

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION BOARD

MINUTES

Thursday

November 20, 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 7:04 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Chuck Kwasnik, Dianna Seifert, Sue Sniegocki, Jim Reid, Ken Langmesser Terry Gill Steve Simasko

Excused: Jim Hayes

Absent: Rick Mills

Support Staff: Dave Struck

3. Citizens Wishing to be Heard

None.

4. Approval of July 17, 2008 Minutes

Dianna made a motion to accept the July 17, 2008 minutes as presented, Chuck seconded, motion passed unanimously.

5. Communications

Motion to accept the communications as presented by Dianna and seconded by Chuck; motion passed unanimously.

6. Financial Report

a. October Report

Have to double check with Dale about the two 10/3/08 checks; they might both be from St. Clair County Farm Bureau. Jim Reid will send a report to the St. Clair County Farm Bureau to show the success of the Fall Farm Tour. Motion to accept the October financial report made by Chuck and seconded by Sue; motion passed unanimously.

7. Old Business

a. Conservation Easement Donation Update

It cost \$1,470 to assess Chuck Kwasnik's 60-acre parcel. Chuck paid \$1000 and Greenstone paid \$470. Chuck will be able recoup his costs via tax savings if the County accepts his proposal. Due to economic conditions, the value per acre between farmland and land for development was only \$86 per acre. Chuck would have received a total of \$5,180 on the entire 60 acres if he were selling his development rights.

Kenockee Township has yet to complete the necessary paperwork.

The Conservation District needs to sign the paperwork as well, and then it will go to Corporation Counsel at the County level and finally a title search.

It needs to be determined who will be monitoring the land for development activity.

Ken suggested that the Ag Board reimburse Chuck for his portion of the appraisal costs. Chuck can turn it down, but Ken wants to set some rules and regulations for future donated land. Appraisal costs could become a deal breaker if someone wanted us to pay for these costs for donated land only.

David will draft a statement to be added to the guidelines concerning appraisal reimbursements for donated land.

Steve Simasko suggested that we could approach the County Board for matching funds.

b. Fall Farm Tour Review

Ken brought extra copies of the Farm Tour packets, and said the tour was an outstanding success. David made copies of all the newspaper articles concerning the tour. It was decided at the last minute to supply cider and donuts purchased at Neiman's in St. Clair. Ken declined an offer from Neiman's to donate the cider and donuts. Neiman's said to call if anyone ran out – two farms ran out and Neiman's never charged for the additional donuts.

Jim Domagalski took the initiative to set up a soybean booth at Westrick's farm, and also contacted McDonald Ford to supply a Ford Mustang with interior made from soybeans.

The Corn Grower's Association sent a representative to display a corn commission display board.

Marketing went well including press coverage; the weather was beautiful; 2600 – 2800 people took the tour. Sue said she took some pictures.

c. Newsletter Update

David will have updated numbers on postage and printing at the next meeting. The last mailing did not include 20 acre parcels. Next year's mailings will include 20 acre parcels with only two mailings per year.

8. New Business

a. Meeting Dates for 2009

No objections. Ken made a motion to approve; Sue seconded; motion passes unanimously.

b. Ag Board 2009 Action Plan

There is a need to push for the final few township resolutions to be signed – have to get on their agendas – will call and schedule.

If anyone has additions to the action plan pass them along to Dave.

As we promote Chuck's farm we need to include in every newsletter how to donate a farm – both to preserve it and for tax benefits. Could our next project be to preserve some of the farmland at the County Park?

c. Fall Farm Tour 2009 Planning

Ken envisions an Ag Tourism "Event."

Ideas: 4-H box lunches at the nearest township hall during the tour; get restaurants involved; farmers could sell their products.

Takes about one hour per farm so if there are six farms it should go for six hours.

Steve suggested networking with farm tractors clubs and Ag societies to coordinate their activities with the farm tour. Steve will contact these groups and send them to our next board meeting.

d. Fundraising Ideas

Ken brought a reusable grocery bag to the meeting to see if the board wanted to sell them for a fundraiser. The bags could be sold at the various farmers' markets.

It was also mentioned that Marine City wants to start a farmers' market.

9. Other Business

a. Staff Report

Included in packet.

b. Items for Next Meeting

Select chairman, vice-chair and secretary.

c. Newspaper Articles

Included in packet.

10. Adjournment

Next meeting is January 15, 2009 at 3:00 p.m. Chuck made a motion to adjourn; Sue seconded; motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianna Seifert
Secretary