

## **Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board**

**March 4, 2015**

**Location: Kent/MSU Extension**

**Members Present:** Candace Chivis (County Commissioner), Ed Robinette (Township Interest), Russ Slater (Ag Interest) and Michele Van Houten (Conservation Interest)

**Members Absent:** Carl Blough (Ag Interest), Dennis Heffron (Ag Interest) and Suzie Reinbold (Real Estate Interest)

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

**Public Present:** None

Meeting began at 11:35 a.m.

- I. **Welcome and Call to Order** – Co-Chair, Michele Van Houten
- II. **Public Comment** – None
- III. **Review Agenda and Declaration of Any Possible Conflict of Interest** – None
- IV. **Review and Adoption of February 4, 2015 Minutes** – Motion to accept minutes as presented by Robinette, seconded by Chivis. Motion passed.

V. **Old Business**

- a. 2014 FRPP applications – update Hall, Poulias

Byers informed the board that the Hall property closing will be using Wege Grant money from 2014 and 2015. Photos have been taken for the baseline. The Greenstone and FSA information paperwork has been turn in and all of the paperwork should be done by the end of the month.

The Poulias farm closing should be done by the end of May. Currently the paperwork has been sent to the Federal Government, but they require additional NRCS paperwork due to the new Farm Bill. The appraisal will be back in about six weeks.

The Frost farm has closed.

The Vanoeffelen farm is still pending. Byers has been trying to contact the oil & gas lease company, but has been unsuccessful in reaching anyone in their office. Because of the oil & gas lease company, a March 31 extension was requested. Also because of the length of time, there may be an updated appraisal needed, but that will not be ordered until Byers gets in contact with the oil & gas company.

The Malone farm had the appraisal company configure 100 acres of land to get road frontage. The survey has been done for the 100 acres. Also, the appraisal is done and things are moving forward. If possible this month, this item could be brought before the county Finance Committee on March 17 and before the Kent County Board of Commissioners on March 26.

The USDA NRCS FRPP now has a new name. The new name is the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP).

Slater informed the board members that he has heard about Water Forums being held in Ottawa County as well as Kent County and suggested that it might be a good idea to make a presentation at these forums to inform people about agriculture preservation.

## VI. **New Business**

### a. 2015 Application Cycle

The current year's application cycle will run from May 1-July 31, 2015.

#### i. United Growth Donation

Byers informed the board that a donation of \$1,900 has been made to the Kent County Ag Preservation program from United Growth fundraising efforts.

It was suggested that someone from the Ag Preservation Board attend a Kent County Board of Commissioners meeting and publicly accept and thank the United Growth people for their donation. This item would fall under the "Public Comment/Order of Business" section of the meeting.

Also, the board should write a letter to the United Growth people to recognize and thank them for their donation.

#### ii. Township Updates

Byers asked if any board members have completed their presentations at a Township Board meeting. These should probably be completed by May.

Grattan/Cannon/Oakfield/Vergennes Townships – Dennis Heffron

Lowell/Bowne Townships – Carl Blough

Grand Rapids Township – Ed Robinette

Alpine/Plainfield/Sparta Townships – Michele Van Houten

Caledonia/Gaines/Byron Townships – Russ Slater

Tyrone/Solon/Nelson/Spencer/Algoma/Courtland/Ada Townships - ?

## VII. **Other**

Byers informed the board that she will continue in her present job with Kent County through 2015. She needs to complete the preservation of the farms that are currently in the process. Her job in Ottawa County also has one farm to go through the process.

Applications will be accepted for the 2015 Application Cycle, but none will be entering the process until there is a replacement for Byers.

In 2016 there will be changes to the process with the Federal Government part of farmland preservation. They are changing from having each state approve the paperwork to regional people approving the paperwork.

VIII. **Public Comment** – none

IX. **Adjournment** – Motion by Chivis to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Robinette. The meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

Next meeting is April 1, 2015 at 11:30 a.m. at the Kent/MSU Extension Office