

**Van Buren County Land Preservation Board  
Human Services West Building  
57418 CR 681, Hartford, MI 49057**

**September 11, 2024 – 6:00 PM  
Minutes**

- 1. Call to Order, Attendance and Agenda Approval** - Chairperson Hickmott called the meeting to order at 6:20 PM.

**Present:** Emilly Hickmott, Carl Druskovich, Chris Rickli, Dave Forester (via zoom), Richard Godfrey, Julie Pioch, Dave Foerster

**Absent:** William Van Tassel, Scott Cedarquist, and Michael Matheny **Guests:** Lisa Ransler, staff

**Approval of Agenda** – Druskovich made a motion with support from Godfrey to approve the September 11, 2024 agenda with no changes. Motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes** - Druskovich made a motion with support from Godfrey to approve the September 11, 2024 agenda with no changes. Motion passed unanimously.

- 2. New Business**

- A. Marketing Discussion**

- **Promotion Language, Flyer, and Press Release:** The Board reviewed a sample press release and discussed details for creating a flyer to promote the upcoming December grant cycle. **Decision:** Board members agreed to finalize the flyer and press release materials. Ransler confirmed she would complete the flyer in preparation for the November meeting, ensuring ample time for distribution to townships.
- **Informational Session for Townships:** Discussion included holding an informational session for townships after the November meeting to increase awareness of the grant cycle. The informational session will help township representatives understand the grant application process and eligibility.

- B. Easement Assessments:** Forrester introduced a document related to conservation easement benefits, focusing on how easements might impact property assessments and provide potential tax benefits for landowners. This document outlined some assessment guidelines and considerations specific to agricultural conservation easements and was

intended to offer insights into how conservation easements could benefit landowners financially while promoting land preservation.

The Board discussed how easements could potentially lower the taxable value of preserved farmland by restricting its development potential, aligning with the Board's goals to incentivize landowners to participate in preservation efforts.

While some members suggested reviewing the document in detail at the meeting, it was ultimately decided that the topic might require more time and specific expertise. Dave suggested that members could review the document individually and bring any questions or comments to the next meeting.

- C. **Webpage Updates** - Ransler reported updates to the LPB webpage to include recent meeting minutes, bylaws, and scoring criteria. The ordinance draft is also being prepared for posting once approved.
- 3. **Unfinished Business** - No specific items were discussed under old business as the main focus remained on marketing and planning for the upcoming grant cycle.
- 4. **Member Reports and Announcements** - Board members provided updates on various township initiatives.
- 5. **Adjournment** – Hickmott adjourned the meeting at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted

*Lisa Ransler*

Recording Secretary