

Van Buren County Land Preservation Board
Human Services West Building, 57418 CR 681, Hartford, MI 49057
Meeting Minutes
November 13, 2024 – 6:00 PM

1. Call to Order and Attendance: Chairperson Hickmott called the meeting to order at 6:20 PM.

Present: Emily Hickmott, Carl Druskovich, Chris Rickli, Richard Godfrey, Scott Cedarquist (via Zoom), and Michael Matheny. **Absent:** William Van Tassel, Julie Pioch, and Dave Foerster

Guests: Lisa Ransler, staff

Druskovich, supported by Godfrey, moved to approve the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of Minutes: The September 11, 2024, meeting minutes were approved as presented, with a motion by Druskovich, supported by Matheny. Motion passed unanimously.

3. New Business

a. Grant Cycle Update - The Board reviewed plans for the December 2024 grant cycle. Outreach to underrepresented townships is a priority. The grant application will not be released until mid-December, and the State has indicated the deadline will be extended to accommodate the delay. Changes are being made to the application, but specific details have not yet been shared.

b. Marketing and Outreach - Staff reported on the press release was sent to the *Courier Leader* and is published on the Land Preservation Board webpage. At the last Township Supervisors meeting, participating Supervisors were encouraged to share program details with landowners.

Members discussed the ecological importance of protecting waterfront properties. These areas support clean water, wildlife habitats, and recreation. Outreach to landowners is essential to encourage preservation through conservancy programs or donations.

c. Township Informational Meeting - The next Township Supervisors Meeting is set for February 28, 2025, information will again be shared to maintain interest in the program.

4. Unfinished Business

a. Ordinance Amendment - The updated land preservation ordinance, finalized by the County Commission on November 12, 2024, is now posted on the county website. No public comments were received during the publication period.

5. Member Reports and Announcements:

The Board honored retiring County Commissioner Dick Godfrey, recognizing his dedication and leadership. Members expressed their appreciation for his contributions to the Land Preservation Board and other committees, noting his insights and guidance will be greatly missed.

Hickmott announced that at the January meeting, the Board would recommend appointments for open positions, including Richard Godfrey (County appointee), William Van Tassel for a County Elected Official, and a vacant Realtor/Land Developer seat. Reappointments for other terms will proceed unless individuals opt out. Official appointments will occur at the March 2025 Organizational Meeting.

Hickmott reported on the DNR's management plan for Van Buren State Park. A public input survey, extended to December 16, 2024, will be widely promoted through newsletters and social media.

Druskovich announced he completed his final meeting as Township Supervisor and is working to ensure a smooth transition of knowledge.

6. Adjournment Chairperson Hickmott adjourned the meeting at 6:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Ransler
Recording Secretary