

**Van Buren County Land Preservation Board**  
**October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007**  
**Administration and Land Services Building**  
**219 Paw Paw St., Paw Paw**  
**6:30 pm**

**Minutes**

**Regular Meeting**

Call to order 6:30 pm

**Present:** Laura Strehlow, Don Mackellar, Dave Foerster, Jeff Radke, Wayne Hammond

**Absent:** Mike Theil, Scott Cedarquist, Tom Erdmann, Ted Major, Mike Pioch, Bill Mihelich, Bill Lawson, Ryan Miller

**Public:** Charles Lachman, Amy Lockhart

**Agenda:** Approved

**Minutes:** Approval of August 9 minutes postponed to November meeting

**Public Comment:** None

**Reports:**

*Township Representatives* – Foerster reported that Waverly Township planning has elected not to address Farmland Preservation in its upcoming Future Land Use Plan amendment in spite of a township wide survey indicating 75% of respondents favor farmland preservation.

*Report on Agricultural Preservation Fund Grantee Meeting* – Foerster reported highlights from the 26-Sep-07 meeting hosted in Charlotte by Rich Harlow and Beth Juras of the Mich Dept of Ag. Miller and Foerster represented the LPB.

- Kent and Van Buren County were commended for being on target to complete PDR closings by the end of FY07 as requested. Others will be granted an extension apparently without penalty.
- The next RFP from the Ag Dept will be delayed until the first of the year due to shortage of funds. The trigger point for a grant cycle is when available funding reaches \$500,000. The application cycle will be 60 days after RFP issue.
- Passage of House Bill 4278 is expected to generate more funds from PA-116 terminations by offering incentives for land owners to settle up. Harlow requested that individuals and/or LPBs contact their representatives to encourage passage of HB 4278.
- At present, only 24 local units of government are eligible for the PDR program.
- Kent County has 17 foundations supporting their program. One source of funds is Crystal Flash who has pledged one cent for each gallon of bio-diesel fuel sold in the Kent County.

*Lachman Conservation Easement Closing* – It was reported that closing on the Lachman PDR was completed on 27-Sep-07. Discussion for a media event to celebrate this achievement yielded the following:

- A photo-op celebration will be held on the Lachman property next April, date TBD.
- Invitees should, at a minimum, include: Governor Granholm; Federal, State and County legislators; Farm Bureau representatives (Ted Hubicek), PP Township Board and Planning Boards (especially Randy Peat); Pine Grove and Antwerp Township Board and Planning Commissioners, other township reps, all who did committee work to implement farmland and open space preservation; MSUE participants; NRCS staff; Conservancy reps.
- Chuck Lachman is amenable to having a sign erected identifying his property as being preserved through the VBC Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (in compliance with applicable township, county and state sign regulations, of course). Group consensus favored sponsoring a design competition for VBC high school graphic arts students offering a prize of \$100 or so. The real prize would be the selection of a design to be used for this and future LPB land preservation signs and possibly to adopt the art for the LPB logo, letterhead, etc. Guidelines for sign content and physical characteristics are TBD.

*North Point property* – It was reported that County Commissioners had tentatively decided not to sell the North Point property. A committee will be established to determine how it might be managed, developed and promoted for public use. There was consensus by LPB meeting attendees that this property should be left as natural as possible (essentially as is) to prevent damage by overuse. This position will be presented by Foerster to County Commissioners at the meeting to establish the aforementioned committee.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at 6:30 pm on the 2nd Floor Conference Room of the Administration and Land Services Building 219 Paw Paw Street, Paw Paw.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 8:10 pm  
Submitted by Dave Foerster