

**Approved Minutes**  
**Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board**  
**Wednesday, January 4, 2012**  
**Location: Kent/MSU Extension**

Members Present: Tom Antor, Carl Blough, Gabe Hudson, Dennis Heffron, Suzie Reinbold  
Members Absent: Sr. Lucille Janowiak  
Guests: Commissioner Bill Hirsch, Bryan Harrison  
Staff Present: Kendra Wills

**Meeting called to order at 11:38 AM by Hudson.**

**Public Comment**

None.

**Adoption of November 30, 2011 Minutes**

Motion by Reinbold with support from Antor to approve the minutes. Unanimous.

**Introduction of Bryan Harrison**

Although it won't be made official until tomorrow's Board of Commissioners meeting, Bryan Harrison, Supervisor of Caledonia Township and government affairs specialist with Amway, will be appointed as the township representative to the Ag Preservation Board. Harrison stated that he grew up working on farms in Caledonia and he father was director of Kent/MSU Extension. He values open space preservation in addition to farmland preservation and looks forward to serving again on the Preservation Board.

**Nominations for Preservation Board Chairperson**

Chair Hudson opened the floor for nominations for Preservation Board Chairperson. Antor nominated Gabe Hudson. Heffron supported. Heffron moved nominations be closed with support from Reinbold. Antor, Blough, Heffron and Reinbold voted aye. Hudson abstained. Hudson agreed to serve another year.

**Nomination for Preservation Board Vice Chairperson**

Chair Hudson opened the floor for nominations for Preservation Board Vice Chairperson. Hudson nominated Dennis Heffron with support from Antor. Reinbold moved nominations be closed with support from Hudson. Antor, Blough, Hudson and Reinbold voted aye. Heffron abstained.

**Nomination for Preservation Board Secretary**

Chair Hudson opened the floor for nominations for Preservation Board Secretary. Antor nominated Reinbold with support from Heffron. Hudson moved the nominations be closed with support from Heffron. Antor, Blough, Heffron, Hudson voted aye. Reinbold abstained.

**Selection of Farms for Option Agreements**

Wills reported that the Hefferan family decided not to pursue PDR at this time. They did not give an exact reason but seemed to feel the price was unsatisfactory. Due to this development, the \$140,000 Wege Foundation grant will not be accepted by Kent County. Terri McCarthy with the Wege Foundation says the foundation will keep these funds on hold in case the family decides to apply again in 2012. Wills also reported the Noreen family does not wish to pursue PDR on their farm at this time. They need more time to determine possible future building site areas for their children.

Wills noted that County and grant funds must cover the costs of the appraisals as well as approximately \$5,000 in closing costs for each of the farms to be preserved. Also noted was the fact that USDA gives higher priority to grant proposals requesting 39% of funding rather than the maximum amount of 50%.

Wills also pointed out that the Bradford Family LLC farm scored the highest of all eligible farms for 2012.

After much discussion and evaluation the following four properties were selected to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that an option agreement be offered for the 2012 USDA Farm and Ranchland Protection Program grant application by motion from Reinbold with support from Hudson. Ayes: Antor, Blough, Husdon, Reinbold. Abstain: Heffron due to conflict of interest with the Lovins property as he currently rents this property for farming use.

1. G & L Orchards  
35 acres in Sparta Township  
Dev. Rights Cost = \$56,000 or \$1,755 per acre  
Request 49% matching funding from USDA
2. Lovins Farm  
75 acres in Grattan Township  
Dev. Rights Cost = \$108,000 or \$1,403 per acre  
Request 39% matching funding from USDA
3. Patterson Farm  
75 acres in Courtland Township  
Dev. Rights Cost = \$84,000 or \$1,105 per acre  
Request 39% matching funding from USDA
4. Bradford Family LLC Farm  
115 acres in Sparta Township  
Dev. Rights Cost = \$220,000 or \$1,913 per acre  
Request 49% matching funding from USDA

The Preservation Board noted that perhaps the Michigan Agricultural Preservation Fund will offer a grant in 2012. Board members were interested in working to secure additional grant funds to try and preserve the Youngquist, Poulias and VanOefflen farms in 2012 as well. Perhaps United Dairy Industries of Michigan could be a possible funding source or other dairy distributors.

#### **2012 Preservation Board Meeting Schedule**

After some discussion the group came to a consensus that the Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board will meet on the first Wednesday of every month at 11:30 AM at Kent/MSU Extension.

#### **Public Comment**

Commissioner Hirsh reported that work is underway to plan a spring 2012 trip to Lancaster County, PA to learn more about their PDR Program. More details to come. The Wege Foundation is willing to support this trip. Scott Everett is working on the logistics.

Mr. Harrison reported that Caledonia Township planners are working to develop an "Agricultural Preservation TIFF-like" tool to capture tax funds from farmland for use in preserving farmland and open space in the township. This may be the first tool of its kind in Michigan. Many Preservation Board members congratulated Mr. Harrison on this work and were excited about the possibility of this new tool. Mr. Harrison said he is in favor of increasing the number of points for township contributions for PDR applications in future years.

#### **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned 1:00 PM.  
Written by Kendra Wills