

**ADA TOWNSHIP
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES OF THE JULY 12, 2012 MEETING**

A regular meeting of the Open Space Preservation Advisory Board was held on Thursday, July 12, 2012. The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairperson Betty Jo Crosby at the Ada Township Offices, 7330 Thornapple River Dr., Ada, MI.

PRESENT: Dan Bergman, Betty Jo Crosby, Randy Damstra, George Haga, Paul Leblanc, Elise Roe, Rick Steketee, Jeff VandenBerge

ABSENT: Jamie Ladd

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

PUBLIC PRESENT: Trevor Bosworth, Viridis Design Group

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JUNE 14, 2012 MEETING

It was moved by Leblanc, seconded by Steketee, to approve the minutes of the June 14 meeting as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

STATUS OF PROJECTS

Property at 4950 Knapp St.

Ferro reported verbal agreement has been reached and Township Board authorization approved for acquisition of the property for a purchase price of \$58,000, including Township Board approval of the proposed cost-sharing formula with the Road Commission and the allocation of the Township's cost share between the General Fund and the Open Space Preservation Fund. Ferro stated we are still waiting for a signed purchase agreement from the seller.

Carl Creek Crossing –Irrigation System Modifications

Ferro reported on a phone conversation with the irrigation system consultant for the Country Homes of Ada. Ferro reported the consultant stated he has been too busy with ongoing projects to prepare a proposal and cost estimate for re-locating the irrigation pumping system and piping to the east side of the creek.

A suggestion was made to find another source of expertise for a proposal, or request the Condo Association to communicate with the consultant to obtain the proposal.

Cooper Property

Ferro distributed copies of an oil and gas exploration lease that Dick Cooper is considering entering into on two of the large properties that he owns. Ferro stated Cooper contacted him to let us know that he is considering the lease, and inquired whether entering into the lease would affect our interest in a conservation easement. In discussion, concerns were expressed that the land disturbance that could be undertaken on the property under the terms of the lease could have a significant impact on the natural features that the Township would seek to preserve in a conservation easement.

Following discussion, it was moved by Roe, seconded by VandenBerge, to direct that written communication be sent to the Coopers stating that if the oil and gas lease is entered into, the Advisory Board would undertake no further effort or discussions regarding obtaining a conservation easement on the property.

Motion passed unanimously.

Property at 1780 Grand River Dr.

Ferro reported he has left two voicemail messages with the property owner and has not yet received a reply.

Master Plans for Carl Creek Wetland Preserve and Carl Creek Crossing Preserve Properties

Trevor Bosworth, ASLA, from Viridis Design Group, presented the draft Master Plans that he has prepared for the Carl Creek Crossing Preserve and the Carl Creek Wetland Preserve, based on input provided from Subcommittee members at a recent meeting. Both plans provide for installing paved parking areas for 6 vehicles, a network of 6-foot wide trails constructed of compacted crushed stone placed over a geo-textile fabric, 6-foot wide elevated boardwalk over wetland areas, site signs, interpretive signs and benches, with both projects divided into two phases. Bosworth provided cost estimates for the improvements for both preserves, with a total estimate of \$164,738 for the Carl Creek Crossing Preserve, and \$179,746 for the Carl Creek Wetland Preserve.

Board members provided feedback on the plans, including refinement of phasing plans, and reduction in amount of parking at the Carl Creek Wetland Preserve. Advisory Board members discussed whether the installation of improved trails is consistent with the Township's management goals for the properties, particularly for the Carl Creek Wetland Preserve property, which has natural features with much less existing disturbance than is the case for the Carl Creek Crossing property.

The consensus of the Advisory Board was that Subcommittee members should give further consideration to the draft plans, after conducting site visits to the properties. It was also noted that the Carl Creek Wetland Preserve Plan should be shown to the adjoining property owner on Alta Dale Ave. for input.

4. Annual Report to Township Board

The Board reviewed the proposed Annual Report to the Township Board prepared by Crosby and Ferro. Haga suggested that detailed information on Board member attendance was not needed in the report. The consensus of the Advisory Board was to remove this detail from the report.

Following discussion, it was moved by Haga, seconded by Roe, to approve the Annual Report, with changes as suggested by Haga.

Motion passed unanimously.

6. Marketing/Promotion Committee Report

Members of the Marketing Subcommittee – Crosby, Leblanc, Roe and Steketee, reported on their recent meeting and progress in preparing a letter to targeted property owners, to market the Township's open space preservation program and encourage preservation of natural lands using conservation easements, held either by the Township or the Land Conservancy of West Michigan. It was noted that Subcommittee members provided feedback to Ferro on suggested revisions to a draft letter he had prepared. Subcommittee work will continue on completing the letter and selecting property owners to receive the letter.

Damstra suggested taking a personalized approach with a small number of individual property owners, rather than a "boilerplate" letter with a large number of property owners.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Burton
Township Clerk
RS: jf