

**ADA TOWNSHIP
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2008 MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m., by Chairperson Betty Jo Crosby.

PRESENT: Betty Jo Crosby, Jamie Ladd, Elise Roe, Mischelle Sytsma, Randy VanDragt

ABSENT: George Haga, Rick Steketee

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director Jim Ferro
Parks Director Mark Fitzpatrick

PUBLIC PRESENT: Approximately 5.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 14, 2008 MEETING

It was moved by Sytsma, seconded by Roe, to approve the minutes of the August 14 meeting.

Motion passed unanimously.

CONSERVATION EASEMENT ON PROPERTY AT 2025 AND 2200 HONEY CREEK AVE.

Ferro reviewed the revised proposals received for conducting an appraisal of the value of the development rights on one or both of the properties owned by the Ethel VanderWarf Family Trust. He noted that the proposals include as an option including evaluation of potential enhancement of the value of adjacent family-owned properties, resulting from being adjacent to permanent open space land.

Following discussion, it was moved by Ladd, seconded by VanDragt, to recommend the selection of Soper & Associates to conduct the appraisal, to include evaluating enhancement of adjoining property, for a professional fee of \$9,000.

Motion passed unanimously.

Ferro next reviewed the draft conservation easement terms that have been prepared to date, noting that they may still be subject to negotiation, and have not been approved by the VanderWarf family.

Ferro asked whether it was the intent of the Advisory Board that the appraisal recommendation be forwarded to the Township Board at this time, and the unanimous consensus was to move forward with presenting the recommendation to the Township Board.

It was moved by Sytsma, seconded by Roe, to next consider Item 4,C., Nomination of Property at 5504 Ada Dr. by Ron Isbeque.

NOMINATION OF PROPERTY AT 5504 ADA DR BY RON ISBEQUE

The Advisory Board reviewed the nomination forms and supporting narrative submitted by Ron Isbeque, Abbey Mill Dr., proposing that the Township seek to acquire, through donation, preferably, or by purchase, the property at 5504 Ada Dr. Mr. Isbeque was present, and commented that there is a lack of park space in this area, as well as a high population nearby. Ferro distributed an aerial photo of the 10-acre property.

In discussion, it was noted that the adjacent property, with similar natural features, had been evaluated by the Advisory Board when it was on the market, and it had not rated high on our rating system. The consensus of the Board was that this proposal should be referred to the Parks Committee. It was also suggested that a preliminary evaluation of this property should be conducted by a subcommittee.

DISCUSSION OF CARL CREEK WETLAND PRESERVE

Ferro and Crosby reported that we have not yet received a response from Sue Schalon regarding removal of the encroaching fire pit. Ferro distributed a news article about a similar encroachment issue in East Grand Rapids, where the adjacent property owners are cooperating with the City's request that they remove lawn and landscape encroachments on a City-owned natural area. Crosby stated she would send this article to Sue Schalon to point out to her that our position is not unique or unreasonable.

Plans for the October 12 dedication event at the Preserve property were discussed, as well as plans to distribute copies of the recorded conservation easement and educational material about proper stewardship of the property to the residents of the surrounding area.

At this time, Ferro distributed written comments on the VanderWarf property appraisal proposals he had received by e-mail from George Haga. The Board reviewed and discussed Mr. Haga's comments. Ferro asked whether the Board wished to reconsider its earlier recommendation, and the consensus of the Board was that Haga's comments could be addressed at the Township Board level.

383 PETTIS AVE. PROPERTY ACQUISITION

Ferro reported there is no change in the status of this project. We are still waiting for the mortgage companies to sign off on our offer.

GILMORE/MDOT PROPERTY ON FORMER THORNAPPLE RIVER – STATUS OF TITLE

Ferro reported he spoke to Rick Rankin today, and he has prepared the quit claim deed, and needs to arrange a meeting with Mr. Gilmore and the bank.

RECOMMENDATION ON FUNDING CONTRIBUTION TO KENT COUNTY PARKS FOR CHIEF HAZY CLOUD PARK

Ferro stated he has not yet received the Level I Environmental Assessment that was being obtained by Kent County for the property they acquired.

MARKETING/PROMOTION

The Advisory Board reviewed the map of Grand River corridor properties prepared by the staff. It was suggested that we should look into whether there is already a conservation easement placed on a portion of the Gilmore property on Grand River Dr., in connection with the wetland mitigation area that was created there.

The Advisory Board also requested that a preliminary site evaluation be conducted of property owned by Bette Roberts on Pettis Ave. and Amway Capital Corp property on Ada Dr. A committee comprised of VanDragt, Ferro and Sytsma was appointed to do this.

Mark Fitzpatrick, Park Director, reported that work is moving forward on obtaining the NWF Community Wildlife Habitat Certification.

Ferro reported on the results to date of United Growth for Kent County's agricultural land owner outreach program. He noted that one family in the far northeast corner of the Township had requested a meeting.

CANDIDATES FOR APPOINTMENT TO ADVISORY BOARD

The Board reviewed the two applications which had been forwarded to the Board by Haga, for consideration as appointees to the Open Space Advisory Board. Ferro noted that Haga was inviting the Advisory Board's input for one appointee. The second vacant position is required to be filled by a Parks Committee member.

It was moved by Ladd, seconded by Sytsma, to recommend the appointment of Jeff Vandenberg to the Advisory Board.

Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Deborah Ensing Millhuff, CMC
Ada Township Clerk
rs:jf