

Van Buren County Farmland Preservation Board
February 14th, 2008
Administration and Land Services Building
219 Paw Paw Street, Paw Paw
6:30 pm

Minutes

Regular Meeting

Call to order at 6:31 pm

Present: Ted Major, Bill Lawson, Don Mackellar, Mike Thiel, Dave Foerster, Tom Erdmann, Ryan Miller

Absent: Scott Cedarquist, Jeff Radtke, Bill Mihelich, Wayne Hammond, Mike Pioch, Laura Strehlow

Public: Charles Lachman, Amy Lockhart

Agenda: Approved (Motion by Bill Lawson)

Minutes of January 10th Approved (Motion by Mike Thiel, Seconded by Bill Lawson)

Public Comment: None

Reports:

County Commissioner – No Report

Township Representatives – Bill Lawson reported that he attended a Keeler Township meeting to gain their support. He also stated that Decatur Township will be addressing possible 2 motions in April concerning Farmland Preservation and Wind Power.

Dave Foerster reported that Waverly Township has addressed Farmland Preservation with a resolution but refused to include a map that defines the areas that will qualify for the program. The resolution allows landowners to show interest in the program and will eventually be added to a map representing farmland preservation areas. Foerster expressed concern since this does not meet the State of Michigan guidelines for approving a Farmland Preservation program at the local level.

Planning Commission Representative – No Report (Did not meet in January)

Other Local Visits – There was discussion about Chuck Eckenstahler possibly conducting a workshop in the near future to talk about a county-wide farmland preservation program that is similar to one that St. Joseph County, MI. recently passed.

Old Business:

Lachman Celebration – The event was tentatively schedule to occur on May 3rd, 2008 at 10:00am with an alternate date of April 26th. A list of invitees is listed on the October 11th, 2007 meeting minutes. There was also discussion about creating a news release, having a tent at the site, and sending out invitation by April 10th at the latest. A tentative list of speakers would possibly include Randy Peat, Rich Harlow, Charles Lachman, and State and Local Representatives.

Fund Raising Ideas – Dave Foerster reported that he had a conversation with the Marketing Manager at Crystal Flash. He spoke to them about possibly having a similar donation structure for biodiesel sales with us like they currently have with Kent County. He was notified that they are not currently selling biodiesel during the winter months, but they are interested in setting something up this spring instead.

New Business:

Farm Bureau Meeting – Dave Foerster spoke about the Scoring System changes for the Purchase of Development Rights program at the State level. He pointed out that we need to consider these changes in our scoring system at the local level as well.

Secretary Position Transition – Foerster reported that Amy Lockhart of the Van Buren County Conservation District will be presenting a memorandum of understanding to the board at the next meeting.

Farmland Preservation Appointments – Dave Foerster reported that the appointment terms for a few board members will be expiring in April including Scott Cedarquist, Bill Mihelich, Mike Pioch / Laura Strehlow (shared), Mike Thiel, and Jeff Radtke. Foerster has currently gotten confirmation from Mihelich, Thiel, and Radtke that they are interested in being re-appointed.

Bylaws - Foerster spoke about the need for adopting Bylaws for the Farmland Preservation Board. He pointed out the his recommendation included addressing an attendance policy, creating a Treasurer position, having no term limits, and re-electing officers one a year.

*There was a **MOTION** by Bill Lawson, **SECONDED** by Tom Erdmann, to table the discussion of the Bylaws until the next meeting. Motion passed unanimously.*

Judgment of Sign Entries – There were numerous sign competition entries submitted by local high school students. The students had to follow certain guidelines to be considered for the cash prize. After much deliberation and judgment, there were 8 finalist chosen by the farmland preservation board members which included the following in no particular order:

- Summer Cadarette
- Mary Jo Clark
- Tyler Schebeck & Cory Playford
- Courtney Cowan
- Nicole Lindsey
- Brittni Roy
- Therese Kozik
- Abbi McClung

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be March 13th, 2008 at 6:30 pm on the 2nd Floor of the Administration and Land Services Building, 219 Paw Paw Street, Paw Paw.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:30 pm

Submitted by Ryan Miller
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