

Approved Minutes
Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board
May 7, 2014
Location: Kent/MSU Extension

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

Members Absent: Ed Robinette (Township Interest)

Staff Present: Stacy Byers (Board Coordinator via phone), Debbie Green (Kent/MSU Extension Staff) and Kevin Travis (Administrator's Office)

Public Present:

Meeting began at 11:40 a.m.

- I. **Welcome and Call to Order** - Chair, Dennis Heffron
- II. **Public Comment** – None
- III. **Review Agenda and Declaration of Any Possible Conflict of Interest** – None
- IV. **Review and Adoption of April 2, 2014 Minutes** – Meeting minutes were reviewed by members present. **Motion by Van Houten and seconded by Reinbold to adopt April 2, 2014 minutes. Motion passed.**
- V. **Old Business**
 - a) 2014 FRPP applications – update
The application cycle for FRPP ended on March 7. The applications that were submitted were accepted in March. The applications were for the Poulias and Hall Farms. The funding will come from FRPP funds and the Wege grant.
 - b) 2013 FRPP Status – Frost and VanOeffelen
Both applications are going along well. Brian will be sitting on the Van Oeffelen application for a while (possibly next month) to review the appraisal done by the Feds. The appraisal came in \$2,500 below the first appraisal amount. Discussion followed regarding the appraisal reduction and about sticking to the offer that was made first from PDR.

The Frost application could possibly close this month with the family out in California. Stacy will be submitting a request for reimbursement.

Van Houten brought up the idea of how to keep the landowners and the general public informed of the easement closings. Possibly some little ceremony where the landowner is presented with the sign saying that his land had been preserved or possibly even some news releases regarding the preservation activity. Stacy suggested recognizing the supporters of farmland preservation such as financial backers (Wege Foundation).

It was decided that a combined recognition should happen when the Frost and VanOeffelen properties close.

c) 2014 Application Cycle

The new application cycle dates were passed by the County Commissioners. The new dates are April 15 – July 15, 2014. Stacy has been getting requests for application packets since the postcard went out to the mailing list. Stacy is planning on having a landowner workshop at the end of July for people who have questions filling out the applications.

d) LCVEF Update

The League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (LCVEF) is planning on have three bus tours this year, the first is tentatively scheduled for the end of July. There will be 2 van tours (10-15 people) and they will be short tours (3-4 hours) and cover agricultural production and processing. There will also be a longer, 55 passenger motor coach bus, that will last all day and be more in-depth on production and processing. The league has hired Issues Media Group to help with getting the word out about farmland preservation by way of articles placed in publications.

VI. **New Business**

Travis informed the board that he is a member of the Agricultural Law Board and that they are having the Agricultural Law Section's 2nd Annual Meeting and Program on Thursday, September 18 from 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. at DeVos Place in Grand Rapids. Any Ag Preservation Board Member that would like to attend is welcome at the annual meeting. If you would like to access the speaker presentations from last year's meeting, you can go online at <https://www.michbar.org/aglaw/>

Also, on June 3 there will be an Agricultural Law Section's Food Law Committee meeting at noon at the Boji Tower in Lansing if you would like to attend. They will be discussing food law issues in Michigan.

Van Houten informed the board that she has been doing PSA's on WICE Community Radio Station. The topics she has talked about include: No Farms, No Food and Outdoor Markets

VII. **Other**

Byers updated the board on the activities with Morgan Stanley. Aaron Hollister, her contact from Morgan Stanley and Byers are working on a regional event in late August (summer). Morgan Stanley will be sponsoring a dinner at the Fillmore Center Complex in West Olive to discuss the financial aspects of farmland preservation and the impacts it may have on landowners. Speakers will include lawyers, CPA's and investment brokers.

Heffron informed the board members that he has gotten PNC Bank of Michigan to endorse Farmland Preservation.

Also, there will be a subcommittee developed on agricultural business and Chivis said that she would keep an eye out for any activity from this committee.

VIII. **Public Comment** – None

IX. **Adjournment** – **Motion by Reinhold and second by Slater to adjourn. Motion passed.** Meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Next Meeting June 4, 2014 at 11:30 a.m. at the Kent/MSU Extension Office