

Approved Minutes
Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board
June 6, 2012
Location: Kent / MSU Extension

Members Present: Tom Antor, Carl Blough, Gabe Hudson, Dennis Heffron, Sr. Lucille Janowiak, Suzie Reinbold

Members Absent: Bryan Harrison

Guest: None

Staff Present: Kendra Wills and Jennifer DeHaan

Meeting called to order at 11:30 AM by Hudson.

Public Comment

None.

Review of Agenda for Possible Conflict of Interest

None declared.

Adoption of May 2, 2012 Minutes

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

Motion to Approve Distribution of RFP for PDR Staffing Services.

Hudson raised concerns about the \$40,000 pay cap, and stated that perhaps the number was too low. De Haan suggested that the number is fair and based upon prior years expenditures, and Heffron concurred. Janowiak recommended putting the Board's preservation goal of 25,000 acres in the RFP so that candidates for the new position know that the job is not necessarily a permanent position. Antor and Hudson would like to see the 25,000 acre goal expanded and don't want to add Janowiak's suggested disclaimer. Blough requested that applicants being seriously considered for the position have a background in agriculture. DeHann said she would take that into consideration. Antor suggested grant and proposal writing for commission, however, DeHann interjected that all funds raised must go toward the program. Hudson asked who will make the final hiring decision and DeHann stated that the County Board of Commissioners would with influence from the Agricultural Preservation Board. Some concern was raised about the changeover from Wills to the new hiree, but DeHaan stated that while the position officially starts January 1, 2013, the transition could begin as early as October with Wills there assist. Janowiak suggested that the language on page 6 be changed from **appropriated or allocated** to **appropriated and allocated**. Heffron moved for approval of the RFP, and Reinbold supported. Unanimous

PDR Scoring Results To Date

At that time Wills did not have PDR scoring results from the Township office. Results will be emailed to the Preservation Board in late June. After Ag Board review, each applicant will receive a letter with his or her scores. They will have two weeks to make any corrections.

Wills noted that Grattan Township allocated \$5,000 for PDR in the Township for 2012. Wills inquired about the matching fund score and the \$2,000 Township minimum score. After some discussion it was concluded that Wills should check the total balance for PDR with the Township as Heffron believes there is well over \$2000 for each of Grattan's applications.

Wills asked if the board was in agreement about dismissing the Gains Township application due to the fact that it resides in an area to be served by water/sewer. In response Hudson and Blough inquired about the possibility of getting the urban service boundary changed. Reinbold inquired about whether or not the Township has an official map showing future areas to be served with water and sewer. Hoekstra suggested that the Township provide actual documentation relating to those future provisions. Hudson agreed to approach the Township and request the official map. Heffron recommended that the Board tell the Gaines Township applicant that the donation of their farm is another preservation option.

USDA Funding

Wills stated that Washtenaw County Received the most money and that \$2.5 million have been allocated by the USDA FRPP to Michigan for farmland preservation.

Heffron to Determine if Lovins Family will be the Biosolid Pilot Farm

Heffron confirmed that the Lovins farm would be the biosolids farm pilot. Wills, Hudson, and Heffron will approach the City of Wyoming to make sure that they are still on board with financing. Wills stated that if Wyoming is on board, closing could happen by November without federal funds.

Idea for Goodfellow Farm Fundraiser

Goodfellow is on board with this idea and is contacting his family to make sure they are as well. The fundraiser would be held using an auction-type setting to accept bids to preserve pieces of the farm. Possible donation range would be \$300-\$10,000 for the pieces and a sign with all donor names would be place on the property. Kent County has given permission for the fundraiser; however, Wills believes that county funds cannot be used.

The subject of an appropriate site for the fundraiser was brought to the attention of the board. Antor suggested that Goodfellow's brother's place would be an ideal location, and he will contact with Goodfellow regarding this matter. Heffron wants to set the goal of raising more than \$56,000 and recommended that the county sign an agreement that additional proceeds will go to the Agricultural Preservation Board. Heffron also stated that this fundraiser would bring welcomed exposure for the cause. Antor wanted to see how much interest is out there by calling on major donors and sending out a mailer with response cards. Wills suggested setting up a committee to help organize the fundraiser. Wills requested members and Reinbold, Heffron, Antor, Hudson, and Janowiak agreed to serve. It is determined that meeting times for the new committee are flexible. Janowiak inquired about donating in another person's name. Heffron suggested filling that information out at registration. Blough recommended that at each parcel level donors be given the option to be a gold, silver or bronze donor, and receive plaques with their name and donation information.

July 26 Farmland Preservation Tour

Wills suggested Antor emcee the bus tour. Antor is undecided at this time

Reinbold suggested changing Farmland preservation to agriculture preservation because it is more inclusive. Anton believes that more focus needs to be placed on economic growth and thinks future tours would benefit from a discussion about where growth can occur. Hoekstra agreed to help locate those places and also add information about TDR's. Blough will possibly talk about Heidi's on the tour. Reinbold suggested explaining to members of the tour how agriculture impacts cities.

Review PDR Funding Spreadsheet

Wills wanted to make sure that board members understood the information and obtained a copy

Other

Eric Pearson of Pearson Foods is interested in talking with the Board to find out more about what it does.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned 1:20 PM.
Written by Virginia Vander Veen