

Agenda
Ottawa County Agricultural Preservation Board
West Olive Administration Building – Conference Room C
12220 Fillmore Street, West Olive, MI 49460
Wednesday, February 7, 2024
8:00am – 9:30am



- I. Call to Order
- II. Establish Quorum
- III. Invocation
- IV. Approval of the Agenda for February 7, 2024
- V. Approval of the [Minutes](#) from January 3, 2024
- VI. Public Comment
- VII. Discussion Items
 - A. Financial Review
 - B. [Farm Updates](#)
 - C. Scoring Criteria Work Session - establish goals; review scoring from other programs; Criterion 1 discussion
- VIII. New Business
 - A. [Letter](#) to MDARD re PA116

Motion: To approve and authorize the Board Chair to sign a position letter regarding changes to how MDARD treats permanently preserved land that is also subject to a PA116 agreement.
- IX. Old Business
 - A. Port Sheldon Township Presentation
- X. Next Meeting Date: March 13, 2024
- XI. Adjournment

UNOFFICIAL
MINUTES

1

OTTAWA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION BOARD

DATE: January 3, 2024

PLACE: Ottawa County Fillmore Street Complex, Conference Room C

PRESENT: Chair Josh Hucul, Mike Bronkema, Allison Miedema, Paul Windemuller, Nate Pyle, Lukas Hill

ABSENT: Kelly Goward, Jasmine Kober (Ad Hoc Youth)

STAFF: Becky Huttenga, Julie Lamer

PUBLIC: Cliff Meeuwsen, Jade Larrison

CALL TO ORDER / ESTABLISH QUORUM / INVOCATION

The Ottawa County Agricultural Preservation Board met on Wednesday, January 3, 2024. Chair Hucul called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. A quorum was present to do business. Bronkema gave the invocation.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND MINUTES

APB 24-01	Motion: Approve the agenda for the January 3, 2024 Moved by Hill	UNANIMOUS
APB 24-02	Motion: Approve the minutes from the December 6, 2023, meeting. Moved by Pyle	UNANIMOUS

PUBLIC COMMENT

NONE

DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Board reviewed the 4th quarter Non-Endowed and Endowed fund

B. FARM UPDATES

Staff is ready to submit the Michigan Agricultural Preservation Fund Board Local Farmland Preservation Program FY2024 Application for the Molyneux and Rasch property. The applications are due January 9, 2024. Staff are waiting to hear if funding for the Veldheer property will be approved from the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Agricultural Land Easements grant. There have been a few minor hold-ups that need to be finalized before closing can take place on the Holstege and Jongekrijg properties. Closing is slated for February 2024.

NEW BUSINESS

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A. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

APB 24-03 Motion: To nominate Hucul as Chair, Goward as Vice Chair, and Pyle as Secretary
Moved by Hill UNANIMOUS

B. FARMING FORWARD EVENT - FEBRUARY 27, 2024

The event is tentatively scheduled to be held at the Yacht Basin in Holland from 8:30-11:30. Staff will send out a calendar invitation.

APB 24-04 Motion: To approve including event information on PDR application postcards.
Moved by Miedema UNANIMOUS

OLD BUSINESS

Huttenga and Kent County PDR staff member developed a 14 question PDR program survey. Staff will send the survey to local farmland preservation practitioners. The survey is designed to gather basic information about other qualified local PDR programs. The information gathered will be used for benchmarking our own programs, and support farmland preservation funding requests from both MDARD and USDA-NRCS

Upcoming public education speaking/presentations events. Huttenga will be presenting January 10, Port Sheldon Twp Board of Trustees meeting. February 6th Ottawa County Planning & Policy meeting. February 8, Innovation Underground, Frankenmuth, February 20th, MI Ag Ideas to Grow With - Beginning Farmer Track, virtual meeting.

NEXT MEETING

February 7, 2024

ADJOURNMENT

APB 24-05 Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 8:49 a.m.
Moved by Windemuller UNANIMOUS



Farm Updates – February 2024

Ottawa County
Farm Where You Belong

Molyneux Property – Wright Township

approximately 154 acres; field crops; 2023 applicant; appraised at \$1,239,000

- Staff submitted the Michigan Agricultural Preservation Fund Board Local Farmland Preservation Program FY2024 Application on January 9, 2024

Rasch Property – Chester Township

approximately 76 acres; apples and peaches; 2023 applicant

- Staff submitted the Michigan Agricultural Preservation Fund Board Local Farmland Preservation Program FY2024 Application on January 9, 2024
- RCPP application is being assembled

Veldheer Property – Olive Township

36 acres; cattle, sheep, and field crops; 2022 applicant; appraised at \$288,000

- Awaiting award announcements from Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Agricultural Land Easements grant

Jongekrijg Property – Zeeland Township

92.55 acres; beef cattle and field crops; 2022 applicant; appraised at \$981,000

- Closing is estimated for early 2024

Holstege Property – Zeeland Township

36.1 acres; beef cattle and field crops; 2021 applicant; appraised at \$372,000

- Closing is estimated for early 2024

Bronkema Property – Olive Township

123.12 acres; sheep, dry beans, and field crops; 2020 applicant; preserved for \$675,000 in December 2022

DeHaan Property – Blendon Township

37 acres; beef cattle and field crops; 2019 applicant; preserved for \$315,000 in September 2021

Jim Klein Property – Chester Township

168.2 acres; field crops; 2019 applicant; preserved for \$585,000 in November 2020



Farm Updates – February 2024

Ottawa County
Farm Where You Belong

Kruithoff Property – Chester & Wright Townships

147.43 acres; hog & cash Crop; 2018 applicant; preserved for \$405,000 in July 2020

Klein Property – Chester Township

55.63-acres; beef cattle and field crops; 2017 applicant; preserved for \$160,000 in July 2018

Hehl Property – Polkton Township

34.9-acres; hogs, beef cattle, and poultry; 2015 applicant; preserved for \$87,000 in August 2016

Chip Kraus, Program Manager
Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program
Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
P.O. Box 30449
Lansing, MI 48909

**HEART OF
THE LAKES**



January 15, 2024

Dear Chip –

Farmland preservation and conservation organizations across Michigan appreciate the decades of partnership and support the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program has offered our state an array of permanent land protection efforts. Your program's guidance and collaboration has been critical to the success of our organizations' work.

Recently, our network has become aware of upcoming changes to P.A. 116 eligibility directly linked to our permanent land conservation work. We wish to advise the Department that changes to P.A. 116 eligibility will have far-reaching impacts across our collective portfolio of permanent conservation work. As such, we urge you to prioritize issuing clear guidance on P.A. 116 eligibility criteria to all the relevant permanent land conservation agencies, many of whom are undersigned here.

As you may know, many of our agencies share with landowners that we are negotiating with that permanent conservation via a conservation easement does not impact their P.A. 116 eligibility and that only a consent agreement is needed before advancing to close. If this is no longer true, it will impact our collective negotiations with landowners across the state for at least the next two years, which includes approximately thirty (30) permanent land protection acquisitions in our collective pipelines. We anticipate changes in the P.A. 116 eligibility will result in some of these thirty private landowners refusing to undertake farmland preservation.

As such, clear eligibility guidance is needed sooner than later, and answers to the following questions will also be critically important:

1. Is there a means by which MDARD can bridge the eligibility of our existing two-year pipeline of P.A. 116-eligible private landowners as a means of safeguarding our existing portfolios of work and investments?

- 2. Beyond this two-year pipeline of work, is there an opportunity to develop a longer-term solution that maintains P.A. 116 eligibility if the private landowner is adamant that the permanent protection is only possible if P.A. 116 eligibility is maintained?

The sooner our organizations are made aware of changing eligibility and processes, the more likely we will be able to avert challenges associated with such changes. If you or your staff require assistance from any of us to better understand implications and challenges, or should you wish to discuss prospective solutions to the question posed above, we stand ready to build upon our history of strong partnership with the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program.

Thank you for your attention to this time-sensitive matter.

Regards,

[Signature insert]	[Signature insert]	[Signature insert]
Jonathan Jarosz	[Name]	[Name]
Executive Director	[Title]	[Title]
Heart of the Lakes	[Organization]	[Organization]
Jonathan@heartofthelakes.org	[Email]	[Email]

[Signature insert]	[Signature insert]	[Signature insert]
[Name]	[Name]	[Name]
[Title]	[Title]	[Title]
[Organization]	[Organization]	[Organization]
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