

Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board Meeting
May 4, 2016
Kent/MSU Extension
11:30 AM

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

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

- I. Welcome and Call to Order** – Meeting was called to order at 11:32 a.m. by Chairman Denny Heffron

- II. Public Comment** - None

- III. Review Agenda and Declaration of Any Possible Conflict of Interest** - None

- IV. Review and Adoption of April 6, 2016 Minutes** – *Ed made a motion to accept the April 6, 2016 meeting minutes. Michele seconded the motion and the motion passed.*

- V. Old Business**
 - a. Bradford Meeting – There was a recap of the meeting with Bradford's regarding their previously preserved property and unpreserved parcel of land. Also, there is an oil and gas lease on this property that expires in 2017.
 - i. American Farmland Trust outcome – Stacy contacted the AFT office and asked if they would be willing to hold onto the funds that they were going to contribute to this land preservation until June 2017. Stacy's contact at the AFT office, Bob is retiring, but he will try to talk the AFT office into putting a hold on the funds until 2017. Linda Howell, Assistant Corporate Counsel for Kent County, said that she would be willing to work with the Bradford farm regarding the oil and gas lease that is to expire in 2017.

The only other option is to move forward with a new property to be preserved. There is the Momber property that has already had an appraisal done.

 - b. Malone a, b update – The Malone parcel A, which is 100 acres, is close to closing right now other than the site visit from the Federal Government. The Malone parcel B, which is 57 acres, is missing the survey. Because the survey company has been taking so long to survey the property, the decision was made to contact a new survey company to get the survey done in a timely manner. Hopefully, these will be able to close in June.

- c. Farrell/Hefferan Property update – The Farrell property is on hold currently. The Bob and Mary Hefferan property is also waiting on the survey company to come out and get the survey completed. Also, the appraisal needs to be updated with the survey.
- d. Wege Grant, Meeting – The grant was submitted and Stacy requested a meeting with the new Executive Director of the Wege Foundation, Mark Van Putten. The meeting went well and Stacy found out that Mark is very interested in preservation. He was asked to continue to help fund farmland preservation and encourage others to join in funding. The Wege Foundation agreed to grant \$86,000 in funds. This money will be used for preserving the Hefferan property and administrative costs. The Wege Foundation is the only foundation to help in funding farmland preservation.

VI. New Business

- a. Weeks Family Meeting – The Weeks property has been pulled from the list of farms to be preserved. Stacy is still in contact with the owners and working with the family in the hope that they will reconsider preserving their property. Most of the property surrounding the Weeks property has already been preserved.
- b. 2016 Application Cycle
 - i. May 1 – July 31, 2016 – The 2016 Application Cycle has opened and the postcards were mailed out to the property owners.
- c. Aquinas College Research Project
 - i. Mary Clinthorne – Stacy has a meeting scheduled today with Dr. Mary Clinthorne and a graduate student from Aquinas College who would like to do a research project on farmland preservation.

VII. Other

- a. Heart of Lakes Spring Summit - Thursday, May 19, 2016
Heart of the Lakes Spring Conservation Summit
City Flats Ballroom
83 Monroe Center St., NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503
9:30 am to 4:30 pm
This would be a good summit to attend and it is in Grand Rapids this year.

VIII. Public Comment - None

IX. Adjournment – *Russ made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Michele seconded the motion and the motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 12:18 p.m.*

The next meeting is June 1, 2016 at 11:30 AM at Kent/MSU Extension.