

Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board Meeting Minutes  
July 10, 2019  
Kent County MSU Extension Office  
11:30 a.m.

**Members Present:** Dennis Heffron (Ag Interest), Gretchen Mousel (Conservation Interest), Dan Oesch (Ag Interest), Suzie Reinbold (Real Estate Interest), Ed Robinette (Township Interest) and Russ Slater (Ag Interest - by phone)

**Members Absent:** Commissioner Matt Kallman and Matthew VanZetten (County Administrator's Office)

**Staff Present:** Stacy Byers (Board Coordinator) and Debbie Green (Kent County MSU Extension)

- I. **Welcome and Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 11:35 am by Chairman, Dennis Heffron.
- II. **Public Comment** – None
- III. **Review Agenda and Declaration of Any Possible Conflict of Interest** – None
- IV. **Review and Adoption of June 5, 2019 Meeting Minutes** – A motion was made by Ed Robinette to accept the June 5, 2019 meeting minutes. Gretchen Mousel seconded the motion and the motion passed.
- V. **New Business**
  - i. **2019 Budget** – The Kent County Budget has been a learning curve because of staff turnovers with Mary Swanson leaving the county and Betty Blase retiring. Erin Moore is now the person in charge of the budget. Erin would like to make it a separate line item instead of including Ag Preservation with the MSU Extension budget.

We are asking for enough money to bring the balance back to the 2012 fund allocation of \$50,000. The Wege Foundation has been gracious enough to be supplementing the allocation since the county cut the budget in 2013. Stacy also asked Erin for a part-time MSU PDR person.

Dennis gave the group some background about the Kent County budget reductions each year. The budget is the biggest challenge for Farmland Preservation because of all the politics involved. Back in 2010 the budget for Farmland Preservation budget was \$1 million dollars. The only way to raise money would be through a special millage. Ingham County and Ann Arbor have a millage and have raised between \$1-\$3 million dollars for Farmland Preservation. The group then had some

discussion about having a millage and discussed the 2020 Budget Request. After the discussion, Suzie made a motion that the board present the budget that Stacy put together to the Kent County Board of Commissioners. Ed seconded the motion and the motion passed.

The Kent County MSU Extension budget is due the end of July. Stacy and Erin will present it to the Board of Commissioners then.

- ii. 2019 Application Cycle – The board has received 6 new applications and there are 35 applications already on file. The deadline to file an application for this year is July 31. It should take Elliott 2-3 weeks to provide rankings.
- iii. State Ag Preservation Fund Board – Stacy requested to be on the State Agricultural Preservation Fund Board. The state will have funds available starting October 1 (these are State Funds). There is a 45-day window to apply and it closes the end of November. There is about \$2 million dollars available.

**VI. Old Business – Updates**

- i. 2019 ACEP – Sieracki – Stacy submitted this farm to the feds, but it was not funded. All the federal funds went to Traverse City. The appraisal for the Sieracki farm has increased and there is now a \$50,000 shortfall.

The application deadline is fast approaching (July 31) for the next funding year. Dennis knows of two more farms in the Fruit Ridge area that might be interested in turning in applications. He will contact them soon to discuss the possibility of applying.

- ii. Wege Grant – The time to submit for this grant will be in August.

Reminder! – Stacy will be making a presentation to the Board of Commissioners on Thursday, August 8 at 8:30 a.m. if you would like to attend.

**VII. Public Comment – None**

**VIII. Adjournment** – Suzie made a motion to close the meeting at 12:28 p.m. Ed seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Next meeting date is Wednesday, September 4, 2019 at 11:30 a.m.  
at the Kent County MSU Extension Office