



**ACME TOWNSHIP
FARMLAND & OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, May 11, 2006, 3:30 p.m.
Acme Township Hall
6042 Acme Road, Williamsburg MI 49690**

Meeting called to Order at 3:45 p.m.

Members present: B. Carstens, K. Engle, W. Kladder, R. Sayler, N. Veliquette
Members excused: B. Garvey (Chair)
Staff present: N. Edwardson, Recording Secretary
Also present: B. Bourdages, Farmland Preservation

- 1. The history of the PDR program in Acme Township and Grand Traverse County:**
Kladder said in 1994 Peninsula Township residents formally adopted a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program by voting in a tax millage to support the program. The PDR program was further supported by grants from the State of Michigan, the U.S.D.A., the Michigan Department of Transportation, and the American Farmland Trust. In December of 2001 Peninsula Township's PDR program had preserved 4,000 acres of agricultural land. In February of 2002 the Michigan Agriculture Preservation Fund was established. The fund's purpose was to provide grants to eligible local units of government for the purchase of agricultural conservation easements through Purchase of Development Rights programs (PDR) to preserve farmland. In 2002 Peninsula Township residents approved another millage increase. The additional funds enabled the Township to increase the coverage of the program to purchase the Development Rights on an additional 3,000 to 4,000 acres. In June of 2002 a two-county, five-township farmland and open space task force was organized with a \$50,000 grant from Rotary Charities. The purpose was to come up with economic incentive to stay in farming and to create effective planning and zoning policies so active farms do not create land-use conflict with surrounding properties. On June 30, 2004, Grand Traverse County adopted a farmland preservation ordinance. October 8, 2002, Leelanau County adopts a PDR ordinance. In July of 2004 Antrim County adopts a farmland Preservation ordinance. Antrim and Grand Traverse will start working towards a joint farmland preservation committee. Governor Granholm visited Northern Michigan to promote farmland preservation in Grand Traverse County on July 10, 2004. Acme Township approved a .5 mill levy to be used for farmland preservation in November of 2004. This generates a quarter of a million dollars in revenue for the township. In February of 2005 Acme and Old Mission townships contracted with Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy for a land protection specialist. In May of 2005 Grand Traverse County appoints the initial members of the Farmland Preservation Board with terms to start July 1st, 2005. In May of 2006 Grand Traverse County opens its first application round and will begin accepting applications from farm owners who wish to participate in the Grand Traverse County Purchase of Development Rights Program.

2. Structure of the current program

Bourdages explained the structure of the local program; Develop selection criteria Score applications; Determine price to be offered to property owner. The units participating in the local program; Acme and Old Mission townships would then work with the county to conduct voluntary application round; develop guidelines for allocation of funds and the Board may allocate matching funds.

3. What is the PDR program and how will it work

Bourdages said the township essentially handles the allocation of funding, while the County is responsible for running the application process and applying the scoring system, approving the restrictions and permitted uses to be part of conservation easements, establishing purchase prices and ongoing oversight and enforcement. He noted the actions that the township needs to take throughout the process. First a landowner submits an application to the county along with an application approval letter from the township. The County scores the application according to the established criteria and returns it to the township. The township then decides to allocate available matching funds. The ordinance says that the township shall allocate matching funds to highest scoring parcels in a manner that provides the most possible competitive advantage to those applications relative to county, state or federal matching programs. Funds can be allocated to a single or to multiple parcels.

4. The application and scoring process

Bourdages showed slides of the GT County Farmland Preservation Scoring System. The objective of this rating system is to help prioritize farmland parcels which should be preserved for agricultural uses. There are several components that are evaluated; agricultural characteristics, size of parcel, agricultural productivity, development pressure, proximity to protected farmland and open spaces and natural resources/tourism values.

5. How can Acme landowners learn more

Bourdages encouraged anyone in attendance to sign up for additional information on Farmland Preservation and the Purchase of Development Rights.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:45 p.m.