

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

The meeting was called to order at 4:08 p.m. by Chairperson Betty Jo Crosby.

PRESENT: Betty Jo Crosby, Randy Damstra, George Haga, Jamie Ladd, Rick Steketee, Mischelle Sytsma, Jeff VandenBerge

ABSENT: Elise Roe, Randy VanDragt

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

PUBLIC PRESENT: Tom Rooks

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 12, 2009 MEETING

It was moved by Sytsma, seconded by Ladd, to approve the minutes of the November 12 meeting

Motion approved.

STATUS OF PROJECTS

1. 383 Pettis Ave. Property Acquisition

Ferro reported that the Fannie Mae has accepted the Township's offer of \$69,100 for the 383 Pettis Ave. property, and our goal is to close on the property by the end of the year, to avoid the Township having a property tax obligation for 2010. Ferro noted that the title company has asked for a new purchase authorization by the Township Board, since the previous authorization was two years ago, and this is on the Township Board's agenda for the December 14 meeting.

2. Raymond Property on Pettis Ave.

Ferro reported that the Raymond family has verbally accepted the Township's offer to acquire a conservation easement on the property at 180 Pettis Ave. SE. Ferro stated the family anticipates selling the property to a "conservation buyer," Tom Rooks, after the conservation easement is recorded. Ferro noted that Rooks was present at the meeting. Ferro stated he and Rooks have met recently to work on the terms of the proposed conservation easement, and he suggested that a Subcommittee be appointed to review and finalize the easement terms.

Rooks distributed a written outline of items he would like to see included in the conservation easement, and presented a map of the property identifying areas he proposes for specific permitted activities.

In discussion, Crosby asked whether Rooks intends to make the property his residence. Rooks stated that he eventually plans to move to the property, but not right away. He stated he will probably rent the home for a period of years.

Ladd asked if Rooks would be interested in hosting educational visits to the property by local schools, and he stated that he would.

Following discussion, it was moved by Haga, seconded by Damstra, to refer the development of the conservation easement terms to a Subcommittee consisting of Sytsma, Ladd and VanDragt.

Motion passed.

3. Racine Property at 4950 Knapp St. NE

Ferro reported that he and Haga met earlier today with staff from the Kent County Road Commission regarding possible cost-sharing to acquire this property, which is at the southeast corner of Knapp St. and Grand River Dr. He stated that the Road Commission has backed away from its earlier suggestion of a 50-50 split of the cost, based on feedback from the Road Commission Board, and was now suggesting only a 28% cost share by the Road Commission, based on the percentage of the property that they would like to have as dedicated right-of-way. Ferro stated he had suggested that the portion of the property that the Road Commission would want for right-of-way is the most valuable portion of the property, which would suggest a larger percentage participation by the Road Commission.

There was discussion regarding the Township's possible uses for the property, including the fact that acquisition would facilitate routing the non-motorized trail around the corner, and that the upland portion of the site could be used for a mini-park/rest area on the trail. The awkward location of the home on the site was noted, with the observation that the property has very little value as a residence. The potential location of underground fuel tanks on the property was also discussed as a factor affecting the value of the property. It was pointed out that based on the former use of the property as a gas station the Township would need to conduct both Phase 1 and Phase 2 environmental studies on the site, with the Phase 2 work involving on-site investigation, soil sampling and testing.

Ferro pointed out that a large percentage of the site is in the floodplain, which impacts the value of the property. Damstra stated he agreed with Ferro's observation that the portion of the property that would be used for right-of-way has a higher value per square foot than the balance of the property. Damstra suggested the possibility of the Township acquiring the property on its own, without Road Commission participation, and dealing with the Road Commission later. The possibility of the Township paying for the property with a combination of Open Space funds, Park funds and General funds was discussed.

Following discussion, it was moved by Damstra, seconded by Sytsma, to refer the property and a potential acquisition offer to a Subcommittee comprised of Damstra, Vandenberg and Ladd.

Motion passed.

MARKETING/PROMOTION

Crosby and Steketee distributed copies of draft brochure copy and layout prepared by staff at the Land Conservancy. Crosby encouraged members to review the text and provide feedback. It was noted that the text needs to be more concise. Other items noted included use of the Township's new logo and web site domain name.

MEMBER AND STAFF COMMENTS

Report from Parks and Recreation Director:

Mark Fitzpatrick reported that he would be walking the Carl Creek Wetland Preserve property with Melanie Good from the Land Conservancy next Friday morning, for the Land Conservancy's annual monitoring and inspection of the property for compliance with the conservation easement terms.

Fitzpatrick also reported he has talked to Susan Burton about adjusting the publication dates of the quarterly Adaview newsletter, so that it better meets the needs of the Parks Department to inform the public about upcoming seasonal events and programs.

Fitzpatrick also reported on a grant program RFP that has been issued by the EPA, through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Local project proposals, focusing on habitat restoration and reducing nonpoint sources of water pollution, are being coordinated and organized into a single grant application by the Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds (LGROW). Project proposals from local

governments need to be submitted to LGROW no later than December 17, when an informational meeting is being held.

Fitzpatrick encouraged Board members to suggest habitat restoration project ideas to him.

Report from Township Supervisor:

Haga pointed out that the annual Township budgeting process will be starting soon, and encouraged members to be thinking about activities the Advisory Board would like to undertake in the next fiscal year.

Haga also reported that he has asked Susan Burton to head up a committee to organize the Township's participation in the Forest Hills Community Expo, being held on Saturday, March 20.

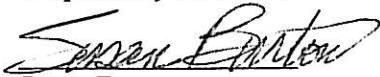
NEXT MEETING DATE

It was noted that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 14, 2010, at 4:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Susan Burton
Ada Township Clerk
rs:jf