

Approved Minutes
Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board
Wednesday, May 11, 2011
Location: Kent/MSU Extension

Members Present: Tom Antor, Jerry Davis, Gabe Hudson, Sr. Lucille Janowiak, Suzie Reinbold
Members Absent: Dennis Heffron, Carl Blough
Staff Present: Kendra Wills, Jay Hoekstra

Meeting called to order at 11:40 AM by Hudson.

Public Comment

None.

Adoption of April 13, 2011 Minutes

Motion by Reinbold with support from Antor to approve the minutes with no corrections.
Unanimous.

Note: When distribution minutes before the meeting for review via email, please do so in PDF format.

Conflict of Interest Forms

At the request of the Kent County Administrator's Office, Preservation Board members reviewed the list of 2011 PDR Program applicants and completed the Conflict of Interest form. Wills will send copies of all forms to Assistance Corporate Counsel Linda Howell. Blough and Heffron will be asked to sign the form as soon as possible. All members present completed a form.

June 24 PDR Celebration Event Planning

Wills researched costs of tent and table rental as well as food catering services for this event. The costs of these services was quite high. Wills asked the Preservation Board how they plan on paying for these services as Kent County officials feel it is not a good idea to request using of county tax payer funds for these items. Preservation Board members agreed that taxpayer funds should not be used. After some discussion, Preservation Board members agreed to seek donations of food and Hudson volunteered to bring his own grill and grill the food himself. Antor volunteered to take the lead on seeking food donations and a donated tent.

Wills reported that Commissioner Sandi Frost Parrish is available to present at the ceremony and requests have been submitted to Representative MacGregor and Senator Meekhof. Senator Stabenow and Congressmen Huizinga will also be asked to attend and speak.

The Preservation Board asked if all families that own preserved farms could speak at the ceremony on how the preservation of their farm has impacted their farming operation. Wills agreed to mail a letter requesting their participation.

Invitations to the event will be distributed to all County Commissioners, foundations and interested stakeholders. A press release will be sent to the media as well. Wills has already ordered "Preserved Farmland" signs for the Cole and Bettes/Kingsbury farms.

Review of May 7 PDR Celebration in Lowell

Hudson reported that the event was very successful. Family members of Wilcox, Nauta, Koning and Rittersdorf farms attended and accepted their "Preserved Farmland" sign. The Grand Rapids Press photographed the event and an article ran in paper almost a week later. Terri McCarthy of the Wege Foundation spoke very highly the program, Kate Dernocoeur of the Vergennes Township Open Space Citizen Committee gave a presentation on farmland and open space preservation in the township, and Wills put together a power point presentation on the history of the PDR Program and the Parnell Avenue Corridor. The power point was converted to PDF format and post on the www.accesskent.com/pdr web site.

Public Education

Wills reported that a new farmers market is being started by Mary Free Bed and St. Mary's Hospital on Wealthy Street on Thursday mornings. The Preservation Board was invited to staff a booth at this market for one day in August or September. Members agreed and will distribute grocery lists as an educational tool.

Hoekstra said he would check into the possibility of distributing grocery lists at this wife's booth at the Fulton Street Market.

Other

The USDA has still not released the grant agreement for the Bradford LLC, Kruithoff and Wollander properties.

Davis reported that he still has to do a presentation on PDR for the Courtland Township Board.

Wills and Heffron had a chance to meet Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Director Keith Creigh. He reported that this will likely be the last year to sign up for the PA 116 tax-break program for farmers as Governor Snyder wants to do away with tax-break programs. Creigh also reported that the focus areas of the department are bringing wireless Internet access to rural areas, water resource issues, food safety and migrant labor housing issues. Due to budget constraints, state funding for PDR is not likely.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned 1:10 PM.

Next Meeting is June 8, 2011 at 11:30 at Kent/MSUE

Written by Kendra Wills.

