

**ADA TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD  
MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 8, 2012 MEETING**

A regular meeting of the Open Space Preservation Advisory Board was held on Thursday, November 8, 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

**ABSENT:** Jamie Ladd, Jeff VandenBerge

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

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Corey

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 11, 2012 MEETING**

Crosby noted that Roe chaired the October meeting, in Crosby's absence, and this should be corrected in the minutes. It was moved by Steketee, seconded by Roe, to approve the minutes of the October 11 meeting, with a correction to note that the meeting was chaired by Roe.

Motion passed unanimously.

**STATUS OF PROJECTS**

a. 4950 Knapp St. – Status of Demolition/Intersection Improvements

Ferro reported that the demolition contract has been awarded by the Road Commission, and the contract calls for demolition of the home to be completed by the end of November. Haga reported that the County is planning a grant-funded intersection improvement project for 2013 completion.

b. Carl Creek Crossing Preserve –Irrigation System Modifications

Ferro reported on the information that was obtained by Dan Bergman from the GVSU Facilities Department, regarding the cost of an irrigation pump system to withdraw water from a pond at the Allendale campus. Ferro stated that based on the differences in pumping capacity and the relative costs of the GVSU system compared to the cost estimate for the Carl Creek system obtained from the condominium association's irrigation contractor, the cost estimate provided to the Township does not appear to be unreasonable.

Haga stated he has talked to Gary Vos about meeting in the future to visit the property, to see if any assistance can be obtained from Dan Vos Construction in modifying the water withdrawal system.

Ferro was asked to look into the possibility of moving the portable bridge structure that was dislodged in the past and is currently located in the middle of the creek channel, and whether it could be put back in place across the creek, and used to screen the above-ground piping.

c. Cooper Property

Ferro reported that Dick Cooper has engaged a consultant to prepare a concept plan for a small developing consisting of 4 lots that would be accessed from a private drive off Boynton Ave. The lots would be located on the old field portion of the property and would not affect the wooded portions of the property that we have been most interested in preserving.

Ferro stated that Cooper has indicated he would like the Township to provide him with information regarding the impact a conservation easement would have on the property tax assessment of the affected property, before he decides whether to share in the cost of an appraisal of the value of the development rights on the

property. Ferro stated he would be discussing this with the Assessor. It was suggested that some guidelines be developed to provide property owners with some idea of how their property tax assessments would be affected by placing conservation easements on their property.

- d. Property at 1780 Grand River Dr.

Ferro reported he is waiting to hear back from the property owner to complete price negotiations.

#### **4. Marketing/Promotion Committee Report**

- a. Update on Discussions with Calvin College for Video Production Project in 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester

Ferro reported on a meeting he and Roe had with a Calvin College instructor and students regarding Calvin's production of a promotional video for the open space preservation program as a student project. Ferro introduced Corey, a Calvin student, who presented brief video "footage" that was shot at the recent volunteer stewardship work day that was held at the Carl Creek Crossing Preserve. Ferro stated that the project would be overseen by Jake Bosmeijer, Chief Engineer at the DeVos Communications Center at Calvin. Ferro stated that the project would begin after the first of the year as a second semester project, to be completed in mid-May. He stated that he has not obtained a proposal from Calvin for the project yet, as Bosmeijer proposes to have preparation of a proposal included as part of the students' project activity.

In discussion, Ferro was asked to discuss with Bosmeijer whether preparation of a proposal could be accelerated and be provided prior to the end of the year.

- b. Update on Discussions with GVSU regarding project to estimate cost to acquire targeted lands.

Ferro presented a proposal obtained from the GVSU's Sustainability Community Development Initiative for services in developing an estimate of total cost to acquire conservation easements on high priority natural land in the Township, based on mapping of priority areas he presented to the Advisory Board previously.

In discussion, Leblanc expressed concern with a disclaimer statement in the proposal indicating that the proposed project fee was an estimate only, and could be higher. He also expressed concern that there was no information included regarding qualifications of students who would be working on the project.

Damstra commented that he had originally had in mind that this task could be done as a student research project at no cost.

The consensus of the Board was that we should further investigate using in-house resources to complete this task.

- c. Update on Property Owner Outreach

Crosby reported on a meeting she and Ferro held with Jim and Marsha Vogt, owners of 125 acres of land located between Pettis Ave. and the Grand River, much of which is floodplain land, as well as steep, wooded slopes. Crosby stated that it was a productive meeting that re-kindled the property owners' interest in considering the possibility of permanently protecting a portion of their property.

#### **5. Member and Staff Comments/Reports**

- a. Master Plans for Carl Creek Wetland Preserve and Carl Creek Crossing Preserve Properties

Ferro was requested to schedule a subcommittee meeting to complete review of the draft Master Plans for the two preserves.

- b. Appointment of Subcommittee on Riparian Protection Rules

Crosby stated she is willing to serve on a subcommittee to meet with Planning Commission members regarding the riparian protection regulations. Crosby also suggested VandenBerge be assigned as well.

#### **MEMBER/STAFF COMMENTS**

Ferro brought to the Advisory Board's attention the 4 acre former church property on Buttrick Ave that is currently for sale. Ferro stated the property extends back to the rail line, and much of the property is wetland that is contiguous to wetlands in Ada Township Park. He noted that the property is separated from Ada Park by one other property that, if also acquired, could potentially be an extension of the natural area within Ada Park.

In discussion, Board members commented that in view of the fact that wetland status already limits the development potential of the property, it was not a high priority for acquisition using open space preservation funds.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Respectfully submitted,

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Susan Burton  
Township  
Clerk  
RS: jf