

**Approved Minutes**  
**Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board**  
**Wednesday, December 12, 2012**  
**Location: Kent / MSU Extension**

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

**Members Absent:** Tom Antor, Bryan Harrison

**Public:** Stacy Byers, Jay Hoekstra, Commissioner Talen, Commissioner Hirsch, Betty Blase

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

**Meeting called to order at 11:45 AM by Hudson.**

**Public Comment**

Chair Hudson began the meeting by stating that this was the last meeting for Kendra Wills as staff person to the Kent County PDR Program. MSU Extension has her working on community food systems and leadership development programs. She will be moving her office to the new Downtown Market opening in July. Several attendees wished her well and congratulated her on a job well done.

Wills thanked everyone for coming and for the generous lunch and gift Preservation Board members provided.

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

None declared.

**Adoption of November 7, 2012 Minutes**

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

**Review of Kent County Agricultural Preservation Endowment Fund Statement**

A handout was distributed to meeting attendees with a summary of contributions for the year. The Grand Rapids Community Foundation manages the endowment fund and a check is mailed to each year for depositing in the Kent County PDR account. Total contributions so far in 2012 were \$15,748.63 with most of these funds being contributed by property owners at the time of closing. The Kent County PDR Program Option Agreement requires a contribution equal to the amount of the last appraisal + 50% of the closing costs at the time of closing. A \$3,400 grant payment was received in 2012 to support appraisal and closing costs. In addition, three private individuals made contributions to the fund totaling \$500.

Wills reported that she changed the contact person for the Endowment Fund to Stacy Byers. A file in Stacy's office contains the login and password to the online system to pull statements for the Endowment Fund. Wills suggests that the Ag Board receive statements on a bi-annual basis to monitor this fund.

**Presentation of Appraisal Results to Property Owners**

Wills reported that appraisals should be completed by this Friday or next Monday. Appraisal updates were ordered on three properties from the 2011 cycle and five properties from the 2012 cycle. Two different appraisal firms conducted the work (Yankee Appraisal and Williams and Associates). Wills asked if any Preservation Board members would like to join her in the meetings with property owners to

review the appraisal results. Hudson and Heffron volunteered. Byers also said she would participate. Wills will work to schedule the meetings all in one day at Kent/MSU Extension.

### **PDR Account Status**

Wills distributed a handout estimating the amount of available funds for the PDR Program in 2013. Kent County appropriated \$50,000 for 2013 to support the program. This was down from \$150,000 in 2012 and \$250,000 in 2011 and 2010.

Wills noted an extension on of the grant from the Grand Rapids Community Foundation still needs to be secured. The Frey Foundation grant expires in June 2013 so funds must be requested before the expiration date. In addition the Wege Foundation has funding reserved to support PDR if a property from their target area is interested and an appraisal has been conducted.

### **Review November Wine, Beer and Food Festival at DeVos Place**

Reinbold, Janowiak and Heffron agreed that staffing the booth at this festival is a positive use of time and seems to make an impact. The PDR Program Endorsement Forms were effective in talking with people about the program and gave people a reason to come to the booth and gave volunteers greater purpose. Byers agreed to make contact with Showspan next year to see if a table can be secured in approximately the same location as this year.

### **Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board's Facebook Page**

Paula Blough, college student majoring in agricultural communications at Kansas State University and daughter of Carl Blough, has agreed to be the volunteer administrator of the Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board's Facebook Page. Paula had the idea of a photo contest with several categories to spark interest in the page and attract more "friends." Denny Heffron generously agreed to donate \$25 gift certificates as the prize for the winning photograph in each category. The Preservation Board will have the opportunity to determine the prize winners.

Wills reported that she will add Byers as a co-administrator of the page and will remove herself as administrator. Wills also noted that Byers and Paula Blough will need to be informed of the new Kent County social media policy when it is released.

Janowiak asked if Ms. Blough could also update the PDR Program page on [accesskent.com](http://accesskent.com) and Wills responded that this is not possible as Kent County has a contractor that does this work for all departments and the standard template and data requirements must be met. Byers will take over responsibility of updating the web site in 2013. Wills has agreed to update the site as much as possible before she turns it over to Byers.

### **2013 Application Cycle**

Heffron and Byers noted that it may be time to conduct informational meetings with property owners to update them on the status of the PDR Program and the application process. Heffron noted that a meeting in the southern end of Kent County would be particularly beneficial as we have had the fewest number of applications from this sub-region. Byers agreed to work on this starting in January.

## **Fund Raiser to Support PDR**

Heffron reported that he visited the Lancaster County, PA fundraiser to raise funds to support their PDR Program. He said there were many event sponsors and each had purchased tables to the dinner event. He liked this idea and hopes this can happen for the event to support the Kent County PDR Program in 2013. For example, PNC Bank is a major sponsor of this event in PA and Heffron plans on meeting with PNC Bank officials here in Kent County to talk to them about farmland preservation.

Heffron also feels there is a need to keep people updated on what is going on with the PDR Program. Perhaps an e-newsletter to all “endorsers” and supporters would be effective as well as social media.

## **Public Comment**

None.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Next meeting: January 9, 2013 11:30 a.m. at Kent/MSU Extension

Meeting notes written by Kendra Wills