

# AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION BOARD

## MINUTES

Thursday

February 19, 2009 – 3:00 p.m.

### CONFERENCE ROOM A

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

#### 1. Call to Order

Chairman Ken Langmesser called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m.

#### 2. Roll Call

Present: Jim Hayes, Chuck Kwasnik, Dianna Seifert, Sue Sniegocki, Jim Reid, and Ken Langmesser

Excused: Terry Gill

Absent: Rick Mills, Steve Simasko

Support Staff: David Struck

#### 3. Citizens Wishing to be Heard

None present.

#### 4. Approval of January 15, 2009 Minutes

Jim Reid made a motion to approve the January 15, 2009 minutes; Chuck seconded; motion passed unanimously.

#### 5. Communications

Letters of communication in packet included a letter to Kenockee Township, a thank-you letter to the Michigan Corn Growers Association, and a thank-you letter to the Michigan Milk Producers Association. Motion made by Jim Reid to accept the communications as presented; Sue seconded; motion passed unanimously.

#### 6. Financial Report

Only change was an addition of a \$200 donation from Michigan Milk Producer's Association. Motion to accept the financial report as presented by Jim Reid; Chuck seconded; motion passed unanimously.

#### 7. Old Business

##### a. Conservation Easement Update

A letter of inquiry was sent to the Kenockee Township Clerk asking for Kwasnik's application paperwork and meeting minutes with a copy of the letter sent to the Kenockee Township Board. No one is sure why the clerk is stalling with the paperwork. The next step for the paperwork is to go to the Soil Conservation District. Ken would like to see this finished so we can publicize the first preserved farm in St. Clair County. David will talk to a representation from Kenockee Township at the Winter Workshop.

##### b. 2009 Fall Farm Tour Planning

Ken attended a Soil Conservation District meeting last night. Ken said Mike Taylor was greatly enthused about the tour, and volunteered to be on the Fall Farm Tour subcommittee along with Jim Reid, David Struck, and Dianna. The Soil Conservation District is interested in promoting the tour as well; however they are

low on funds due to State cutbacks to their budget, but if we have a specific request they will look at it before saying no. Granholm wants to cut their budget again this year and tree sales have been down. Jim Hayes said the Macomb office is only operating one day per week. Ken discussed sharing a newsletter between the Ag Preserve Board and the Soil Conservation District. After further discussion, Jim Reid proposed having a joint newsletter with the Soil Conservation District, one with their annual report (early winter) and the second in September with their fall tree sale.

Ken discussed the location of the Fall Farm Tour and the Soil Conservation District liked the idea of moving it to Memphis. Karen McCue mentioned their adzuki beans that get processed at Green Seed in Columbus for the Japanese market.

Dianna will head up the contacting and signing up of farms since she is from Memphis. Possibilities include: Jim Domagalski – grain farm; Rowley – dairy farm; Winn’s – beef/adzuki beans; Altermatt’s – vegetable farm; Dudek’s – hog farm. Could incorporate a 4-H lunch wagon at the new addition to the County Park property off Bauman Road where people on the tour could pick up coupons for a Memphis restaurant to provide a “Grown in Michigan” menu item.

David will to contact DDA of Memphis (if there is one) and see how they would like to participate and if they would like to advertise with street banners; M-19 receives a lot of traffic. Restaurants in Memphis include: Mom’s Country Kitchen, Mr. Z’s, Subway and Memphis Market (deli) has a couple of tables for seating. David will contact the Tourism Bureau to see if they want to get involved with the Fall Farm Tour. Farm Bureau may want to help with donations if they can get some advertising out of it, especially if the Fall Farm Tour can be considered educational – which it is definitely that.

c. Reusable Bags

David collected pricing and bag-type information from two companies. After discussing the selling of the bags for a fundraiser it was decided to test 600 bags through the summer and see how they sell, and if it goes well we can order more to sell at the Fall Farm Tour. They can be sold at Farmer’s Markets, the 4-H Fair and festivals throughout the summer. David will have each company send us a sample so we can decide at the next meeting what company we want to go with and decide on what we want printed on it (Farmland Preservation Logo along with “Save Farmland – Buy Local” and the Web site. Motion made by Jim Reid to allow Dave to use Board money to pay for freight for bag samples; Jim Hayes seconded; motion passed unanimously.

**8. New Business**

a. 2007 Census of Agriculture (released 2-4-09)

Census is taken every five years – in packet page 16; lost approximately 22,000 acres of farmland in last five years.

b. Update from Farm Bureau seminar in Lansing

Chuck and Ken attended the seminar. Chuck went to the P.A. 116 and 262 breakout session. Programs are most effective in areas not threatened by development, for example, Huron County. P.A. 116 property tax has been lowered to 3.5% of living

expenses. Ingham County passed a 0.07 millage generating \$200,000 to \$300,000 per year. The measure passed with help from the young vote (MSU). Clinton County is attempting a millage. Ken went to two other breakout sessions. Michigan has one of the strongest Right to Farm acts in the country. Ann Arbor just passed an ordinance to allow citizens the right to have chickens in the city limits and will be covered by the Right to Farm legislation. As long as a person follows GAMPS, Right to Farm will protect you.

Ag Tourism session was given by Abbey Jacobson from Westview Orchards in Romeo. Westview, a 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> generation farm, was given a hard time by their township concerning Ag Tourism and what they deemed necessary to handle large traffic flows. The township wanted them to pave a large area of their alfalfa field for parking after Westview used their own money to set up a definition of Ag Tourism for the township. The township tuned around and wrote their own definition of Ag Tourism and put costly demands on the orchard. Westview sent cards to every household in the township and 300 showed up to a meeting; two were against the orchard and the rest were for the orchard. The orchard employs a lot of people. Westveiw made the last set of signs for the 2008 Fall Farm Tour. In the end, they ran a slate of their own people in the election for township positions to change the outlook of the township board.

c. Conservation District meeting Report

Covered.

d. Update on Michigan Agricultural Preservation Fund Board meeting

Meeting on February 10, 2009, there is no update from MDA and they have no money.

e. 4-H Animal Day at McMorrان

Lori Warchuck invited the Ag Board to have a booth at the Animal Day on March 14, 2009, 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. to teach the public more about animals and how they fit into our daily lives. This is the first time they approached us for help and they did help with the Fall Farm Tour last fall. Dave said he could get information together for the booth. Jim Reid will ask Farm Bureau if they are interested in having a booth at the Animal Day as well. Ken and Dianna said they may be able to attend the booth.

**9. Other Business**

a. Items for Next Meeting

Bag samples and logo, and regional farm directory with Kathe Hale.

b. Newspaper Articles

In packet and another Detroit News article on dairy farms.

**10. Adjournment**

Ken made a motion to adjourn, Dianna seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianna Seifert, Secretary