

**Van Buren County Land Preservation Board**  
**July 12<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:** Bill Lawson, Jeff Radtke, Mike Pioch, Bill Mihelich, Scott Cedarquist, Laura Strehlow, Tom Erdman, Dave Foerster, Ryan Miller

**Absent:** Don Mackellar, Ted Major, Mike Thiel, Wayne Hammond

**Public:** Charles Lachman, Jack Bley

**Agenda:** Approved (Motion by Jeff Radtke, Second by Tom Erdmann)

Minutes of May 10<sup>th</sup> and June 14<sup>th</sup> Approved (Motion by Jeff Radtke, Second by Bill Mihelich)

**Public Comment:** none

**Reports:**

*County Commissioner* – Tom Erdmann mentioned that South Haven Township’s Supervisor Ross Stein was interested in seeing more information on farmland preservation. Erdmann also pointed out that he would like someone with a little more knowledge on the subject to go to the township and present them with some material about farmland preservation.

*Township Representatives* – Laura Strehlow noted that the Pine Grove Township clerk had the applications in hand and that it seemed positive overall.

Bill Lawson said that Hamilton Township will not have a meeting until September. He also noted that the Township is in a court case with a landowner allowing ATV racing on the property. The zoning ordinance does not support the activities that are occurring on the property.

Dave Foerster mentioned that Waverly Township recently did a survey, are now creating the map overlay, and are giving attention to the commercial properties in the master plan. Foerster also mentioned that the Township Supervisor may be against farmland preservation. He also pointed out that the 4-H group showed no interest at all in farmland preservation.

Scott Cedarquist had a chance to discuss planning and zoning issues with the Bangor Township Supervisor. There are no current plans to consider a zoning amendment in the township. This would be one of the prerequisite steps toward farmland preservation.

Jeff Radtke noted that Decatur Township is working on the joint re-write of their master plan and that the Township Supervisor will not have anything to do with farmland preservation. He also discussed it with the planning commission, and they had expressed interests in including it in the master plan.

*Planning Commission Representative* – no report  
*Other Local Visits* – none

**Old Business:**

*Lachman Update* – Ryan Miller explained that he has received the baseline document back from the State with their approval. Miller also noted that he has received the title commitment from Chicago Title Company in Portage, MI. He is currently waiting on the State to approve and return the draft conservation easement so that he can send it off to the USDA for their approval.

*Lachman Baseline Report Presentation* – Ryan Miller presented the baseline document that he has prepared for the Lachman property. He stated that it was recently approved by the State of Michigan and that he has sent it off to the USDA as well. Miller proceeded to explain what was covered in the document, presented the maps, and finished with photos that he had taken of the Lachman farm. Miller also stated that the document, along with the pictures, will have to be updated annually to meet the State of Michigan requirements for monitoring easements.

*Application Cycle Update* – Miller explained that he has received one completed application from Gary and Judith Jones of Paw Paw Township. He claimed that he had presented the application to the Paw Paw Township Clerk and that they would be approving it at the board meeting that night. He had also taken a portion of the application to the NRCS office for their blessing. Miller also noted that a landowner from Pine Grove Township name Bob Koehn had shown some interest in applying, and that he was at the Township meeting that night working on completing his application.

**New Business:**

*News Release / Education* – none

*County Considers New Courthouse* – Tom Erdmann explained that the long term planning committee met and discussed their plan for the next 20 years. They discussed the property in South Haven on Lake Michigan that the county owns which could possibly be sold where the proceeds were used for improvements or new county buildings. He explained that right now there are 4 courts in the county and none of them have proper security. He continued to explain that the old courthouse is thought to be somewhat inefficient in terms of utilities. With the sale of the Northpointe property in South Haven, a new courthouse could be built housing all the 4 courts, 1 entry, proper security measures, and better technology.

There was a long discussion that followed about the Northpointe property and the possibility of preserving this property instead of selling it. There was a (**MOTION** by Laura Strehlow, **SECONDED** by Bill Lawson, Tom Erdmann abstained) that the Farmland Preservation Board supports the preservation of the Northpointe property of open space per the Farmland Preservation Ordinance. Motion passes with unanimous vote, with Erdmann abstaining.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at 6:30 pm on the 2nd Floor of the Administration and Land Services Building 219 Paw Paw Street, Paw Paw.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 7:57 pm  
Submitted by Ryan Miller