

Approved Minutes
Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board
Wednesday, September 14, 2011
Location: Kent/MSU Extension

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

Meeting called to order at 11:50 AM by Hudson.

Public Comment

None.

Adoption of August 10, 2011 Minutes

Motion by Janowiak with support from Reinbold to approve with one correction on page two that the number of appraisals from each region was in part based on the total number of applications from that region. Unanimous.

Selection of Appraisal Firms to Conduct 10 Appraisals

The presentation of bids from Kent County Purchasing Department was made to the Preservation Board. Two appraisers submitted bids. Both appraisers want to complete 5 appraisals by the November 15, 2011 deadline. The references for Fast Track Appraisals, inc. based in Byron Center were checked by County Purchasing. Yankee Appraisal was the other firm. Motion made by Reinbold with support from Heffron to approve the work plan the way County Purchasing outlined. Each firm will conduct 5 appraisals. Grattan Township will be billed the cost of the three appraisals (\$2,400 each) from their township per their funding support for PDR.

Report on Meeting with the Wege Foundation

Wills and Heffron reported they met with Terri McCarthy of the Wege Foundation per a request from Terri after the last scheduled grant payment was made in August 2011 to preserved the Koning farm. Wills and Heffron asked if there would be interested from the Wege Foundation in helping to preserve the Hefferan farm located on the SE corner of 5 Mile Road and Parnell Avenue in Grattan Township (within the Parnell Ave. Corridor). McCarthy said we are invited to submit a proposal to help preserve this 220 acre farm with a request no greater than \$175,000. The Foundation Board will meet in early November to make a decision. Wills will seek permission from County Administrator before submitting a proposal using the online grant proposal form.

Discuss Donation of Development Rights Easements

Two farmers have expressed an interest in donating development rights on their farms to Kent County. Wills explained a program to do this has not been created due to the concern that this would add additional financial burden on Kent County for easement monitoring and enforcement. After some discussion the Preservation Board determined that they would like to draft guidelines for the expenditures of the Kent County Agricultural Preservation Endowment Fund at GRCF. The Preservation Board feels this fund has the potential to cover the monitoring and enforcement costs of donated easements. Wills will research this.

2011 Closings

Things seem to be going smoothly for the closings on the Bradford LLC, Bradford Trust, Wollander and Kruithoff farms to close by the end of 2011. Wills will be busy in October completing closing paperwork and the Preservation Board meeting for October may be cancelled. Chair Hudson will make a decision about one week prior to the October 12 scheduled meeting.

Other

The grocery lists seemed to be an effective educational tool. We will hand these out at the November Wine and Food Festival at DeVos Place. Information on booth staffing sign-up to come soon. Suzie, Denny, Gabe and Sister Lucille were all interested in helping to staff the booth.

Wills ordered "Preserved Farmland" road signs and the Kent County Road Commission will be installing on the 2010 preserved farms. The Ag Preservation Fund held by Kent County will have to cover the cost of materials and labor to install these signs.

Some discussion occurred around the VanDenBerg/Cook farm located on Parnell Avenue. This farm is a concern of many surrounding Parnell Corridor landowners and the Wege Foundation. Wills will contact Marcia Cook again to see if there is interested in applying for PDR and then selling the farm. We believe PDR is desired but the family does not want to own the farm any longer.

The Kent County Budget should be adopted in mid November. We will find out then the approved amount of Kent County general funds for PDR. We believe \$150,000 is the current proposed allocation. After the budget is approved we may want to talk with the Frey and Grand Rapids Community Foundations about their 2012 allocations and a possible grant extension.

Gratitude was expressed to Davis and Reinbold for helping with baseline report photos.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned 12:59 PM.

Written by Kendra Wills