

Unapproved Minutes
Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board
June 5, 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: Jack Schmidt, League of Conservation Voters.

Staff Present: Stacy Byers, Board Coordinator and Jennifer DeHaan, County Administrator's Office

Meeting called to order at 11:33am by Hudson.

- I. Welcome and Call to Order: Gabe Hudson, Chair.**
- II. Public Comment: None.**
- III. Review Agenda and Declaration of Any Possible Conflict of Interest.** Chair Hudson wanted to “discussion of conflict with July 3, 2013” meeting time to the agenda. Byers suggested moving it under “other”.
- IV. Review and Adoption of May 1, 2013 Minutes.**
 - a. *The April 3, 2013 meeting minutes were discussed. Motion by Robinette, second by Reinbold to approve the May 1, 2013 minutes. Motion passed unanimously.***
- V. Old Business**
 - i. *2013 Kent County Application cycle – review and adoption of the new system.*** Byers stated that at the last meeting, the Ag Board discussed accepting applications throughout the year rather than just during the official application cycle. Byers stated that in some cases landowners do not have time during the limited application cycle to submit the application. Heffron stated that by allowing the applicants to submit their applications year-round they may get new applications and will also make any outreach efforts throughout the year more effective as landowners will not have to wait to submit the application. DeHaan stated that the ordinance requires the Board of Commissioners to adopt a formal application cycle, but that the Ag Board as a matter of process could accept the applications throughout the year in anticipation of the Board approving the next application cycle. A discussion ensued. **Motion by Reinbold, second by Blough to accept applications throughout the**

year in anticipation of the Board of Commissioners approving a yearly application cycle. Motion passed unanimously.

- ii. *2013 Application Ranking*: Byers presented the 2013 ranking spreadsheet for the Board's review. In draft form, the spreadsheet listed the applications from 2012 and 2013, and allocated points relative to the approved selection criteria. A preliminary ranking was presented. Byers informed the group that points may change as more information is received from the landowners and local units of government as to potential match contribution. She intends to have a comprehensive list of all applicants from the first application cycle in 2007 to present, for the board to review in the months ahead.
- iii. *2013 FRPP Program* – Byers gave a brief update of the FRPP Program status. Kent County submitted two applications for consideration of matching funds to the FRPP program. Byers has been working with the Federal Coordinator to get all necessary paperwork signed and returned. The Federal Coordinator has given verbal confirmation that both properties will receive the requested amount. However, a final commitment will come in the form of a cooperative agreement. Byers anticipates that will be forth coming soon.
- iv. *Farm for Auction*
 - 1. *Update from Commissioner Ponstein* – Commissioner Ponstein was not able to attend the Board meeting, so Heffron gave an update as to the status of fund raising activities. Several properties are being considered for fundraising. Heffron stated that Commissioner Ponstein would like to use the name and location of the property for promotional purposes and that the hosts of the fundraising events such as farm to fork restaurants, like to see and know what farm they are protecting. The Board reviewed the spreadsheet of applicants for other potential properties and identified a couple of properties that may fit the needs of the fundraiser. The Ag Board asked Byers to contact the landowners to determine their interest in participating with a fundraiser. A discussion ensued regarding the amount of funds that would need to be raised at the fundraiser.

VI. New Business

- i. Heffron reported on the Tour out East. Dates are set for July 24-26, 2013 and the anticipated cost is \$1,800/person. Heffron encouraged board members to think of individuals that would benefit from the experience. There is room for about 12 participants.
- ii. Reinbold informed the group of the restaurant “Suburbia’s” interest in endorsing the farmland preservation program. The owners of the

restaurant would like more information to determine how they might get more involved. Reinbold reported that Suburbia offers locally grown food choices on their menu.

- VII. Other.** Heffron and Hudson reported on their visit to Alpine Township. They both felt it was a good discussion and that Alpine might be willing to donate funding for appraisals.

Hudson noted that he would be unavailable the week of July 1, to attend the next Board meeting. Discussion was heard on possible alternative dates. A **Motion was made by Hudson, seconded by Reinbold to reschedule the July 2, 2013 meeting to June 26, 2013 at 11:30AM at MSU Cooperative Extension. Motion passed unanimously.**

- VIII. Public Comment.** Jack Schmidt, from the League of Conservation Voters spoke about the work he was doing with LCV.

- IX. Adjournment. Motion by Reinbold, seconded by Heffron to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:40 pm.**

Next Meeting: *June 26, 2013 at 11:30 am at Kent/MSU Extension.* (change for regularly scheduled time)