

City of Ann Arbor

100 N. Fifth Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
www.a2gov.org



Action Minutes

Wednesday, June 4, 2008

4:30 PM

City Council Chamber

Greenbelt Advisory Commission (GAC)

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rubin called the meeting of the Greenbelt Advisory Commission to order at 4:40 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioner Garfield arrived at 4:50 p.m.

Present 8 - Tom Bloomer, Dan Ezekiel, Michael Garfield, Jennifer Santi Hall, Gilbert S. Omenn, Laura Rubin, Sylvia Taylor and Peter Allen

Absent 1 - Christopher S. Easthope

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

1. Mike Moran - Ann Arbor Township

Mike Moran, Ann Arbor Township Supervisor, gave an update to the Greenbelt Advisory Commission regarding Ann Arbor Township's farmland preservation efforts and their mutual collaboration efforts with the Ann Arbor Greenbelt program. Mr. Moran noted that the City's greenbelt program application to the Federal Farmland and Ranch Protection Program to preserve 286 acres in Ann Arbor Township could not have been done without the joint efforts of the City and the Township.

Mr. Moran requested that the City Greenbelt Program assign the easement to this 286 acre parcel to Ann Arbor Township if the City Greenbelt is successful in their FRPP application for this site. Mr. Moran stated that the Township has a long history with this property and they successfully fought a mobile-home community development on the site. He also noted that any neighbor concerns related to the property would be addressed to the Township Hall, not the City, and assigning the easement to the Township would also place responsibility for enforcement and monitoring with the Township.

Finally, Mr. Moran stated he has concerns that the Greenbelt Advisory Commission is considering waiting to make additional purchases due to the uncertainty in the current real estate market. He stated the Greenbelt should act now to prevent large landowners from selling to developers when the market returns.

Commissioner Omenn thanked Mr. Moran for his comments and for Ann Arbor Township's partnership with the City on conservation efforts. Commissioner Omenn noted that purchases are difficult at this time with comparable values hard to make given the changing real estate market. He did note that a good opportunity would not be overlooked because of the market.

There was general consensus among commissioners regarding the assignment of the easement to Ann Arbor Township. It was agreed that they would discuss this issue under New Business later on the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY

None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Santi Hall, seconded by Commissioner Omenn, that the Agenda be Approved with changes:

New Business - Discuss Ann Arbor Township Easement Assignment

On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. [08-0579](#) Greenbelt Advisory Commission Minutes - May 7, 2008

A motion was made by Commissioner Santi Hall, seconded by Commissioner Garfield, that the minutes of May 7, 2008 be approved with minor changes by the Commission and forwarded to the City Council, due on 6/16/2008.

A correction was made to Page 5, to change the word "Mayor" to "Vice-Chair."

On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

1. [08-0607](#) Negotiations and Current Real Estate Market

Peg Kohring of the Conservation Fund spoke about a possible pilot program that would allow landowners to submit sale price bids to the City for the amount they are willing to sell their property's development rights. Council approval would still be required and an appraisal would still be required to ensure that the City was not paying more than the fair market value. Ms. Kohring stated the pros of the program would be an opportunity for the City to see which landowners are really interested in selling. A con would be that the bid program might not be accepted by the farming community.

Commissioner Hall inquired about the bid process and how the proposals might work with the township millage programs and other protection grants.

Commissioner Rubin noted that the applicants who are likely to apply under this process are land developers who are interested in selling their property.

Commissioners discussed how this pilot program might affect the Greenbelt Program's relationship with the local farm community and whether this program would be worthwhile to the Greenbelt's efforts.

Commissioner Omenn suggested a public forum to solicit feedback from the landowners and other interested parties to help shape the program. He noted that it should be reaffirmed that this is a supplement to the existing program, not a replacement.

Commissioner Hall stated communication efforts are needed to ensure that the farming community is not alarmed or think that the Greenbelt Program is lowering the value of the land. She stated that at the same time the Greenbelt Program has to be

responsible to the City taxpayers.

Commissioner Garfield inquired about existing bid process policies within the City. He also raised questions regarding matching funds.

Commissioner Ezekiel inquired about the cost of this new bid process. He stated generally there is a favorable response from the Commission about this conceptually.

Commissioner Rubin asked for volunteers for the committee. Commissioners Allen and Omenn volunteered.

A motion was made by Commissioner Santi Hall, seconded by Commissioner Omenn, that staff and GAC committee members are directed to develop a bid process that makes available a certain amount of funding for potential applications, and to develop an application form, a marketing plan, and a GAC review process and that this plan be returned to the Greenbelt Advisory Commission at their next regular meeting for review. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

2. Strategic Plan Survey Results

Ginny Trocchio, Conservation Fund, provided the Commission with an update regarding the Strategic Plan Survey. Commissioners Hall, Taylor and Bloomer worked on the committee.

A copy of the survey results are on file in the City Clerk's Office.

Commissioners stated that a revised strategic plan needs to address emerging issues. Emerging issues include small farms, market changes, gasoline prices, etc.

3. Staff Update

Ginny Trocchio, Conservation Fund, updated the Commission regarding the bid process and charitable gift contribution deductions available to landowners due to changes in the law.

Commissioner Garfield suggested that the Greenbelt Commission partner with private land conservancies and trusts as often landowners are more willing to donate to these private trusts versus a public entity like the Greenbelt.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Easements in Ann Arbor

Commissioners discussed the policy decision to allow Ann Arbor Township to control first all of the easements in their township.

Commissioner Allen suggested that the Greenbelt Advisory Commission consider placing restrictions on the easement prior to transferring to Ann Arbor Township.

Commissioner Bloomer stated this should be a non-issue. He stated he believes that the City and all of the townships have the same goals regarding land preservation. He stated the monitoring standards are the same.

A motion was made by Commissioner Omenn, seconded by Commissioner Ezekiel, that the Greenbelt Advisory Commission agree to the proposal from

Ann Arbor Township that in joint City/Township purchases of development rights, that when Ann Arbor Township is willing and able to be the responsible party for the easement, the City will agree to the request of Ann Arbor Township to transfer the first easement, while the City retains responsibility for the second easement. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

NEXT AGENDA ITEMS

None presented at this meeting.

REPORT FROM COMMITTEES

None.

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Commissioner Garfield, seconded by Commissioner Omenn, that the Greenbelt Advisory Commission enter into Closed session to discuss pending land acquisition applications. On a roll call, the vote was as follows with the Chair declaring the motion carried at the meeting adjourned into closed session at 6:05 p.m.

Yeas: 8 - Commissioner Bloomer, Commissioner Ezekiel, Commissioner Garfield, Commissioner Santi Hall, Commissioner Omenn, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Taylor and Allen

Nays: 0

Absent: 1 - Councilmember Easthope

RECONVENE

A motion was made by Commissioner Bloomer, seconded by Commissioner Garfield, that the meeting reconvene. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried and the meeting reconvened in open session at 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Seeing no further business before the Commission, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.