

**Unapproved Minutes**  
**Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board**  
**September 4, 2013**  
**Location: MSU Extension Office**

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

**Members Absent:**

**Staff Present:** Stacy Byers, Board Coordinator

**Public Present:** Bill Hirsch

**Meeting began at 11:40am.**

**I. Welcome: Gabe Hudson, Chair.**

**II. Public Comment: None.**

**III. Review Agenda and Declaration of Any Possible Conflict of Interest.** Byers suggested adding the Heffron Farm Donation under new business section a. **Dennis Heffron announced a conflict as he is submitting the donation. Heffron recused himself from all voting and discussion regarding the donation.**

**IV. Review and Adoption of June 26, 2013 Minutes.**

**a.** Due to the change in location of the meeting, no formal business was conducted at the August 7, 2013 meeting. Therefore the June 26, 2013 will be reviewed and approved at the September 4, 2013 meeting. **Motion by VanHouten seconded by Antor to adopt June 26, 2013 minutes. Motion passed.**

**V. Old Business**

**a.** *Outreach and Promotional Material* - VanHouten gave an update on the blog she is developing for the League of Conservation Voters. The Blog is getting good hits. The goal of the first two articles was to connect local food to farmland preservation through a series of interviews with local farmer markets, restaurant owners and chefs. The articles should also raise the community conversation on farmland preservation and the value of farmland itself. The Flavor magazine showed interest in the articles and linked them to their face book page. Michele is in the process of gathering information on her third article for the blog. This article will highlight the “story” of a family protecting their farm and the impact it has had on their operation and lives.

**b.** *LCV Educational Campaign* – Byers updated the group on her conversations with LCV and the Wege Foundation. LCV in conjunction with United Growth, is proposing an educational campaign on farmland preservation and its importance to Kent County. The Wege Foundation has demonstrated some interest and LCV

is hoping to vet it through other foundations like Frey and Grand Rapids Community Foundation to get broad support for the campaign.

- c. *2013 Cooperative Agreement* – Byers reported that she received the 2013 Cooperative Agreement from the Federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program and that Kent County was to receive the full amount requested in the Grant submitted in March 2013. The Administrator’s Office was in the process of signing the documents and would be returning them to the FRPP Coordinator’s office.
  - d. *County Budget Update* – Byers reported that she had not received word on the Farmland Preservation Programs slated budget for 2014. DeHaan said that the Controller’s recommended budget was due to come out October 1, 2013.
- VI.** New Business
- i. Heffron Farm Donation – **Motion made by Reinhold and seconded by Robinette to accept a 83 acres (+/-) Agricultural Conservation Easement from Dennis Heffron. Motion passed.**
- VII.** Other – Hudson reported to the group that he recently met with the new Senator Tonya Schumaker about her position on farmland preservation. Hudson and the Senator had a productive conversation and Hudson believes she will be a supporter of the program. DeHaan announced she will be transitioning out of the County and moving onto other opportunities with her career. The Ag Board was sad to hear she was leaving, but wished her the best with her future endeavors.
- VIII.** Public Comment – None was heard
- IX.** Adjournment – **Motion by Reinhold, seconded by Antor to adjourn. Motion passed.**

Next Meeting: *October 2, 2013 at 11:30 am at Kent/MSU Extension.*