

# Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board

August 5, 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 Michele Van Houten (Conservation Interest)

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

**Members/Staff Absent:** Russ Slater (Ag Interest) and Mary Swanson (Administrator's Office)

**Public Present:** None

Meeting began at 11:33 a.m.

- I. **Welcome and Call to Order** – Chairperson, Dennis Heffron
- II. **Public Comment** – None
- III. **Review Agenda and Declaration of Any Possible Conflict of Interest** – None
- IV. **Review and Adoption of July 1, 2015 Minutes** – Motion made by Robinette to accept the July 1 meeting minutes. Seconded by Blough. Motion passed.
- V. **Old Business**
  - a. 2014 FRPP applications – update Hall, Poulias  
The Hall property has closed.

The Poulias property (113 acres) should close before the end of the year. They have the money and are just waiting for processes to go through. The backup has been caused at the Federal level because of the new Ag Bill.

- b. 2013 FRPP Status – Frost and Vanoeffelen  
The Frost property has closed.  
The Vanoeffelen property must be withdrawn from the FRPP program due to the oil and gas lease. The Oil and Gas Company was unwilling to sign a sub-surface non-disturbance affidavit, and therefore, the lease was be in direct conflict with the intent of the Conservation Easement. Unfortunately, the Federal funds are not transferable to another farm.

Byers said she will look into preserving the Vanoeffelen property using 100% local funds. In order to preserve the property without Federal Match, Byers will need to confirm several variables, including: 1) confirming sufficient funding from the Grand Rapids Community Foundation/Frey/Kent County funds from the budget; 2) Kent County Commissioners approve and 3) County Counsel would allow the purchase with the present oil and gas lease. *A motion was made by Robinette to proceed with preserving the Vanoeffelen property using 100% local funds if the three items are approved. Van Houten seconded the motion. **Motion passed.***

c. 2015 Application Cycle – Malone

The Malone property (100 acres) can be preserved with available funding. There is also a second piece of property (56 acres) that can be preserved this year also if there is available funding. The funding was discussed included: Grattan Township (\$15,000), Wege Foundation and local funds. The 100 acre property/easement could be funded by Federal money and Wege Foundation. The 56 acre property/easement would have to be funded with all local funds and no Federal money.

Byers mentioned the American Farmland Trust that originated from the Love Farm in Climax, Michigan in 1999-2000 time frame. This farm was sold and the money was put into trust. Grants are available from this trust to be used for agricultural preservation/conservation. The deadline to submit a grant is the middle of September.

*A motion was made by Reinbold that the Ag. Preservation Board move forward with submitting a grant proposal to the American Farmland Trust. Van Houten seconded the motion. **Motion passed.***

*A second motion was made by Reinbold for the Ag. Preservation Board to preserve the 56 acres of property on the Malone Farm if funding is secured. Robinette seconded the motion. **Motion passed.***

d. 2015 Application Cycle

i. May 1 through July 31, 2015 – List of applications

There are three new applications:

- Timothy Kruithoff – more acreage
- Patrick Farrell – Ada Township near Vergennes, corner of McCabe and 2 Mile
- H. Giles

And two renewal applications:

- Donald DeWys
- Bruce Roth

At the September 2 board meeting, the committee will be voting on ranking and which farms to preserve.

## **VI. New Business**

### **a. Report on TDR and Portland Urban Growth Boundary**

Byers reported on her trip to Portland, Oregon regarding Transfer of Development Rights with Ingham County officials. The transfers are very complex, but it could work in Ingham and/or Kent County. The best places for transfers to work are in very busy areas that are in close proximity to each other.

Robert Liberty and his staff will be working with the Ingham County officials on a year-long project to get a Transfer of Development Rights programs set up in the county. They will also be working on putting together a toolbox (calculator) for local units of government to use when contemplating a zoning or land use change from agriculture to development.

At next month's board meeting, Byers said that possibly the board could take some time at the meeting to lay out a potential Transfer of Development Rights program for Kent County. Discussion followed regarding the Urban Growth Boundary program.

## **VII. Other**

On Wednesday, October 14, 2015 at 10:00 am there will be a special event to recognize the farms that have had property preserved in the last year. The event will begin at 10:00 a.m. and will be held at the Hall property. Discussion followed regarding the need for tables and chairs and raising money to purchase light refreshments for the event to be held in the pole barn on the property. The list of invitees include: Kent County Commissioners, Township officials, State Representatives, State Senators, City and Village officials, Metro Council members, and media contacts (paper and news stations). The list of speakers include: a Kent County Commissioner (Candace, Stan or Tom), Ellen Satterly from the Wege Foundation, Dennis Heffron or Paul Knoerl from Grattan Township, someone from Debbie Stabenow's office, someone from the Frey Foundation, someone from the Grand Rapids Community Foundation and past landowners who were involved with preserving acres of their property. Possibly have a few landowners talk about why they got involved with the Ag. Preservation program.

Robinette volunteered to donation cider and donuts from the Robinette's Apple Haus for the occasion.

**VIII. Public Comment** – None

**IX. Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 12:51 p.m.

Next meeting is Wednesday, September 2 at 11:30 a.m.  
at the Kent/MSU Extension office