

Van Buren County Farmland Preservation Board
December 13th, 2007
Administration and Land Services Building
219 Paw Paw Street, Paw Paw
6:30 pm

Minutes

Regular Meeting

Call to order 6:32 pm

Present: Ted Major, Jeff Radtke, Don Mackellar, Mike Pioch, Mike Thiel, Tom Erdman, Dave Foerster, Ryan Miller

Absent: Bill Lawson, Bill Mihelich, Wayne Hammond

Public: Charles Lachman, Amy Lockhart

Agenda: Approved (Motion by Jeff Radtke)

Additions: *Time change of meetings*, under New Business

Minutes of November 8th Approved (Motion by Mike Thiel)

Public Comment: Amy Lockhart talked about the recent success of a conference that was held by the conservation district.

Reports:

County Commissioner – Tom Erdmann reported that he attended a South Haven Township meeting that was used as a community forum to discuss important land issues. The discussions will be used to help plan the revisions of the master plan for the township.

Township Representatives – Jeff Radtke reported that Keeler Township doesn't seem to be on board with farmland preservation. An example would be their latest actions of turning farmland into higher density residential near sister lakes.

Dave Foerster reported that he is uncertain if Waverly Township is going to include farmland preservation in its master plan. They recently requested that a speaker come in and address the planning commission and talk about the program.

Ted Major explained that Almena Township is working on including farmland preservation in their master plan. He also explained that Lawrence Township would also like a person to come in and speak about the program.

Mike Thiel reported that Porter Township is seriously considering including farmland preservation in their master plan update.

Don Mackellar reported that Decatur Township is working on the plan and possibly will have it completed next spring.

Planning Commission Representative – Jeff Radtke reported that the county planning commission discussed the intern position that was approved by the BOC to take over the staff position of the LPB. There was concern of whether the position was just a temporary fix and not a good long term solution. Amy Lockhart suggested the possibility of the conservation district taking over the duties. Radtke also reported that the planning commission approved five (5) PA 116 applications. He also brought up the idea of creating of a nomination committee for the LPB appointments.

Other Local Visits – None

Old Business:

North Point Update – Dave Foerster reported that a committee is meeting every month to have discussions about what to do with the North Point property. They are currently discussing how much development the property can withstand.

Sign Competition – Dave Foerster passed out a flyer that he and Julie Pioch created for the sign competition. He also noted that Ryan Miller has created a space for information about the competition on the county's website. Charles Lachman pointed out that he had recently spoken with John Tapper III and that he would be willing to donate a sign up to approximately \$400 to \$500. Lachman also noted that Mr. Tapper would be more than willing to allow the student(s) to work with the equipment at the sign shop.

New Business:

Agriculture Preservation Board Conference – Tom Erdmann, Dave Foerster, and Scott Cedarquist attended the Agriculture Preservation Board Conference in Lansing on Wednesday December 12th. Tom Erdmann reported that there were two speakers at the conference from Pennsylvania and Maryland that were involved in very successful farmland preservation programs. Dave Foerster noted that Rich Harlow spoke at the conference about the status of the next grant period. Foerster claimed that Harlow approximated that the next grant will be available no later than March of 2008. Foerster also noted that House Bill 4278 will most likely be pushed through committee by the end of the year and be voted on in January. The passing of this bill will likely generate more funds from early-terminated P.A. 116 agreements by offering the landowner a discount on what he owes. The bill will also allow the government to charge interest on future early-terminated P.A. 116 agreements.

Time Change of LPB Meetings – There was a discussion on whether to change the LPB meeting time to 6:00 pm or keep it at 6:30 pm as it is now. There was a **Motion** by Tom Erdmann to keep the meeting time at 6:30 pm. The motion was **Seconded** by Jeff Radtke. Motion passed.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be January 10th, 2007 at 6:30 pm on the 2nd Floor of the Administration and Land Services Building, 219 Paw Paw Street, Paw Paw. (We will be viewing a video about wind generation.)

Meeting Adjourned: 8:00 pm
Submitted by Ryan Miller
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