

APPROVED MINUTES

Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board

Wednesday, February 10, 2010

Location: Grand Valley Metro Council, 678 Front St. NE

Meeting called to order at 11:30 a.m. by Gabe Hudson

Members Present: Jerry Davis, Gabe Hudson, Dennis Heffron, Sr. Lucille Janowiak, Suzie Reinbold,

Commissioner Tom Antor, Carlton Blough

Members Absent: none

Staff Present: Jay Hoekstra; Jen DeHaan

Guests: Commissioner Jim Talen

PUBLIC COMMENT

Gabe Hudson participated in the presentation by Kendra Wills to applicant Max Cole. Mr. Hudson reported that Mr. Cole praised board member Jerry Davis.

ADOPTION OF JANUARY 21, 2010 MINUTES

Suzie Reinbold moved and Sr. Lucille Janowiak seconded the adoption of the minutes of January 21 as presented. All voted aye.

UPDATE ON 2010 USDA FARM AND RANCH LAND PROTECTION PROGRAM GRANT PROPOSAL

Dennis Heffron reported that the Grand Rapids Community Foundation has awarded a three-year \$300,000 grant to match the County's appropriation. The Preservation Board will apply to the Frey Foundation for a \$300,000 three-year grant in February. Gabe Hudson, Commissioner Parish and Denny Heffron will speak with the Vice President of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation in early March.

It was also reported that both Rittersdorf and Kingsbury have agreed to sign options. G. Hudson reported that Mr. Merriman had declined the option.

APPRAISED PROPERTY NOT INCLUDED IN 2010 FEDERAL APPLICATION

Dennis Heffron moved, and Jerry Davis seconded that farms appraised for the 2010 Federal application, but not submitted, will not need to reapply in 2011 and will be included for consideration in the 2011 federal grant application. Any applicants that declined the option offered in 2010 would have to reapply in 2011. All voted aye.

The Board requested staff to send letters to those who refused the option offer informing them that negotiations are over and that they would need to reapply for consideration in 2011.

REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Tom Antor reported that the PDR Funding Sustainability Subcommittee has just begun its work and is exploring all options. One topic is installment purchase agreements. Dennis Heffron suggests that the committee consider the townships' role in funding. One possibility might be that a township contributes at least the same proportion of their budget as the County. He suggests that townships should look at their previous budget to see expenditures needed due to non-agricultural development. Tom Antor remarked that there's a need to plan regionally so that townships can see how they fit into a larger context. There is also a need to show how agricultural land preservation improves the quality of life of all citizens. Jay Hoekstra explained the regional planning work of Grand Valley Metro Council and described the efforts to bring the regional plan to local government. He recalled the role of this board in refining the boundaries of the area planned for agricultural preservation in the regional development plan. There

was a discussion about how to best learn about installment purchase agreements. It was thought that it was still early to use this tool.

Staff reported that Stacy Byers, the PDR Program Coordinator for Ingham County, said it would be fine if Kent County wanted to send ten or so people to their educational program rather than having one in Grand Rapids. A specific price has not been worked out for this however and still no official date for this presentation in March has been set.

BIOSOLID PDR PILOT PROGRAM UPDATE

Dennis Heffron and Kendra Wills met with five property owners from the Gaines Township for a presentation on the new Biosolid/PDR Pilot Program. Property owners interested in this option will have to apply during the March 1 thru April 30 annual application cycle just like all other property owners. In order to apply for the Biosolid/PDR Pilot Program, the property must already be in the biosolid land application program.

Kendra Wills may need assistance in calling former PDR applicants to ask them if they would like to re-new their PDR application. Suzie Reinbold and Gabe Hudson volunteered.

Postcards announcing the application cycle will go out to the 1,200 household mailing list in late February.

It was the Board's consensus that applications should be carried over unless applicants contact staff and decline. The Board requested staff to add this notice to the application forms and instructions.

MARCH MEETING

Suzie Reinhold moved, and Jerry Davis seconded that the March meeting be canceled. All voted aye. It was agreed to hold a training session for new members in March and March 3 was set as the first option. Tom Antor said he could meet any day at noon, and while he said he could meet most days, Tom suggested that the board hold a work session and March and that Kendra Wills send out an e-mail with a few days that might work.

PROMOTING KENT COUNTY AGRICULTURE

The board discussed potential events for 2010:

- A golf outing would be organized by Stan Ponstein. It is uncertain if Mr. Ponstein would be able to do this in 2010.
- The board felt that it would be good to participate in the John Ball Zoo Party for the Planet and that T-shirt sales would also be good. They would like to get more information. T-shirts should have a logo on them and possibly the preserved farmland sign logo. It was commented that there is a need for consistency in logo use. Ideas for T-shirt logos should be brought to the next meeting.
- It was reported that the Kent County Fair Board would probably not allow an auction of a pig to benefit the PDR endowment fund, because there are no other comparable fundraising events at the fair. It was suggested that any hogs that needed to be sold for funding, be sold through FFA at the Lowell 4-H fair.
- The art prize idea was not discussed.
- Suzie Reinbold supported having the booth at the November 2010 wine and food Festival at DeVos place.

Tom Antor suggested that the board recruit volunteers to work on these promotions. The volunteers would need to be very knowledgeable about the ag preservation program. Other board members said they could find knowledgeable volunteers.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Written by Jay Hoekstra.