

Ann Arbor Charter Township
FARMLAND AND OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Monday, May 22, 2023
Township Offices, 3792 Pontiac Trail, Ann Arbor MI
7:30 PM

I. Call to Order, Establish Quorum

Chair Bartoshesky called to order the regular meeting of Ann Arbor Charter Township Farmland and Open Space Preservation Board at 7:30pm.

Present: John Allison
Tom Bartoshesky
Alex Cacciari
Ken Judkins
Jeremy Moghtader (arrived 7:35)

Absent: Ali Kawsan

Also in attendance: Land Preservation Consultant Barry Lonik

II. Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of February 27, 2023

MOTION by Judkins, support by Cacciari, to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2023 meeting as presented.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

III. Public Comments

None

III. Project Updates – Land Preservation Consultant Lonik

Lake Erie RCPP (Regional Conservation Partnership Program)

- \$7.4M in dedicated federal funds available to the Greenbelt, County, and funded townships including Ann Arbor Township. Funds were committed October 2021, but the process by which properties can be submitted has still not been established.
- Once an application has been submitted, funds are guaranteed for up to 50% of the appraised value of the land.
- All participants must have a SAM (System for Award Management) number

Bayer wetland permit/application

- Board of Trustees approved the sending of a letter to Brian Thomas at USDA, requesting that USDA/ACEP (Agricultural Conservation Easement Program) allows the construction of a requested building in the easement. No response has been received.
- One of the functions of the proposed building will be to operate as a roadside stand, which is allowed by-right.

- Brian Thomas sent the letter to others in USDA/ACEP to see if they are in agreement with the Township's reading of the easement agreement on this matter.
- Without communicating with the Township, Ms. Bayer had obtained a wetland permit from EGLE (Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy) to construct a 4' earthen dam to raise water levels in the wetland west of 23 and east of Whitmore Lake, with the overflow continuing to go into Traver Creek.
 - Member Judkins discussed the potential impact of this 4' rise in the wetland, which could cause flooding on nearby properties resulting in the loss of farmland, and flooding on a County road.
 - Permit will also need to be obtained from Ann Arbor Township.
 - The purpose of the earthen dam was to improve the area for duck hunting.

Fund Balance

- ~2.5M is available from the millage, including the upcoming collection, which will be the last collection for this millage. This would be enough money to purchase ~600 acres.
- For every dollar spent, another \$2.20 is leveraged.
- The millage and use of millage funds had been highly successful, as shown on tables provided by Consultant Lonik relative to:
 - Expenditures and Commitments
 - Natural Features on Protected Properties
 - Funds Leverage
 - Values and Township Share
- The Board discussed whether a new millage should be pursued.
 - A list of remaining open space parcels and remaining agricultural parcels was provided.

IV. New member nominations

No applications/nominations received. Effort to recruit members is ongoing.

V. Matters Arising

Member Allison updated the Board relative to activity on the Township Farm:

- Good Neighbor Farm lease had been renewed for a longer time period (more than 1 year). Good Neighbor Farm is interested in obtaining a little more acreage, but is waiting until next year to move forward on this.
- Hayfield was planted and then abandoned by another tenant, who had moved. City Utilities Director has suggested letting the hayfield go for another year. Member Judkins recommended a winter seeding of clover.

Member Judkins reported on a recent meeting with a group of farmers and the Township's climate consultants. About 14 farmers participated.

- When asked about their number one complaint, every farmer said their biggest issue was deer. One farmer is unable to plant hay, and other farmers are unable to harvest planted crops, because of deer damage. DNR documents the damage every year. Member Judkins said one year deer killed 3000 Christmas trees on his property.

- The second most frequent complaint was difficulty moving farm equipment on increasingly busy roads. Car/farm vehicle accidents are increasing. Two car/farm vehicle accidents had occurred this spring, resulting in severe injury as well as significant damage to the farm equipment.

VI. Closed Session

MOTION by Cacciari, support by Allison, that the Ann Arbor Township Farmland and Open Space Preservation Board go into closed session under Sec. 8(d) of the Open Meetings Act, to consider the purchase of real property.

Roll call vote: Ayes – Allison, Bartoshesky, Cacciari, Judkins, Moghtader. Nays – none. Motion passed 5-0.

The Board went into closed session at 8:25pm and re-entered open session at 9:05p.m.

MOTION by Allison, support by Cacciari, that the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Board recommend an appraisal for the parcel included in Application 22-1, contingent upon clarification of issues involving septic system for adjacent parcels, exact acreage, and applicant acceptance of the Township Affirmative Agricultural Easement conditions.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Moghtader, support by Cacciari, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion passed by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10pm.