



**ACME TOWNSHIP
FARMLAND & OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, January 13, 2009, 2:00 p.m.
Acme Township Hall
6042 Acme Road, Williamsburg MI 49690**

Meeting called to Order at 2:10p.m.

Members present: B. Garvey(Chairman),G. LaPointe(2:30), W. Kladder, Township Supervisor,
S. Vreeland, Township Manager
Members excused: B. Carstens
Staff present: N. Edwardson, Recording Secretary
Also present: B. Bourdages, Farmland Preservation

1. **Limited Public Comment:** None

2. **Approval of Minutes from July 24, 2008, meeting:**

Motion by Kladder. Seconded by Garvey to approve the meeting minutes from July 24, 2008, with one correction. Motion carried unanimously.

3. **Old Business:**

1) **Update on status of Federal Farmland Protection Program in 2008 Farm Bill**

Bourdages said that the Farm bill passed in July of 2008. Allocations increase from 97 million in 2009 to 200 million in 2012. Acme Township as well as the Conservancy will qualify for funding. Senator Debbie Stabenow holds a key chair in the Senate. She has been a strong advocate for the Farm bill. The Senator was present in September for the Conservancy trust gathering. She has promised to work hard to get Michigan Farm funding to us.

Ken Engle commented that half of the farm bill is directed to nutrition program. He said with the change in the economy, world suffering, the trend is towards helping more people out. Bourdages said there are a lot of changes in what we know to be Food Stamps, school lunches.

4. **New Business:**

1) **Consider recommendation to Board of Trustees to make offers to landowners to begin purchasing development rights**

- a) **Status of discussion with landowners/Offer of bargain sales**
- b) **Township's counsel's opinion**
- c) **Implementation Plan**

Bourdages reviewed the Proposed Implementation Plan that was first introduced in December of 2008. Committee members were given handouts of the plan and spreadsheet with figures. Some of the highlights of the landowner status included in the implementation plan were 1) all landowners have signed a "Letter to Proceed" with the township and have been

patient with the process since their applications were submitted in August of 2006. 2) some landowners have more urgency in selling development rights than others due to capital improvement needs, current liens on their property, etc. 3) with an average across the board donation of 25% in bargain sales from the top three scoring landowners, Send Brothers, Engle, Sayler, there is sufficient projected revenue to buy development rights on all this farmland which is approx. 635.5 acres under application with the estimated proceeds from the current millage ending in 2014 and 4) there is some flexibility on the part of the landowner applicants to sell some or none of their development rights now, and grant option agreements to the township for 2-3 years for the remaining acreage with modest consideration required for those options.

A letter from Chris Bzdok, township counsel, dated January 8, 2009, regarding the proposed PDR implementation plan was given to Advisory members.

Also a letter written by Ken Engle, to the township Board in November regarding the PDR program.

Certified General Appraiser, Tim Johnson, owner of Cedar Consulting, was in attendance. His services were utilized by the township to appraise the conservation easement values on the properties mentioned above. It is Johnson's opinion that there has been no measureable change in value since the appraisals were conducted late 2007 and early 2008. The primary factors that continue to support the PDR values are the size of the parcels and the fact that the "highest and best use" for these parcels is to "Hold for Future Development".

Bourdages said the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy has received grant funds from the Americana Foundation in support of the township farmland preservation program. Approximately \$25,000 of this money has been set aside for option payments to Acme landowners.

Bourdages, Vreeland and Kladder prepared a worksheet of potential offer scenarios for the PDR program. Committee reviewed and discussed the different options.

MOTION BY GARVEY TO RECOMMEND THAT THE BOARD ENGAGE IN NEGOTIATING OFFERS BASED ON THE PDR PROGRAM MODEL PRESENTED AS WELL AS MAKING THE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS TO THE TOWNSHIP BUDGET. SECONDED BY LAPOINTE. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Kladder commented on recruiting additional committee members. He also mentioned a upcoming farm conference. Kladder said another goal he has is to connect the North and South ends of the township. The North where the farmland is and the South the businesses and residential areas. He would like the sides to have a clearer understanding of what is available. He will be meeting with Garvey to discuss this very issue later in the week.

Vreeland talked about doing a marketing survey that included Shoreline and Farmland. She is having lunch later this week with the Zoning Administrator from Whitewater Township. Vreeland would like to discuss a combined effort of the two townships staff to staff in doing this survey.

Vreeland also commented that some adjustments need to be made to the Farmland Budget.

Garvey commented about getting the word out to the public. Vreeland said she has been thinking about doing a "human interest story" with photos. Garvey is very impressed with all

that has been accomplished and would like the public to be aware of it.

ADJOURNED AT 4:00 p.m.