

Granville Township Trustees  
Special Meeting Minutes  
December 8, 2011

Present: Trustees Mason, Jenks, VanNess, Fiscal Officer Kennedy  
Guests: Leonard Hubert, 3808 Columbus Rd, G  
Mickey Smith, 177 Louise Dr, G  
Rob Schaadt, 2523 Burg St, G  
Chuck Peterson, Granville Sentinel  
Matt Harbage, (NRCS), 200 N. High St, Rm 522, Columbus 43215  
Pat Deering, Soil and Water Conservation, 771 E. Main St, Newark

Chair William Mason opened the meeting a 10:00AM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Trustee Mason indicated Ms. Deering had just made the Trustees aware of a Federal Program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) entitled the "Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program" (FRPP). This program has been around for awhile, but has recently been expanded to include local government units such as Granville Township who have ongoing Open Space conservation programs. For qualifying properties, it provides partial grant funding to purchase Conservation Easements restricting development. Unfortunately the deadline to file applications for the current round of funding is December 15<sup>th</sup>. F.O. Kennedy has already filed an application to qualify the Township as a participating entity, but the Trustees must hear more about the program, determine if they wish to attempt to participate in this round and determine which properties, if any, in the Township they wish to submit for consideration.

Trustee Mason asked Mr. Harbage to explain the FRPP. Mr. Harbage explained the FRPP program is actually a US Department of Agriculture program. It provides for a 75% grant payment with 25% local match to acquire development rights (D.R.) on properties to prevent development of farmland. The 75% is limited by 2 times the grant amount which cannot be more than the appraised value of the D.R. being acquired. Thus if the amount of the appraised value of D.R. is paid, then the grant amount limit is 50% which would then require a 50% local match. If the purchaser of the D.R. was able to negotiate a payment of less than the appraised amount the percentage would increase, up to a maximum of 75%.

Mr. Harbage indicated appraisers are required to follow one of either two types of appraisals – USPAP or Yellow Book in arriving at a value of the D.R. Mr. Schaadt explained the USPAP is the U.S. Professional Appraisal Process and the Yellow Book is the set of guidelines for Federal appraisals. The Yellow Book criteria are much more comprehensive and appraisers must be certified to perform appraisals using these standards. He indicated the Township's current appraisals for property right acquisitions under the Open Space Program are USPAP prepared.

Trustee Jenks indicated he reviewed the materials sent out before this meeting and it appears the Township's appraisal standards are the same as the USPAP Federal Standards.

There are courses which appraisers can take in order to become FRPP certified appraisers for this type of grant. There is an appraisal institute coming up in February in Flint Michigan and another in April.

Mr. Harbage made it clear an appraiser must follow the appraisal standards and specifications for this program or the appraisal will not be accepted by NRCS and the grant application will be rejected. If an appraiser submits their C.V. to Harbage he will evaluate their credentials and make sure they are qualified before the Township would use them.

Mr. Harbage outlined the following steps:

- 1) The Township must become a qualified entity. F.O. Kennedy must submit one additional form to complete the process and Granville Township will be qualified.
- 2) The Trustees must submit parcel applications for properties which they believe meet the program criteria (such as the amount and quality type of farmland to be protected, limitation on forest coverage, limitations on impervious surface area on the property etc). This must be done by December 15<sup>th</sup>.
- 3) If parcels detailed on the application appear to meet the criteria, then NRCS will enter into a Cooperative Agreement with the Township to continue to process the application.
- 4) Title and appraisal work will be conducted at the Township's expense.
- 5) Once the title work is completed a draft deed, representing the Conservation Easement will be prepared with the various restrictions. Harbage will review the easement for acceptability in the program.
- 6) An appraisal must be prepared by an appraiser acceptable to the program.
- 7) Any liens, oil and gas leases, mortgages and easements allowed to remain must be subordinated.
- 8) Property couldn't be more than 66% forested.
- 9) If a property had a historical marker it would automatically qualify.

There was discussion about the ability of a property owner to carve out a potential homestead, but it had to be a separately recorded parcel of property. Gas and oil development was discussed. An application for a wetland property probably would not qualify. If the Township actually owns the property it will not qualify. It must be acquiring development rights from a third party property owner. This program will not work for a property used as a golf course.

Mr. Harbage provided referral information for a township in Miami County which has been using this program. Trustee VanNess indicated he will call the contact person. Harbage also indicated there may be another round of applications permitted in the spring, but that will depend upon the amount of money left after the December 15<sup>th</sup> round is completed. Harbage also explained this program must be renewed by Congress next year and he is only guaranteed the amount of money which has presently be allocated.

WHEREAS, the Board of Granville Township Trustees is desirous of participating in the US Department of Agriculture Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program under the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and

WHEREAS, the initial step in this participation is the completion of an entity application, and a subsequent step involves submission of parcel applications, now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED on a motion by Trustee VanNess and a second by Trustee Jenks, by a unanimous affirmative vote, that Granville Township Fiscal Officer Norman Kennedy is authorized to execute the entity application for Granville Township and Granville Township Trustee Dan VanNess is authorized to execute approved parcel application forms, both for submission to NRCS.

On a motion by Trustee Jenks and a second by Trustee Mason, with Mason yes, Jenks yes and VanNess yes, it was agreed to move the meeting into Executive Session, under ORC 121.22(G)(2), for the purpose of discussing possible property acquisition.

After a period of discussion on a motion by Trustee Mason and a second by Trustee VanNess, by a unanimous affirmative vote the meeting was returned to regular session.

Trustee Jenks indicated he thought that we should have the land owners we elected to include in the program initial a list of the requirements that are imposed on them by the program, so that they knew what was expected of them before we submitted their names for consideration in the program.

Trustee VanNess, who coordinates the Open Space program for the Trustee's, presented the following properties for consideration:

- 1) 115 acre Trevor Wolfe property along the west side of Loudon St
- 2) 50 acre David Betts property along the west side of SR661.
- 3) Four parcels totaling 94 acres, along the east side of Burg St., owned by Janet Worth, Flite and Bernita Friemann, Don and Alice Lewis and Rick Pyka. These properties are to be considered as a package.

There was discussion about each of the properties. After this discussion the following votes occurred:

- 1) The Wolfe property – on a motion by Trustee Mason and a second by Trustee VanNess, by a unanimous affirmative vote it was agreed to have Trustee VanNess prepare an application to submit to the NRPP program for grant consideration.
- 2) The Betts property – on a motion by Trustee VanNess and a second by Trustee Jenks, by a unanimous affirmative vote it was agreed to have Trustee VanNess prepare an application to submit to the NRPP program for grant consideration.
- 3) The four parcel property group, Worth etal – on a motion by Trustee Mason and a second by Trustee Jenks, with Mason no, Jenks no and VanNess yes it was determined no application would be filed with NRPP for these properties.

After the votes above, Fiscal Officer Kennedy indicated to the Trustees the Township has the money either on hand or in process of collection to its Open Space Preservation Fund to pay the estimated local match for the development rights of properties one and two, should the grant process move to a mutually agreeable actuality with both NRCS and the Township.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10PM.