

**ADA TOWNSHIP  
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD  
MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2009 MEETING**

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

**PRESENT:** Randy Damstra, George Haga, Jamie Ladd, Elise Roe, Rick Steketee, Mischelle Sytsma, Jeff VandenBerge, Randy VanDragt

**ABSENT:** Betty Jo Crosby

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

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 13, 2009 MEETING**

The minutes were declared approved by consensus of the Board.

**STATUS OF PROJECTS**

**1. 383 Pettis Ave. Property Acquisition**

Ferro reported that the contract that had been pending on the property with another party had fallen through, after inspections, and the property is once again on the market. Ferro reviewed the written information provided to members regarding the financial cost to the Township if we abandoned the grant funding and pursued acquisition of the property using solely Township funds, compared to the original grant-funded budget, and compared to the a revised acquisition budget based on acquiring the property, with the grant funding assistance, at a much lower purchase price than originally budgeted.

Ferro summarized that the cost to the Township of acquiring the property and converting it to open space without the grant funding would be approximately twice the cost to the Township that was originally estimated two years ago, and 4 times the cost if we are able to acquire the property now at a much lower purchase price, with the grant funding.

The Advisory Board discussed the merits of abandoning the grant versus continuing our efforts to convince the owner to go along with the procedure set forth in the grant program, which requires the owner to submit their own appraisal, if they are unwilling to accept our offer.

Following discussion, it was moved by Haga, seconded by VanDragt, to direct that the Michigan Department of State Police be contacted to inquire whether the costs of a new appraisal from an outside source would be eligible for grant reimbursement, whether the State would consider the results of a new appraisal and possibly authorize a higher offering price, and if so, to direct that the Township order an appraisal of the property.

Motion passed unanimously.

**2. Raymond Property Appraisal – Status of Appraisal**

Ferro reported we still have not received the completed appraisal report from Yankee & Associates. Ferro stated he did have a lengthy conversation with Mr. Yankee early in the week, and Mr. Yankee shared with him the results of his analysis, indicating a value for the development rights on the property of approximately \$6,000 per acre. Ferro noted that this was substantially higher than the value that was determined for the VanderWarf property on Honey Creek Ave.

The consensus of the Board was to defer any action until the appraisal report is received.

**3. Carlson Property at 409 Pettis Ave. SE**

The Board reviewed rating sheets from Crosby and Ferro that were in the Board members' packets, and VanDragt distributed copies of his rating sheet. It was observed that the ratings were at the low end of the range of all properties that the Board has evaluated in the past.

The consensus of the Board was that acquisition of the building did not rank highly as an open space protection priority, but that achieving protection and restoration to natural conditions of the land along the riverfront would be a priority, possibly in conjunction with protection of adjoining land upstream to the M-21 bridge.

It was suggested that the Township pursue the possibility of acquisition of land along the river from any purchaser of the Carlson property, and that the possibility of acquiring additional land upstream be pursued with the owners of adjoining property.

**4. Jakeway Property on Two Mile Rd.**

Ferro reported he has spoken to Helen Jakeway, and she stated they would be interested in a possible development rights acquisition transaction with the Township.

The consensus of the Board was that more serious interest from the Jakeway family would need to be shown, by sharing in the costs of an appraisal.

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

A date was set for a site visit to the Roberts property, on Monday, October 5.

**DRAFT OPEN SPACE BROCHURE**

Elise Roe reported on the status of the brochure. The Marketing Committee is planning to schedule a meeting with a staff member from the Land Conservancy of West Michigan, for her input on the draft brochure.

**MEMBER AND STAFF COMMENTS**

Mark Fitzpatrick reported on discussion taking place among the Stewardship Network members regarding priorities for invasive species control, and development of an "Early Detection and Rapid Response program. The direction that their effort is taking is to focus attention and resources on control of three invasive species that have not yet gained a strong foothold in the area – Swallow-wort, Japanese Knotweed and Oriental Bittersweet.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

Respectfully submitted:

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Susan Burton  
Ada Township Clerk  
rs:jf