

Approved Minutes
Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board
Wednesday, October 3, 2012
Location: Kent / MSU Extension

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

Members Absent: Bryan Harrison

Public: Commissioner Bill Hirsch and Stacy Byers via conference call

Staff Present: Kendra Wills

Meeting called to order at 11:43 AM by Hudson.

Public Comment

None.

Review of Agenda for Possible Conflict of Interest

None declared.

Adoption of September 2012 Minutes

Motion by Antor with support from Heffron to approve the minutes with one spelling correction on page two. Unanimous.

Goodfellow Fundraiser

Hudson noted that special thanks should be given to the Heffron family for their support of the preservation of the Goodfellow Orchards property and organization of the event by Denny Heffron. Heffron noted that a lot was learned by this event and work will begin on improving this process for next year. Blough noted that some people were confused with the bidding and payment process.

Sister Lucille noted that more time would be needed to market the event. She felt staffing a table at the Fulton Street Farmers Market would be a worthwhile activity. Distributing flyers to local businesses would be effective as well. Personal contact is important. Marketing material should also emphasize that all amounts are acceptable and people can go together as a group to help preserve the farm.

Hudson reminded Ag Board members to continue to seek out endorsements of the Kent County PDR Program by businesses and individuals. Endorsements will be used in power point presentations, PDR Program brochures and possibly on the web site and Facebook page. Names or mailing lists will not be distributed to other organizations. This is not a political or candidate endorsing activity – merely expressing support for the Kent County PDR Program and is goal/mission.

Antor noted that winter would be a better time for farmers for a future fund raiser to preserve a farm. He also suggested information be sent to local restaurants that purchase locally grown foods. These restaurants should also be asked to endorse the PDR Program. Reinbold noted that she asked Trillium to endorse and they agreed and she will get them the form.

Antor also noted we should collect RSVPs for the fund raiser event next year. Heffron agreed and said he would like to do a dinner event at the new Downtown Farmers Market.

The group also discussed the possibility of a full page ad in the Advance Newspapers to thank contributors to the event for next year.

Antor suggested maybe restaurants are asked to collect \$1 contributions from patrons and hang up “tractors” around the restaurant with the names of contributors. This is often the tactic of banks and other businesses that collect donations.

Reinbold thought maybe a conversation with Experience Grand Rapids would be worthwhile as agriculture contributes to tourism in Grand Rapids and Kent County. Reinbold also noted that should be willing to join the Lowell Chamber and connect with them about farmland preservation issues.

Accepting USDA NRCS Grant Funds for Lovins Farm

Motion by Reinbold with support from Blough to accept the USDA NRCS Farm and Ranch Land Funds in the amount of \$42,120 to preserve the Clayton and Anne Lovins farm in Grattan Township.

Hudson and Wills noted that special thanks should go to the Kent County Administrator’s Office for working very quickly to make sure these funds were secured.

Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board

Wills reported that applications were available for the Preservation Board and since Sister Lucille is not renewing her “conservation interest” position is open. For your information, Wills will be asked to submit attendance records for all Preservation Board members. Hudson noted that the Board of Commissioners has implemented new guidelines for attendance expectations for all citizen boards.

Preservation Board Facebook Page

Wills reported that Paula Blough, a college student majoring in agricultural communications and daughter of Carl Blough, is serving as a new Administrator of the Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board’s Facebook page. This will be an unpaid volunteer position but may give her valuable experience to add to her resume.

Ms. Blough wants to offer a photo contest to draw more people as members to the page. Heffron agreed to offer \$25 gift certificates to Heffron Farm Market for photo contest winners. More information on the contest to come at the November meeting.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Next meeting: November 7, 2012 11:30 a.m. at Kent/MSU Extension

Meeting notes written by Kendra Wills