

Approved Minutes
Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board
March 5, 2014
Location: Kent/MSU Extension

Members Present: Candace Chivis (County Commissioner), Carl Blough (Ag Interest), Suzie Reinbold (Real Estate Interest), Ed Robinette (Township Interest), Russ Slater (Ag Interest) and Michele Van Houten (Conservation Interest)

Members Absent: Denny Heffron (Ag Interest)

Staff Present: Stacy Byers (Board Coordinator), Debbie Green (Kent/MSU Extension Staff), Mary Swanson (County Assistant Administrator) and Kevin Travis (Administrator's Office)

Public Present:

Meeting began at 11:40 a.m.

I. Welcome and Call to Order – Vice Chair, Michele Van Houten

With the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice Chair, Michele Van Houten was in charge of the meeting.

II. Review and Adoption of February 5, 2014 Minutes

Meeting minutes were reviewed by members present. **Motion by Blough and seconded by Chivis to adopt February 5, 2014 minutes. Motion passed.**

III. Public Comment

Mary Swanson introduced Kevin Travis to the committee. Kevin is the new hire for Jennifer DeHaan's position.

IV. Review Agenda and Declaration of Any Possible Conflict of Interest

None were voiced.

V. Old Business

a. 2014 FRPP applications

Updates – Deadline for applications is Friday, March 7, 2014. The applications were turned in Wednesday, February 25. The two applications turned in are for the Poulias farm and the Hall farm for this year. These two are located in Grattan and Vergennes townships.

i. Option Agreements

The agreements were brought before the Board of Commissioners last week.

ii. BOC Comments

Most of the remarks from the County Commissioners were positive and that was because there will be no county funds involved with these two farms. Funding will come from grants secured from the Wege Foundation and the Federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program.

b. 2013 FRPP Status – Frost and Van Oeffelen

Neither of these two properties have had closings yet. The Van Oeffelen farm is approximately 38 acres and is awaiting an agreement between Greenstone Farm Credit Services regarding a subordination agreement on the mortgages associated with the parcel. The Frost farm is approximately 77 acres and the owners live in California. There is a sister title company out in California that is working with the owner to get her signature on papers. Stacy is hopeful both easements will close either in March or April 2014.

VI. New Business

a. 2014 Application Cycle.

There will be changes coming in the application cycle. In the past, the cycle ran from March 1 to April 30th. According to the ordinance, the application cycle must be open for 90 days. Stacy proposed running the application cycle from mid-April until mid-July 2014. This change will be brought to the Board of Commissioners meeting at the end of March Legislative Meeting. The process for this change starts in committee meetings and then a week later it is brought up at the Board of Commissioners meeting. The board concurred with the proposed timeline change and directed Stacy to proceed with an application cycle from April to July 2014.

VII. Other

Updates from Stacy – You could possibly see some activity regarding the educational campaign as early as next month. There will be three bus tours. One will be an all day tour including Farmland Preservation and Economic Development and will include a maximum of 50 people. The other two bus tours will be half day/afternoon tours for a maximum of 15 people, per tour. The League of Conservation Voters is hoping to host two tours in 2014 and one in 2015.

The League of Conservation Voters is hosting the website for The Farmland Preservation Educational Campaign information.

The Speaker Series will be a two day event and held in the fall. Day one will involve the local leadership learning more about Farmland Preservation. Day two will be presented like the Train-the-Trainer program with PowerPoint presentations and handouts. This will be to help develop leadership in people to go out and spread the word about Farmland Preservation to different groups in the community at their meetings.

Also looking into some earned and sponsored media to take out advertisements to generate interest in Farmland Preservation.

The Morgan Stanley event will be held in the Ottawa County area and will take place the end of July or early August.

Michele Van Houten will be attending the Land Trust Alliance Conference in April and Denny Heffron is working on getting a scholarship for Michele to attend.

VIII. Public Comment - None

IX. Adjournment – meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Next Meeting April 2, 2014 at 11:30 AM at Kent/MSU Extension office.