

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION BOARD

MINUTES

Thursday

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

County Administration Building, Conference Room B
200 Grand River Avenue, 2nd Floor, Port Huron, MI 48060

1. **Call to Order**
Chairman Jim Reid called meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.
2. **Roll Call**
Present: Jim Reid, Chuck Kwasnik, Terry Gill, Sue Sniegocki, Ken Langmesser, Dianna Seifert
Support Staff: Dave Struck, Senior Planner
Excused: Jim Hayes
Absent: Steve Simasko, Rick Mills
3. **Citizens Wishing to be Heard**
None.
4. **Approval of May 15, 2008 Minutes**
Chuck Kwasnik made a motion to accept the May 15, 2008 minutes as presented, Sue Sniegocki seconded, all in favor, motion passed unanimously.
5. **Communications**
None.
6. **Financial Report**
June Report
Dave Struck explained the financial report included in the packet and noted that there were no chances since the previous report. *Chuck Kwasnik made a motion to acknowledge receipt of the financial report, Ken Langmesser seconded, all in favor, motion passed unanimously.*
7. **Old Business**
 - a. Regional Farm Directory Update – K. Hale
Kathe Hale from MSU Extension talked about donations that were received from the Lapeer and St. Clair Farm Bureaus. Kathe has discussed the directory with Carl Osentoski of the Huron County Economic Development Corporation and he is interested in the regional effort that would cover Huron, Tuscola, Sanilac, Lapeer, St. Clair, Genesee and northern Macomb counties. Kathe then shared the Edible Wow Southeast Michigan catalog and the artists' trail brochure that Huron County developed.

Kathe suggested doing a news release in the paper and online to get local farmers to submit their information for the directory, which would highlight

area farmers' markets, direct-buy farms, U-pick farms, artists and community festivals.

Ken Langmesser made a motion for the Agricultural Preservation Board to contribute \$300 towards the Regional Farm Directory, Sue Sniegocki seconded, all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

b. Donation of Conservation Easement Process

Dave Struck stated that he once again talked with Tom Valentine of the Lapeer Conservation District, who serves as staff support to the Lapeer County Agricultural Preservation Board. Dave asked Mr. Valentine to further explain why the donation in Lapeer did not involve an appraisal. Mr. Valentine explained it was because the donor did not seek any of the federal income tax benefits that are associated with conservation easement donations.

Dave mentioned that he attended the Michigan Department of Agriculture PDR workshop on July 15 and there was a session on the tax benefits of conservation easement donations. Dave shared the presentation with the Ag Board. If Chuck Kwasnik wants the tax deductions, a before-and-after appraisal will need to be done to determine the value of the development rights. Staff and board members will need to determine all associated costs with the process, such as appraisal, title search, and drafting the easement. Dave will look into these issues and report back at the next meeting.

Jim Reid mentioned that Mark Williams in Brown City may be able to do the appraisal. Dave mentioned that the Department of Agriculture has a list of appraisers that can do development rights appraisals.

c. Fall Farm Tour Update

Ken Langmesser reported on the four farms that he has confirmed for the Fall Farm Tour. So far, the confirmed farms will be Simons Dairy Farm, Westrick Grain Farm, Schwehofer Farm on Allington Road, and Langmesser Farms. Dave mentioned that the Board should focus on securing 2 more stops, preferably in the St. Clair Township area to keep them concentrated. He also suggested having the tour run from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. instead of 4:00 p.m. Ken said he will try to get a horse farm and possibly a greenhouse to add to the tour.

d. 4-H Fair Photo Contest

Dave Struck said that he contacted Gilda Schott, the 4-H Coordinator, about the photo contest rules and prize structure. Gilda agreed to share the information with the Fair Board and spread the word about the contest amongst the local clubs and in the 4-H newsletter. The contest was open to 4-H members only and the deadline for submissions was July 11.

There were three participants in the photo contest this year. Board members discussed the low participation and discussed whether it was worth doing in the future. Members also discussed whether they should just cancel the contest this year due to the low turnout. Terry Gill and Chuck Kwasnik suggested the Board should carry through on the contest this year since the commitment was made, but to not do the contest next year.

Ken Langmesser made a motion to award the prizes this year to Katie Thrushman (1st Prize - \$75.00), Nadia Post (2nd Prize - \$50.00) and Naomi Post (3^d Prize - \$25.00) and, further, to send a letter to 4-H to inform them that due to the lack of interest, the Ag Board will not continue the contest in the future, Dianna Seifert seconded, all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

e. Newsletter Update

Ken Langmesser gave Dave Struck the write-up on Leo Westrick, along with a poem and a picture for the newsletter. Dave suggested that the Board hold off on distributing the next newsletter until the beginning of September so that they can highlight and advertise the Fall Farm Tour on the cover one month in advance. This will be helpful since the newsletter is now reaching more households.

8. New Business

a. Michigan Department of Agriculture PDR Training Workshop Review

Dave Struck attended the workshop on July 15. He gave a brief synopsis of the workshop and told the Board members if they would like to look through the seminar workbook to let him know. He shared a copy of the presentation regarding tax issues and conservation easements with the Board. There is also a listing of state certified appraisers in the workbook.

b. Taste of St. Clair Assistance

Dave mentioned that Dan Lockwood had asked if the Ag Board would be able to assist in connecting local farmers to St. Clair restaurants to provide ingredients for a "Taste of St. Clair" event the Downtown Development Authority was planning. Board members mentioned some producers in the area that have websites and that provide direct selling, such as Vandebossche Farms, which has a website and Northrup Farms. They also suggested utilizing the farmers at the farm markets and also the Michigan MarketMaker website, which has a lot of St. Clair County producers on it and is searchable by product. Dave said he could compile a list to share with the DDA in St. Clair.

9. Other Business

a. Staff Report

Dave said that everything in his staff report was covered earlier in the meeting.

b. Items for next Meeting

No specific items were mentioned. Primary focus will continue to be the donation of conservation easement.

c. Newspaper Articles (for information only)

There are no articles for this month.

10. Adjournment

Chuck Kwasnik made a motion to adjourn, Dianna Seifert seconded, motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianna Seifert
Secretary