

Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board

April 1, 2015

Location: Kent/MSU Extension

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

Members Absent: Michele Van Houten (Conservation Interest)

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

Public Present: None

Meeting began at 11:30 a.m.

- I. **Welcome and Call to Order** – Chairperson, Dennis Heffron
Mary Swanson brought along Nathan Kark who is a Management Analyst in the Administrator's office, so those in attendance introduced themselves and explained their involvement with the Ag Preservation Board.
- II. **Public Comment** – None
- III. **Review Agenda and Declaration of Any Possible Conflict of Interest** – None
- IV. **Review and Adoption of March 4th, 2015 Minutes** – Motion to accept the minutes as presented by Blough, seconded by Slater. Motion passed.
- V. **Old Business**
 - a. 2014 FRPP applications – update Hall, Poulias
Hall Farm – the paperwork is completed and is set to close. There are two outstanding mortgages through the Ionia County FSA Loan office and Greenstone. These will be paid off with private funds. It is anticipated that there will be no problems with the closing. Funds for this preservation are from Wege Foundation money from 2 cycles (2014/2015 money).

Poulias Farm – the paperwork has been submitted to FRPP and now on to Washington, D.C. The approval papers should be back in about two weeks. Funds for this preservation are 45% Feds/55% Local/Wege Foundation

There was discussion regarding all the preserved land in the county, township and state and where the money has been coming from to preserve this land.

- b. 2013 FRPP Status – Frost and Vanoeffelen
Frost Farms has closed.

Vanoeffelen Farm – there are still the oil & gas lease challenges and there are only 38 acres in the easement. The deadline for filing the paperwork has been extended to August 31, 2015, but after that date this preservation timing will be done.

- c. 2015 Application Cycle – Malone

Malone Farm – the updated appraisal has been completed and the Malone's have reluctantly accepted the amount. The property is in close proximity to the Hall and Poulias property, but it was appraised at a lower price per acre for the Malone property. Byers will be submitting the paperwork to the Feds by April 15.

County meetings regarding Ag Preservation are: April 7 – Finance Committee receives Malone property information; April 14 – Legislative Committee will discuss the selection criteria and April 21 is the full Board of Commissioners meeting.

Just a point of information – Byers and Heffron will be meeting with the Frye Foundation at the end of the month regarding funding for Farmland Preservation.

- d. 2015 Application Cycle

The postcards will be sent out to landowners for the 2015 application cycle. Byers asked if anyone had any modifications in wording for the postcards.

- i. May 1 through July 31, 2015

These are the dates that applications will be accepted into the Farmland Preservation application cycle.

- ii. Selection Criteria Approval

It was suggested that there be language added to the applications because of the current challenges with oil and gas leases on property that had been submitted to the Farmland Preservation program. It was decided that applications may not go forward in the process if there are oil and gas leases attached to the property.

Robinette made a motion to add the words “owning all mineral rights on property or the process will not continue and not be accepted” to the preservation application. Chivis seconded and the motion passed.

VI. **New Business**

Byers and committee members discussed the possibility of a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony in October for Frost, Hall, Poulias, Vanoeffelen and possibly Malone farms that have been preserved recently. The ceremony would include an agenda with speakers talking about the importance of the FRPP. Need to invite the Frye Foundation and Wege Foundation to show the new generation the importance of FRPP now and in the future.

Questions to answer are: where to hold the ceremony? (possibly the Hall Farm) and catering? There is no money in the budget for refreshments so donations would have to be collected to cover this cost.

VII. **Other**

Reinbold had a meeting with Cannon Township Board Member, Diane Jones. Jones covers District #4 for the Kent County Board of Commissioners. Jones said that constituents need to give her feedback on Property Development Rights and tell her that they want money to go towards agricultural preservation. A chart has been requested showing where the PDR money comes from and where it is being spent. Byers said that she could put something together for Diane Jones and the committee members as well.

VIII. **Public Comment**

IX. **Adjournment**

Next meeting is May 6, 2015 at 11:30 a.m. at the Kent/MSU Extension Office