Korth about the potential for Open Space Preservation Program involvement in preserving a 2.4 acre vacant lot on Conservation St. as permanent open space. Ferro stated the site has just over 300 feet of frontage on Honey Creek. He referred Board members to additional information regarding the property contained in his memo to the Advisory Board, including aerial photos of the property and the vicinity.

Crosby noted that the most significant point noted in Ferro's memo was the potential for preservation of this property being part of a larger effort to preserve additional creek frontage on properties in the surrounding area.

Ladd stated that he believes there is an opportunity here to achieve preservation of the 8835 Conservation St. property at no cost to the Township, through use of a conservation easement and funds raised from within the neighborhood to compensate the property owner for the reduced value of the property. Ladd stated he also believes there is potential to expand the preservation effort to other properties along the creek, both upstream and downstream of the 8835 Conservation property.

A Subcommittee consisting of Advisory Board members Ladd, Roe and VandenBerge was appointed to meet with the property owner and Tom Korth regarding options for preservation of the property.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Susan Burton Township Clerk  
RS: jf