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**FARMLAND PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING – Minutes**

Monday, April 27, 2009 @ 7:00 p.m.

Spartan Room (MSU Extension) - Human Services Building

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Larry “Casey” Jones, Ed Reimick, Richard Haugh, Earl Collier, Harvey Jipping, and Mark Evans.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Tasha Smalley

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**OPENING COMMENTS:**

Chairman Jones reported he had developed a presentation pertaining to the proposed cuts to MSU Extension and Michigan Agricultural Experimental Stations. Approximately ten presentations were scheduled including one at the Kellogg Biological Experimental station, which involved Representative Bob Genetski, and the Chairman with three additional members of the State of Michigan Budget Committee. Additional presentations were made to Michigan Township Services, Michigan Association of Counties, and a number of Allegan Townships and agricultural related organizations. A resolution was presented to the Board of Commissioners and forwarded to the State of Michigan. Shortly after this meeting the 50% budget cut was eliminated from the proposed budget.

Mark Evans participated in Michigan Farmland Conference call on March 25, 2009. There were 37 people on the conference call and they learned that farms of \$1 million income would not be eligible for the Preservation Program. A flyer would be developed around June 30, 2009 explaining there would be no money available from the State; therefore, each county would have to join with an outside Agricultural Agency to obtain 25% of the funding and the Farmer would have to march the 25% to preserve their farm.

On May 15, 2009, Mark Evans, Harvey Jipping, Earl Collier, and Tasha Smalley met with Wayne Whitman to discuss.

On April 20, 2009, MSU Extension Director Horticulture Educator Tom Dudek, MSU Extension Director Paul Wylie, Board Chairman Casey Jones, and State Rep. Bob Genetski toured several ornamental plant farm operations in Saugatuck-Ganges area. Visits to Alpha Nursery, Midwest Ground Covers and Vantils Greenhouse showed the variety of ornamental horticulture industry in West Michigan. These businesses contributed \$52 million to the Allegan County economy in 2007.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: (March 23, 3009)**

These minutes will be approved at the next meeting.

Review Soil Conversation Applications:

Soil Conservation Applications were handed out from the Soil Conversation District. Shawn McKinney developed maps that included all applicants farms with soil types included. Each application took about 1 hour to develop. This process included the farm number and additional information to score each farm. Shawn requested the Farmland Preservation board to amend the application to include all applicants obtain a USDA Farm Service Agency Map for their application. The FSA map will identify the applicant's farm and tract number which is needed by his office to develop an accurate soil map thought toolkit/ARC GIS. These can be saved in digital format and are free of charge.

Review and Score Applications:

The information was presented and discussed for each applicant.

Other Pending Business:

Mark Evans suggested that each application be checked and reviewed to see if they are zoned agricultural and are included in the Township Master plan. These will be reviewed at our next meeting.

It was suggested a form letter be developed and sent to each township requesting they provide the information. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion was made by Earl Collier and seconded by Mark Evans to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m. The motion carried.

**NEXT MEETING:**

Monday, May 26, 2009, at 7:00 P.M. Spartan Room, Human Services Building.

Minutes taken by Larry "Casey" Jones.