

**Approved Minutes**  
**Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board**  
**Wednesday, November 7, 2012**  
**Location: Kent / MSU Extension**

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

**Members Absent:** Carl Blough, Bryan Harrison

**Public:** Stacy Byers, Ginny Wanty, Valerie Lindeman

**Staff Present:** Jennifer DeHaan, Kendra Wills

**Meeting called to order at 11:32 AM by Hudson.**

**Public Comment**

None.

**Review of Agenda for Possible Conflict of Interest**

None declared.

**Review of 2012 Scoring Criteria for 2013**

Preservation Board members were asked to review the 2012 Scoring Criteria prior to attending the meeting today. Hudson began by stating he felt several changes were made last year and minimal changes would likely be needed this year. Janowiak asked Wills if she knew of any requests from property owners for the Preservation Board to review specific scoring requirements. Wills stated that she was not aware of any specific changes requested by property owners, but noted that amount to applications was significantly reduced by last year's policy change that only one application per farm operation would be appraised.

Heffron asked Byers to review the criteria and see if there were significant differences with the Ingham County program. Byers noted that Ingham measures the amount prime, unique and locally important soils rather than by Soil Group. This is how the federal scoring criteria operates as well. Ingham also uses a multiplication factor to calculate the points for the size of parcel. Byers felt this gives properties at the edge of the scoring limits more of an equal scoring. Lastly, a conservation plan is a requirement for application in Ingham County. This is required for closing and this helps Ingham skip a step in the closing process. Note: USDA NRCS does not charge for these plans. Overall, Byers felt the system was similar to Ingham's and was reasonable.

Byers asked about calculation of application properties in proximity to PA 116 lands giving the large increase in new properties entering the program in 2011. Wills notes this work was being done by Kent County IT (a GIS analyst) and they were likely working from a PA 116 inventory from 2009 or earlier. Wills notes it would be a good idea if a new map of PA 116 lands could be created for scoring purposes; however, this will be difficult as PA 116 lands are difficult to map as they are not tracked by parcel number, rather they are tracked by legal description.

Heffron noted that since the Preservation Board decided to remove future residential structures on the preserved area (including the Farmstead Complex) the wording and point allocations for scoring criteria for Reserved Building Sites needed to be revised for 2013.

Motion by Reinbold with support from Janowiak to approve the 2013 Scoring Criteria as amended.

Unanimous.

### **Presentation on MNRTF Grants for PDR**

Valerie Lindeman, a Master Naturalist (MN) Volunteer, conducted some research at the request of Wills for her MN community service project. Wills requested she research the possibility of the Kent County PDR Program applying for Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant funds to preserve farmland. Lindeman prepared a report and provided Wills with several handouts and a flash drive of information. Lindeman stated that Peninsula Township was successful in securing MNRTF grant funds to preserve farmland with “scenic” qualities. The other criteria are lands that allow public access and lands that protect natural resources. After much discussion, the Preservation Board concluded that public access of farmland in the PDR was not going to work. The MDNR’s Hunter Access Program is not popular for several reasons. However, there is a significant amount of funding available through the MNRTF and they are interested in development rights purchases. The Preservation Board agreed work should be done to determine the possibility of preserving farmland meeting the “scenic” or “protection of natural resources” requirements.

Antor has a contact person with the MDNR and MNRTF and he will work to get them to attend a future Preservation Board meeting to discuss this.

### **Adoption of October 2012 Minutes**

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

Note: Antor had to leave at 12:30.

### **Selection of Properties for Appraisal and Awarding of Contracts**

Wills reported that Kent County Purchasing received bids from three appraisers to conduct six new appraisals. The bids were distributed to all Preservation Board members. Wills also reminded the Preservation Board that updated appraisals were in the process for three farms. Given that the Board of Commissioners allocated \$50,000 for PDR in 2013, it is unlikely that nine appraisals will be needed. After reviewing the bids, a motion was made by Heffron with support from Janowiak to not appraise the DenBraber farm in Gaines Township. This farm is small in size and expensive to appraise. All Voting Yes Were: Hudson, Heffron, Janowiak and Reinbold.

The Preservation Board asked Wills to work with Kent County Purchasing Department to divide the work among all three appraisers if possible.

### **Public Outreach Ideas**

Wills reminded the group of the schedule to staff the booth at the Wine, beer and Food Festival at DeVos Place.

There is a program called ProStart for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders interested in the culinary arts through the Michigan Restaurant Association. Perhaps we can provide them with information on how farmland preservation supports a creation of a local food system.

### **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