



Kent County Agriculture Preservation Board
Wednesday, March 6, 2024 from 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
775 Ball Ave NE – Michigan State University Extension
Minutes prepared by
Matthew Channing, matthew.channing@kentcountymi.org

Approved Minutes

Members Present: Vice Chair Suzie Reinbold (Real Estate Interest), Russell Slater (Agricultural Interest), Secretary Jessica Marks (Agricultural Interest), Carolyn Johnson (Conservation Interest), Rob Steffens (Township Representative), Lisa Oliver-King (County Commissioner)

Absent: Dennis Heffron (Agricultural Representative)

Staff: Mark Rambo, Matt Channing

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Vice Chair Suzie Reinbold welcomed everyone to the meeting at 11:02 am. Several members of MSUE were present including District 7 Director Scott Korpak, Kellie Kieren, and Samantha Griffin.
- II. **Approval of the Agenda** – Secretary Jessica Marks made a motion to approve the March 6, 2024 Agenda. Commissioner Oliver-King supported the motion. UNANIMOUS.
- III. **Approval of Minutes** – Secretary Jessica Marks made a motion to approve the January 10, 2024 minutes. Commissioner Oliver-King supported the motion. UNANIMOUS.
- IV. **Public Comment on Agenda Items** – None
- V. **PDR 2024 Score and Rank** - Staff reported that there was one application for the preservation of approximately 115 acres in Solon Township. This will be the first preservation in Solon Township. The application scored 114 out of 200 points, or 57%. In Comparison, this application would have ranked 5th out of 6 when compared to the 2023 scores.

Carolyn Johnson motion to recommend to the Board of Commissioners to accept the score and rank of the PDR 2024 score and rank of applications. Secretary Jessica Marks supported the motion. UNANIMOUS.

- VI. **A Hope Church Brethren Donation** – Staff presented to the Agricultural Preservation Board a donation of development rights from Hope Church Brethren in Bowne Township. The Church's

membership contacted staff regarding the processing for donating development rights on approximately 68 acres of land. Staff met with representatives of the congregation and they completed an application. The application meets the minimum criteria.

Secretary Jessica Marks made a motion to pay all related expenses, including appraisal, title work, and closing costs, on behalf of the applicant as well as to recommend to the Board of Commissioners to accept the donation of the development rights. Russell Slater supported the motion. UNANIMOUS.

- VII. Norman State Application** – Staff informed the Board that Kent County received notification from MDARD that the Norman application will receive \$120,800 in grant funding. This represents 39% of the total and fully funds the application.

Secretary Jessica Marks made a motion to recommend to the Board of Commissioners to accept the grant. Commissioner Oliver-King supported the motion. UNANIMOUS.

- VIII. Appraisals** – Staff received two quotes for the Norman appraisal. Michael French of Soper & Associates, LLC quoted \$2,200 and Mark Williams of Williams Appraisal Services quoted \$3,950. Mr. French completed three appraisals for the County last year and Mr. Williams was a NRCS appraiser. Mr. French also quoted \$2000 for the Hope Church Brethren application.

Russell Slater made a motion to accept the Williams Appraisal Services quote for the Norman appraisal and accept the Soper & Associates, LLC quote for the Hope Church Brethren application. Vice Chair Suzie Reinbold supported the motion. UNANIMOUS.

- IX. Letter to MDARD** – Staff delivered to the Board a letter requesting the Board's support to encourage MDARD to grandfather in the PA 116 agreements pending easements to receive both. MDARD reversed course on allowing farmers to obtain conservation easements without relinquishing their PA 116 agreements. Several programs across the state have pending easements for farmers who also receive PA 116 benefits and now must choose which benefit to take.

Rob Steffens made a motion for Matt Channing to sign the letter of support on behalf of the Agricultural Preservation Board. Secretary Jessica Marks supported the motion. UNANIMOUS.

- X. Staff Update** – Staff provided the Agricultural Preservation Board with an update on the new Agricultural Interest Representative position. Board of Commissioners staff hope to have the process completed before the April Agricultural Preservation Board meeting. Staff also informed the Board that Matt Channing will be separating from the County sometime in early May due to pursuing educational opportunities.

- XI. General Public Comment** – None.

- XII. Board Updates** – Rob Steffens expressed interest in reworking the rules so that serving Board members can sell their development rights to the County. Mark Rambo volunteered to review this matter with the County's attorneys. Rob Steffens would also like to see PDR millages passed at the Township level.

XIII. Adjournment – A motion as made by Rob Steffens to adjourn until next meeting. Secretary Jessica Marks supported. UNANIMOUS

The meeting was adjourned at 12:08 p.m.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, April 3, 2024

11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

775 Ball Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503