



**Kent County Agriculture Preservation Board**  
Wednesday, January 15, 2020 from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Kent MSU Extension Office – 775 Ball NE, Grand Rapids MI

**APPROVED Minutes**

**Members Present:** Dennis Heffron (Ag Interest), Dan Oesch (Ag Interest), Suzie Reinbold (Real Estate Interest), Ed Robinette (Township Interest), Russ Slater (Ag Interest)

**Absent:** Commissioner Matt Kallman, Gretchen Mousel (Conservation Interest)

**Staff:** Matthew VanZetten, Stacy Byers (phone)

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Denny welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made.
- II. **Review of Agenda** – The agenda was approved by consensus.
- III. **Approval of Minutes** – A motion was made by Ed Robinette to approve the December 2019 minutes. Dan Oesch supported. UNANIMOUS
- IV. **Transfer of Development Rights Proposal** – Matthew shared that Progressive AE was hired by the County Administrator’s Office to support education efforts related to TDR potential in the County.
- V. **Agriculture Preservation Specialist Position** – Matthew shared that the County has made an offer for the Agriculture Preservation Specialist position. He will send a note to the members if/when it is accepted. He hopes the new staff person will be attending the next meeting.
- VI. **Updates**
  - a. **State Grant** – The state grant for the Kruithoff farm was submitted. Nine other communities submitted grants as well (Barry, Ottawa, Lapeer, Macomb, Washtenaw, Ingham, Weber Township, Acme Township). As a reminder, \$1.9 million was available. We expect to hear back in Quarter 1 of 2020.
  - b. **Federal Grant** – The federal grant RFP has not been released yet. We anticipate it being released in March. Stacy met with Jennifer Headrick to inform her about the process.

We expect changes in 2020 resulting from the recently passed Farm Bill at the federal level. Specifically, we anticipate that cash matches will change, and farm owners can commit increased percentages of land donation toward the match. Also, the conservation approval process may be revised. The Kruithoff and Sierecki farms have been targeted for this application.

- c. **Monitoring** – Staff learned about an issue with a farm where it had been split into parcels. We are reviewing the information and hope to share a report next month.

**VII. Ag Preservation 2020 Work Schedule & Timeline** - The 2020 calendar was reviewed. It was agreed to meet in the County Administration Building. A revised calendar will be emailed to everyone with electronic calendar invites.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

**Next Meeting:**

Wednesday, February 5, 2020  
11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
Kent County Administrator's Office