

**Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board Meeting**  
**September 7, 2016**  
**Kent/MSU Extension**  
**11:30 AM**

**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) and Debbie Green (Kent/MSU Extension)

- I. Welcome and Call to Order** – the meeting was called to order at 11:42 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 July 6, 2016 Minutes** - Russ made a motion to accept the July 6 meeting minutes. Suzie seconded the motion and the motion passed.
- V. New Business**
  - a. Presentation from Curtis Talley Jr. MSU Extension Farm Management Educator – Mr. Talley talked to the group about Oil and Gas Leases: expired leases, re-negotiating leases and lease terms. He mentioned that there are safe areas that are off limits to oil and gas companies and those are parcels of land that are 40 acres or less.

After Mr. Talley’s presentation, the group discussed the idea of getting the current applicants together and having Mr. Talley come back and give his presentation to that group of farmers. It would be educational for them to learn about oil and gas leases before they are approached by an agent or a company that would like to lease their property.
  - b. 2016/2017 Meeting Schedule – Discussion was brought up regarding changing the monthly meetings to every other month or just sending e-mail updates if there is not a lot to discuss on the agenda. It was decided to keep the monthly meeting schedule with the option to cancel meetings if no activity is needed on topics.

## **VI. Old Business**

- a. Malone a, b Closing – The closing did not take place as planned because the feds had some issues with the paperwork. They needed updated information, missing signatures and tax ID number. Hopefully, this will be all taken care of within the next two weeks.

Denny suggested that the board keep Debbie Stabenow's office aware of the challenges that the board has been having with the federal government to get farmland preserved.

- b. Hefferan Property update – The Hefferans have decided not to move forward with the preservation of their land. One of the members (Bob) was talking to a realtor that told him he could make more money by splitting the property into 10 acre parcels and selling it off piece by piece.

The board decided that because everything was set for closing, that they would send two representatives from the board out to the farm to talk to Bob about the real financial possibilities between preserving the land and trying to sell the 10 acre parcels one by one. Seeing as Michele is related to the Hefferans, she and Suzie will pay Bob a visit in the near future to discuss his possibilities for the property.

Because of this latest development with the Hefferan property, discussion took place as to a replacement for the funds that were set aside for this preservation. The properties that were brought up were the Roth property – 70 acres (try to preserve 40 of the 70 acres), that has an oil & gas lease, and the John Stein property – 37 acres (unknown if there is an oil & gas lease – Stacy will contact to find out).

Michele made a motion to move forward with negotiations for the 2016-2017 application cycle with the John Stein property of 30 acres and the Roth property of 70 acres. Suzie seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Discussed was started regarding implementing an Appraisal Policy. Stacy and Denny brought up the idea because of the number of farms that have backed out of the process. One idea was to have the property owner pay for the appraisal and then reimburse them after the closing. Another idea was to have the property owner put down an earnest deposit before the process started. No final decisions were made on this topic.

- c. 2016 Application Cycle – There were no new applications received during this year's cycle.

**VII. Public Comment** - None

**VIII. Adjournment** – Suzie made a motion to close the meeting. Michele seconded the motion and the motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Next Meeting October 5, 2016 at 11:30 AM at Kent/MSU Extension.