

## AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION BOARD MINUTES

**Thursday**

January 19, 2006 - 3:00 p.m.

**CONFERENCE ROOM B**

200 Grand River Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Port Huron, MI 48060

1. **Call to Order**  
Chairman Jim Reid called meeting to order at 3:12 p.m.
2. **Roll Call**  
Present: Mike Lauwers, Dianna Seifert, Terry Gill, Ken Langmesser,  
Sue Sniegocki, and Jim Reid  
Support Staff: Dave Struck  
Excused: Jim Hayes  
Absent: Chuck Kwasnik
3. **Election of Officers**  
Mike made a motion to keep officers as they are; Ken seconds; all are in favor; motion passes unanimously.
4. **Citizens Wishing to be Heard**  
No citizens present.
5. **Approval of November 17, 2005 Minutes**  
Mike made a motion to approve the November minutes as presented; Sue seconds; all are in favor; motion passes unanimously.
6. **Financial Report**
  - a. November/December Financial Reports  
Discussion: Printing and mailing costs per newsletter issue is roughly \$1000.00 – 1221 copies were mailed for the last issue with 1500 copies printed – leftovers are distributed to township halls and other counters. Board members suggested taking extra copies to locations where residents with less than 40 acres could pick them up; for example, banks and stores like Tractor Supply.
7. **Old Business**
  - a. Newsletter  
A draft of the next newsletter was presented by Dave that included an article about Jim Hayes as the featured board member. Sue will be featured in the next issue.

One article announcing the Board's first application cycle in the drafted newsletter created much discussion. The article does not give a date for the application cycle but states that it will be "in the future" and its purpose is to 1) Gauge interest from farmers, 2) To get parcels lined up for the next state funding cycle and 3) To create an inventory of properties with owners who are interested in permanently preserving their farmland.

Some Board members felt that this would create discouraged and angry landowners. That calling for an application cycle would create false hope from landowners who after all their time and effort would find out that there is no funding. **However**, Stacey Sheridan, who was asked to attend our November meeting to give us direction, strongly recommended that our next step should be to run an application cycle for the following reasons: 1) It would test our selection criteria, 2) Broaden awareness among landowners, 3) Would help determine target areas that need further educating, 4) Determine how much landowner interest is out there and what parts of county it is coming from, and 5) The biggest reason - we need an offer appraised and on the table before we can be eligible to accept any State and Federal funding. The Board needs to decide what it's next step will be if it is not an application cycle.

b. Board Vacancy

Acheson Ventures gave Bill Kauffman a name to contact who may be interested in the board vacancy.

c. Community Updates

Dianna attended the last Riley Township meeting and they stated that they will be passing the farmland preservation resolution that adopts the County's plan after the master plan has been updated. Berlin Township passed their resolution in November of 2005.

d. Scott Everett- Formal Establishment of Ag Boards

Jim Reid presented a letter he sent to "People and Land" stating that we would support grant funding that would help formally organize established agricultural preservation boards in addressing both state and local farmland protection efforts, and the letter also included a request for any financial assistance People and Land could offer. People and Land has applied for a grant that contains \$1.5 million dollars and they should know in the next 30 days if they have been awarded the money or not. People and Land has been given \$10,000 from Comerica Bank. Scott's goal is to establish the Association Board and hire Bill Bobier by April of 2006.

- e. Stacey Sheridan  
Stacey did not give Bill Kauffman an example of an Open Space program yet.

## 8. New Business

### BOC Reappointments

- a. November 2005 reappointments include Jim Reid, Sue Sniegocki, Ken Langmesser and Pat Anger Alternate Terry Gill for a 3-year term. December 2005 reappointments include Chuck Kwasnik and Dianna Seifert for a 3-year term.

- b. Set Dates and Times for Meetings in 2006

A 2006 schedule of meetings was handed out. One change was made. The March meeting was changed from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> with the same start time. Motion to approve the 2006 schedule of meetings as amended made by Mike; seconded by Terry; motion passes unanimously.

- c. Winter Workshop – Charamy Cleary Visit

The Winter Workshop will be on February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:45 pm; an announcement for the meeting was included in the draft issue of the next newsletter. Dave said that it would be good to have some Board members at each of the two sessions. Dave will not be able to attend, but Bill should be there.

- d. Fundraising / Donors

MMPA, Farm Bureau and the St. Clair County Conservation District will most likely match the same support that they gave last year. Jim Reid will ask Eastern MI Bank again this year; Mike Lauwers suggested asking Capac State Bank; a suggestion was made to ask Detroit Edison. Scott Everett will be asking Farm Credit Services' main branch for \$15,000 to be used for statewide funding purposes.

Mike suggested that we look into being set up as a 501-C3 entity so that we could accept land donations if anyone chooses to do so, and that the Board somehow make attorneys and tax preparers aware of this so they may better assist their clients. Dave said that he could research this and put it in the next newsletter. Also to be included in next newsletter will be donation information – the how, who and where to send money to support the St. Clair County Farmland and Open Space Preservation.

- e. Timeline Revision

This will be addressed at the next meeting in February.

**9. Other Business**

a. Items for February Meeting

What is our next step? - Application cycle revisited.

b. Newspaper Articles

Scott Everett (director of American Farmland Trust) will send pertinent articles to Dave.

**10. Adjournment**

Dianna made a motion to adjourn; Mike seconds; motion passes unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianna Seifert  
Secretary