

Van Buren County Farmland Preservation Board
November 8th, 2007
Administration and Land Services Building
219 Paw Paw St, Paw Paw
6:30 pm

Minutes

Regular Meeting

Call to order 6:35 pm

Present: Bill Lawson, Mike Thiel, Mike Pioch, Scott Cedarquist, Dave Foerster, Wayne Hammond, Ryan Miller

Absent: Jeff Radtke, Bill Mihelich, Laura Strehlow, Tom Erdman, Ted Major, Don Mackellar

Public: Charles Lachman, John Cocco & Family

Agenda: Approved

Minutes of August 9th Approved (Motion by Bill Lawson, Second by Scott Cedarquist)

Minutes of October 11th Approved (Motion by Mike Pioch, Second by Bill Lawson)

Public Comment: There was a lengthy discussion between the board members and the John Cocco Family about some options that could be explored further towards preserving the Cocco farm.

Reports:

County Commissioner – none

Township Representatives – Wayne Hammond noted that Columbia Township is still interested in farmland preservation. He claimed that he has been passing out information to interested citizens. He also stated that he handed out an application to Tom and Loraine Crandall and that they were actively persuading the Arlington Township board to include farmland preservation in the master plan.

Dave Foerster reported that the Waverly Township board has been fed with a lot of misinformation about the farmland preservation program. Foerster claimed that they will be including farmland preservation in their master plan update.

Scott Cedarquist reported that Columbia, Bangor, and Bloomingdale Townships have shown no movement towards zoning.

Bill Lawson noted that Hamilton and Decatur Townships are on board and should be close completion by the first of the year.

Planning Commission Representative – none

Other Local Visits – none

Old Business:

Celebration / Media Day at Lachman Farm – Dave Foerster referenced last month’s discussion about the specifics of the celebration at Mr. Lachman’s farm. He noted that he had spoken with someone from Sporting Image in Paw Paw about the cost of creating a sign for the Lachman farm. He also had a conversation with someone from MDOT about the placement of the sign along M-51 Highway. MDOT claimed that the right-of-way on the West side of M-51 is 62 feet wide and that the sign will need to be on the outside of that ROW.

There was a lengthy discussion on the contest that will take place at local high schools for 11th and 12th graders. Dave will be working with Julie Pioch to create and send out a brochure to the local schools. The contest will be to see who can create a design to be used on the sign that will be placed on the Lachman farm. It was decided that the prize will be approximately \$250 for the winning class. Some of the guidelines for the contest include:

- 11th and 12th graders
- 5 basic colors can be used
- The design for the sign should be 2 ft x 3 ft
- The words “Preserved Farmland” must be included in the design
- The sign must be readable at 55 mph
- The design should be suitable for other uses such as t-shirts and posters

New Business:

VBC Staff Position to the LPB – Ryan Miller and others discussed the Board of Commissioners recent decision to hire a part-time intern to fulfill the staff position of the farmland preservation board. He noted that this intern will work for the county for a nine (9) month period for fifteen (15) hours per week at a total cost of \$5000. Miller stated that he agreed that this position will be very beneficial. Miller also believes that it would not be efficient for a part-time position to effectively staff the LPB exclusively, and that there may be some benefits for using them for other tasks as well. His concerns include the position working minimal days per week, only working a nine (9) month duration, and being inexperienced in grant writing. Wayne Hammond pointed out that Miller was staffing the LPB for the last year and not being paid for it.

Bylaws – There was a lengthy discussion on a document that Foerster handed out to the board covering Bylaws for the LPB. The LPB discussed the possibility that the meetings will be run on a consensus basis and not by Robert’s Rules, unless necessary or stated otherwise. It was also decided that for there to be quorum at a meeting there will need to be 5 voting members present. The topic of absenteeism was discussed, and it was agreed that there might need to be a provision covering absenteeism in the Bylaws. There was a discussion about setting up a system to rate absences as either excused or unexcused.

NOTE: We will be discussing and voting on changing the meeting time to 6:00pm at the next meeting, so please attend!!!

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

Meeting Adjourned: 8:50 pm (Motion by Scott Cedarquist, Seconded by Bill Lawson)
Submitted by Ryan Miller
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