

**ADA TOWNSHIP
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 13, 2008 MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairperson Betty Jo Crosby. Crosby welcomed newly-appointed member Jeff Vandenberg.

PRESENT: Betty Jo Crosby, George Haga, Jamie Ladd, Elise Roe, Mischelle Sytsma, Jeff Vandenberg, Randy VanDragt

ABSENT: Rick Steketee

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director Jim Ferro
Parks Director Mark Fitzpatrick

PUBLIC PRESENT: Kendra Wills, Kent/MSU Extension
Bryan Harrison, Caledonia Township Supervisor
Raj and Sunita Agrawal

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2008 MEETING

It was moved by Sytsma, seconded by Roe, to approve the minutes of the September 11 meeting.

Motion passed unanimously.

UPDATE ON UNITED GROWTH FOR KENT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL LAND OWNER OUTREACH PROGRAM

Kendra Wills from Kent MSU Extension updated the Board on the results of the mailing and follow-up phone calls that were made to owners of large undeveloped properties in the Township, offering to meet with them to provide information about land preservation options and methods. Kendra stated that election year campaigning and robo-calls made it difficult to reach people by phone, as well as the fact that many of those on the contact list may have daytime jobs. Evening calls were made as well as daytime calls to try to reach residents.

Kenda suggested that an event jointly sponsored by the Township and United Growth, with invitations to property owners, might be an effective way to engage residents and provide them with information. The possibility of involving Vergennes Township in the event, and holding it as a Saturday breakfast event at either the Wittenbach Ag/Science Center or the Franciscan's Center in Vergennes Township was discussed. The consensus of the Board was that a January timeframe for the event should be considered.

Crosby indicated she would contact Kate Dernocoeur from the Vergennes Township Open Space Committee about their interest in participating.

STATUS REPORT ON OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION PROJECTS

Ferro reported on the status of several ongoing projects. The Carl Creek Wetland Preserve sign has been installed, and the conservation easement document as well as an information sheet on proper care of the property has been mailed to all of the adjoining property owners and all of the donors to the acquisition of the property. Crosby reported that she and Ferro had visited the Preserve to confirm that the fire pit adjacent to the Schalon property has been removed.

Ferro stated there is no new information to report on the acquisition of the 383 Pettis Ave. property. He noted that the property owner is still trying to obtain consent from the mortgage companies for the purchase price. Ferro reported there is also no new information on the Gilmore property. We stated we are still waiting for a mortgage release to be obtained by Mr. Gilmore, on the property that was quit claim-deeded to the Township.

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

The Board discussed whether a contribution of open space preservation funds from the Township should be made to Kent County, toward the cost that the County incurred in acquiring land to expand Chief Hazy Cloud Park, between Pettis Ave. and the Grand River. The consensus of the Board was that our funds would best be used as offered matching funds toward a future County acquisition of additional land along the Pettis Ave./Grand River corridor.

A motion was made by Haga, seconded by Sytsma, to recommend that the Township not contribute open space preservation funds toward the already-completed 95-acre expansion of Chief Hazy Cloud Park, and that we communicate to the Kent County Parks Department the Board's interest in contributing toward any future acquisition of additional land adjacent to the park by the County.

Motion passed unanimously.

POTENTIAL DONATED CONSERVATION EASEMENT AT 3201 EGYPT VALLEY AVE.

The Advisory Board reviewed and discussed a conservation easement draft dated 11-13-08, that included revisions resulting from review by a Subcommittee consisting of Haga, Crosby and Ladd, as well as discussion between Dr. Agrawal and Planning Director Ferro on the morning of 11-13. Ferro pointed out that with the end of the year coming soon, and the fact that there is only one Township Board meeting in December, time was running short to complete negotiation of the proposed conservation easement terms and for the Advisory Board to make a recommendation on whether to accept the donated easement. He presented two options for the Board to consider – one, for the Advisory Board to make a recommendation on whether to accept the easement based on the general concept presented to date, with details of the easement to be worked out by a Subcommittee; or two, for the Advisory Board to schedule a special meeting prior to the December 8 Township Board meeting.

The consensus of the Board was to hold a special meeting on Monday, December 1, at 4:00 p.m., with the terms of the easement to be further refined by the Subcommittee in the meantime.

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

The consensus of the Board was for the draft easements for the VanderWarf property to be reviewed by the Subcommittee. No action was taken.

NOMINATED PROPERTY AT 5504 ADA DR. AND ROBERTS PROPERTY AT 2455 PETTIS AVE.

Ferro reported that a site visit and preliminary evaluation has not yet been conducted for either of these properties.

Marketing/Promotion

Crosby reported on the multi-year volunteer effort to remove autumn olive from the Goodwillie School property and adjacent Seidman Park property, in a cooperative effort between the Forest Hills School District, Goodwillie students and parents, the Land Conservancy of West Michigan, Kent County Parks Department and Ada Township.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Susan Burton
Ada Township Clerk
rs:jf