

**ADA TOWNSHIP
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 9, 2012 MEETING**

A regular meeting of the Open Space Preservation Advisory Board was held on Thursday, August 9, 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, Paul Leblanc, Elise Roe, Rick Steketee, Jeff VandenBerge

ABSENT: George Haga, Jamie Ladd

STAFF PRESENT: Jim Ferro, Planning Director

PUBLIC PRESENT: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JULY 12, 2012 MEETING

It was moved by Steketee, seconded by Bergman, to approve the minutes of the July 12 meeting as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

STATUS OF PROJECTS

Property at 4950 Knapp St.

Ferro reported the purchase agreement has not yet been signed by the property owner.

Carl Creek Crossing –Irrigation System Modifications

Ferro reported he has left several messages with the management company for the condominium association, requesting them to push the irrigation contractor for a price quote on relocating the pumping equipment and getting rid of the above-ground piping. Ferro stated the management company is in a better position to get a response from the irrigation contractor, since they are the contractor's client.

Cooper Property

Ferro reported on Dick Cooper's inquiry as to whether the Township would be willing to continue discussions about a conservation easement on the southern portion of his property, if he limits the area subject to an oil and gas lease to the northern portion of the property. Ferro pointed out that the two southerly parcels owned by Cooper, with about 117 acres, is the hilly, wooded land that contains the high quality natural features we have been interested in preserving, while the northern, 92-acre parcel is primarily old field, which we have not been focusing on for preservation.

In discussion, VandenBerge stated he sees no objections to accomplishing preservation of a portion of the property with a conservation easement, but that the presence of an oil and gas lease on the northern property would significantly reduce the value of the development rights on the southern properties, and should be taken into account in any negotiations.

Ferro read written comment that had been submitted by Ladd, in which he urged that we not entertain any conservation easement on any portion of the property, if an oil and gas lease is entered into on the remainder of the property.

Damstra suggested we should pursue obtaining a conservation easement on the entire property, and more aggressively pursue the matter with the property owner. The consensus of the Board was to pursue a conservation easement on the entire property. Ferro will contact Cooper regarding this.

Property at 1780 Grand River Dr.

Ferro reported on communication with the property owner regarding a potential acquisition price.

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

Crosby reported that the Subcommittee is waiting for weather conditions to moderate before site visits to the properties are made, before further revisions to the draft Master Plans are made.

MARKETING/PROMOTION

Ferro presented mapping of 6 proposed areas of the Township, as potential areas of focus for a mailing and follow-up contacts with property owners, regarding use of conservation easements to preserve natural features on their properties. Ferro noted that the 6 target areas were selected based on consideration of adopted priorities in the Open Space Preservation Plan, results of the 2006 natural features inventory conducted for the Township by Calvin College, topography and location of existing lands protected by public ownership and conservation easements. Ferro stated there are about 35 property owners in the 6 areas.

In discussion, it was suggested that the target areas and property owners should be prioritized, and that we should be more aggressively pursuing acquisition of conservation easements on high priority properties.

Damstra suggested that the Township obtain outside assistance, using temporary interns, to develop an estimate of total cost for preserving all of the targeted areas. GVSU and Aquinas College were suggested as possible sources of assistance, which Ferro will pursue.

Steketee suggested that in view of the fact that the future use of the Amway facility on Spaulding Ave. has been decided, we should re-contact Amway about a possible conservation easement on that property. Ferro suggested immediately contacting the two major property owners on the Grand River, north of Knapp St. It was agreed Ferro and Crosby would follow up.

Damstra suggested a video documentary be developed regarding our achievements in preserving land along the Carl Creek corridor, and that this could possibly be a good project for a high school media class. Roe stated she would contact Calvin College and the Media teacher at Eastern High School about the possibility of such a project.

The suggestion was also made that the Township should communicate again with Amway Corp. regarding conservation easement possibilities at the Catalog Warehouse property on Spaulding Ave., now that the future use of that property has been determined.

PUBLIC COMMENT None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Burton
Township Clerk
RS: jf

Note: Approved revisions to draft minutes denoted by underscore and overstrike marks.