

**Approved Minutes – June 5, 2013**  
**Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board**  
**May 1, 2013**  
**Location: Kent/MSU Extension**

**Members Present:** Tom Antor (County Commissioner), Carl Blough (Ag Interest) Gabe Hudson (Ag Interest), Michele VanHouten (Conservation Interest), Denny Heffron (Ag Interest), Suzie Reinbold (Real Estate Interest), and Ed Robinette (Township Interest).

**Members Absent:** **Guest:** No guests present.

**Staff Present:** Stacy Byers, Board Coordinator and Jennifer DeHaan, County Administrators Office

**Meeting called to order at 11:34am by Hudson.**

- I. **Welcome and Call to Order: Gabe Hudson, Chair** - Chair Hudson introduced the township interest representative, recently appointed by the Board of Commissioners, Edward Robinette. Mr. Robinette shared his background with the group. Robinette operates a 120 acre farm in Plainfield and Grand Rapids Township that has been in the family for 102 years. He served on the Township Board as a trustee from 1996 to 2012. He currently serves as the Township Clerk. Robinette received a Bachelors Degree in Horticulture from Michigan State University.
- II. **Public Comment: None.**
- III. **Review Agenda and Declaration of Any Possible Conflict of Interest. None was heard.**
- IV. **Review and Adoption of April 3, 2013 Minutes.**
  - a. *The April 3, 2013 meeting minutes were discussed.* **Motion by Antor, second by VanHouten to approve the April 3, 2013 minutes with amendments. Motion passed unanimously.**
- V. **Old Business**
  - i. *2013 Kent County Application cycle* – Byers gave an update of the 2013 application cycle progress. Three new applications were received from Alpine, Grattan and Caledonia Township. The 2012 applications will remain active for the 2013 cycle. All applications, both new and old, will be scored and ranked. Heffron suggested amending the Ag Board procedure of hosting an application cycle period for applicants to apply, to an ongoing application period where landowners could apply throughout the year, while still maintaining a deadline for applications to be scored and ranked. The Board agreed. Dehaan stated that the Board of

Commissioners actually approves the annual application cycle, however, it may just be a procedural issue to have applications submitted in anticipation of an application cycle that will be established by the Board. Dehaan suggested working with Byers to review the Ordinance and verify that the change was possible. Heffron suggested having the application cycle change on the June agenda.

- ii. *April 25, 2013 Landowner Workshop* – The workshop was held at the Lowell Township Hall at 7:00 pm. Approximately 10 people attended. Blough commented that he was a bit disappointed by the low turn-out but was pleased with the discussion. He further commented that the questions were very good and well thought out and demonstrated that they were serious about participating with the program. VanHouten asked how participants heard about the workshop. Byers said she sent out the invitation using the Equalization Department's list of landowners who own over 40 acres or more. Hudson and VanHouten suggested adding the Ag Board members to the list.

## **VI. New Business**

- i. Farm for Auction - Heffron suggested identifying a farm/conservation easement to be showcased and “sold” in the 2013 Fundraising Auction. Discussion ensued about the farms in the “hopper”, farms eligible for Wege Foundation dollars and farms that already had appraisals conducted on them. A discussion ensued. **Motion by Reinbold seconded by Blough to select the Youngquist property for the Auction candidate. Motion passed unanimously.** Heffron suggested inviting Commissioner Ponstein to the June meeting to give an update on the local restaurants as they relate to fundraising efforts.
- ii. Ag Preserve Boards of Michigan Report – Heffron gave a report of upcoming events to be hosted by the Ag Preserve Boards of Michigan. The first even was an announcement of another trip out East to learn about farmland preservation strategies in Lancaster County, PA. The date is pending but slated for the later part of July. The cost is \$1,800.00 per person, which includes airfare, meals and lodging. Heffron encouraged members that have not attended in the past to sign up. Heffron also announced that the Ag Preserve Boards of Michigan will be hosting a state wide event to educate townships on the value of using farmland preservation as a Master Plan tool. All are encouraged to attend, more information will be coming as the date, time, and location are finalized.

- VII. Other.** Hudson announced he and Heffron would be traveling to Alpine Township on May 20, 2013 to give a presentation on the status of the County program. All are welcome to join.
- VIII. Public Comment.** No Public comment.
- IX. Adjournment. Motion by Antor, seconded by Heffron to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:40 pm.**

Next Meeting: June 5, 2013 at 11:30 am at Kent/MSU Extension.