

**ADA TOWNSHIP
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 11, 2011 MEETING**

A regular meeting of the Open Space Preservation Advisory Board was held on Thursday, August 11, 2011. 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: Betty Jo Crosby, Randy Damstra, George Haga, Jamie Ladd, Elise Roe, Rick Steketee, Jeff VandenBerge

ABSENT: Randy VanDragt

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

PUBLIC PRESENT: None

Crosby noted that Mischelle Sytsma, having resigned from the Township Board, was no longer a member of the Advisory Board. Crosby asked Haga whether another Board member would be appointed to this body. Haga responded that the Township Board will be appointing a replacement Board member by mid-September, and his hope was that the appointee will be able to also serve on this Advisory Board and Mischelle's other committee appointments.

APPROVAL OF JUNE 9, 2011 MEETING MINUTES

Ladd requested clarification of financial data contained in the Annual Report to the Township Board that was approved at the June 9 meeting. Ferro and Haga stated they would review this information for possible corrections.

It was moved by VandenBerge, seconded by Steketee, to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2011 meeting as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

STATUS OF PROJECTS

a. Bottrall Property – Status of Demolition, Gate Installation and Sign

Ferro reported that the demolition contract has been signed. An asbestos survey has been completed, and an area of about 140 square feet of asbestos floor tile has been identified. Ferro stated that the fee quote from the contractor for asbestos abatement is \$750, and that this work can be completed in the next week. Ferro reported that the gate installation is being delayed until after demolition is complete, and the site sign is ready to be installed.

b. 383 Pettis Property – Sign

Ferro reported that a site sign for this property is also ready to be installed.

c. Cooper Property on Bailey Dr.

Ferro reported that the timber harvest operation has been completed on the Cooper property, and Dick Cooper is now cleaning up tree tops that were left behind, before inviting the Advisory Board to visit the property again. Ferro stated that Cooper has also retained a certified forester to prepare a forest stewardship plan for the property.

e. VanderWarf Property

Ferro reported that the VanderWarf property on the east side of Honey Creek Ave. has been sold, and that he was told by the realtor that the new owner has no plans to develop the property. It was noted that we should contact the new owner in the future about possible interest in a conservation easement.

f. Gilmore Property Mortgage Release, Letter to Property Owner

Crosby reported she has sent a letter to John Gilmore requesting the title encumbrance on the property that was conveyed to the Township by quit claim deed be addressed.

g. Vos Property – Status of Irrigation System and Option Extension

Ferro reported on his meeting with members from the Country Homes of Ada Condominium Association, regarding their interest in abandoning their irrigation system easement on the Vos property, and the water withdrawal system from the creek. Ferro stated the Association has completed an evaluation of the additional annual costs they would incur if they convert to the Township water system for their irrigation system. Ferro noted there is some uncertainty about their future added cost, based on uncertainty regarding how much they would be able to reduce their water usage from current levels. They are confident that they can implement measures to lower their water use, but are not certain as to how much of a reduction can be achieved. The Association Board stated that ideally, they would like to be able to implement water use reduction measures for the next year before negotiating an agreement with us to abandon the current water supply, so that they can be more certain of their future costs for water. Ferro stated that another option that was brought up was revising their current system to move the pump house and pumping equipment off the Vos property, but retain the water withdrawal component in the creek.

In discussion, the Advisory Board consensus was that re-locating the pump house but retaining the creek as a water source was not a desirable option. The Board's preference if the Township purchases the property is to achieve removal of the entire system from the creek and Vos property. In addition, the Board requested staff to look into whether the Association's withdrawing of water from the creek for irrigation is a lawful activity.

The Board discussed whether a payment offer should be made to the Association at this time. In discussion, the consensus was that we should first complete the Phase 2 environmental survey work recommended by the Township's environmental consultant, and request an extension of the purchase option with Gary Vos.

Following discussion, it was moved by Haga, seconded by Roe, to recommend retaining Dixon Environmental to complete the Phase 2 environmental survey work in accordance with their proposal and fee quote of \$5,615, and to pursue obtaining a new option agreement or extension of the previous option agreement to October 14, 2011.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Note: Advisory Board member Damstra left the meeting at this time.

BIELEMA PROPERTY, PRELIMINARY SITE EVALUATION.

Crosby presented a summary of the written site evaluation report that was prepared following the site visit to the Bielema property in early July by herself, Ferro and Dave Warners from Calvin College.

Crosby noted the report conclusion that the natural features of the property have been significantly altered by timber removal and conversion of woodland to pasture, and grazing of cattle in sensitive wetland areas, with free access of cattle to the river.

Following discussion, it was moved by Ladd, seconded by Roe, that the Advisory Board not pursue acquisition of the Bielema property, based on the findings of the site visit report.

Motion passed unanimously.

STATUS OF PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE

Fitzpatrick and Ferro reported that they have prepared a revised schedule for completion of the new plan, with public review and comment and Township Board approval scheduled for December, 2011.

Ferro noted that there will be additional 2010 Census data released next week that will be useful in the plan.

STATUS OF STEWARDSHIP PLANS/SCHEDULES FOR OPEN SPACE PROPERTIES

Mark Fitzpatrick reported we should schedule fall stewardship activities at park and open space properties at this time. This topic was briefly discussed. It was requested that stewardship activity at the Carl Creek Crossing property on Grand River Dr. be placed on the September meeting agenda for discussion. Crosby suggested she, Fitzpatrick and Ferro meet to set some dates and priorities for activities, so that volunteer recruitment efforts can begin. A meeting date of Friday, August 19 was set.

STATUS OF CONTRACT SERVICES WITH LAND CONSERVANCY

Ferro reported he has not received a proposed contract from April Scholtz.

STATUS OF REVISIONS TO RIPARIAN PROTECTION STANDARDS.

The Planning Commission' deliberation regarding proposed revisions to the riparian protection standards in the zoning regulations was discussed. Crosby noted that the public hearing held at the July Planning Commission meeting has been continued to the August 18 meeting, and that she will be attending.

Ferro was asked to place information regarding the riparian protection standards revision proposal on the Township web site.

MEMBER AND STAFF COMMENTS/REPORTS

Staff was asked to place on the September agenda for discussion the matter of a suitable memorial in the Township for Bette Roberts.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

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

It was noted by Crosby that the next meeting of the Advisory Board is scheduled for September 8.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Burton
Township Clerk
RS: jf