

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION BOARD

MINUTES

Thursday

January 17, 2008 - 7:00 p.m.

CONFERENCE ROOM B

200 Grand River Avenue, 2nd Floor, Port Huron, MI 48060

1. Call to Order

Chairman Jim Reid called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Chuck Kwasnik, Dianna Seifert, Sue Sniegock, Jim Hayes, Ken Langmesser, Jim Reid, Terry Gill, Steve Simasko, and Rick Mills.

Support Staff: Dave Struck

3. Election of Officers

Jim Hayes made a motion to keep officers as they are; Sue seconded, all in favor; motion passed unanimously. Officers are: Jim Reid, Chairman; Chuck Kwasnik, Vice Chair; and Dianna Seifert, Secretary.

4. Citizens Wishing to be Heard

None.

5. Approval of September 20, 2007 Minutes

Terry made a motion to accept the September 20, 2007 minutes as presented, Jim Hayes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Communications

Copies of the letters received and sent to the farms that participated in the farm tour were included in the agenda packet. Ken wants the next farm tour to be in the Southern end of the county.

Also included is a letter to Bernice Westrick, wife of the late Leo Westrick, to inform her of a donation made to the Agricultural Preservation Board in remembrance of Leo in the amount of \$100.

Dianna made a motion to receive and file the communications; Sue seconded; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

7. Financial Report

a. December Report

Recent donations include: \$100 in memory of Leo Westrick, \$200 from MMPA, and a return check of \$1500 from Scott Everett from the State Ag Boards of Michigan. There was not enough support from other counties so Scott Everett is returning the checks to those counties that had given money. Chuck made a motion to approve the December financial report; Ken seconded; all in favor, motion passes unanimously.

A suggestion was made to include the Marysville Ethanol plant in the 2008 Fall Farm Tour, and at that same time ask them for a donation to support our cause – Jim Reid to approach them.

In addition, we need to revisit donors who offered support in the past. EMG mentioned at the last Fall Farm Tour if we wanted another donation.

Jim Hayes paid the Fahley Farm \$240 for expenses incurred by the Farm Tour. Ken made a motion to reimburse Jim Hayes for the \$240 paid to the Fahley Farm– all were in favor. Jim Hayes then generously said that he would forgo a reimbursement and would like to donate the money to the Ag Board in memory of Leo Westrick. The Ag Board acknowledged receipt in memory of Leo Westrick.

8. Old Business

a. Regional/Statewide Farm Directory

Discussion of a farm directory started after Dave showed examples of directories from Massachusetts and Traverse City. Steve mentioned that if we were to have a specific “project” in mind that we could come before the County Board of Commissioners and ask for support – could even target support by district. A farm directory for St. Clair, Sanilac, Lapeer, Tuscola and Huron Counties could be considered a “project” to put before the County Board of Commissioners for support. Support for Times Herald ads to advertise the Farm Tour and farmers’ markets could also apply. Steve asked if our Web site was tracked for hits – Dave said yes, and that he will find out what the number of hits has been.

The Times Herald is very interested in promoting and doing an article on “locally grown.” We need a slogan and a logo for this regional directory.

b. Ag Board 2008 Work Plan

See page 9 in packet – lists high, medium and low priority for the next year. Review and suggest any changes at the next meeting. Brockway Township seems to be waiting to sign their resolution until their master plan is completed. Dave to submit a package asking for support from the Michigan United Conservation Clubs by mid March. The St. Clair County Conservation District has postponed support until after they find out what the State is going to do to their budget.

c. Fall Farm Tour Report

The Fall Farm tour was a great success – 800 people toured in 2007 and 450 people toured in 2006. The Ag Board needs to start thinking about what part of the county we want the tour to be this year. Ken said Simons on St. Clair Highway has a dairy farm - China Township farmer growing grapes for wine – horse farm (Shea Stables?) – Ethanol Plant in Marysville – Fox Fire Farms – DNR duck and geese plantings on Harsen’s Island – example of selling hunting rights. Farm Tour scheduled for the second Saturday in October (October 11, 2008).

9. New Business

a. Ag Preserve Boards of Michigan Statewide Conference

Highlights in packet, see pages 13 and 15. One county reported preserving 800 acres of donated land; Monroe has 40 to 80 acres in the process of being donated; Lapeer preserved 40 acres donated by Almont. HB 4278 – possible action on bill in 2008 – 11 million dollars in liens from P.A. 116 property.

Chuck Kwasnik announced that he wants to donate the development rights on 60 acres of his farm to the Ag Board.. Because Chuck will donate the development rights, he did not want to incur any appraisal costs or recording fees. Chuck said his 60 acres will give us a chance to test our program. Costs to preserve his land could be considered a "project" paid for by possible support from the County Board of Commissioners.

b. Newsletter

Dave passes out most recent copy. Ideas for articles – wind energy farms, Chuck's 60 acre donation – article noting donation made in the memory of Leo Westrick and Jim Hayes' \$240 donation.

10. Other Business

a. Staff Report

The County Master Plant Update is scheduled to be completed by spring/early summer of 2008.

b. Items for Next Meeting – March 20, 2008

- Priority list changes for 2008
- Farms for 2008 Fall Farm Tour

c. Newspaper Articles

See packet.

11. Adjournment

Next meeting on March 20, 2008 at 3:00 p.m.. Dianna made a motion to adjourn; Sue seconds; motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianna Seifert, Secretary