

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes

February 03, 2003

Members Present: Bernie Blackmore, Joe Allen, and Gene Dawson
Members Absent: None
Staff Present: Howard Yamaguchi
Others Present: Mike Meriwether, Janet Person, Russ Blasdel, Jack White, Laura Stanek, Chris Howser, Don Schuiteman, Jim Wilson, Ken Stead, and Patricia Drollinger

1. Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Bernie Blackmore.

2. Little League Field

Don Schuiteman briefed the County Lands Agriculture and Forestry (CLAF) committee about the letter from the Bellaire Village to the County requesting a lease of a 6-acre block of property behind the proposed Animal Shelter, where the decommissioned sewage lagoons are currently located. The Village would lease the property from the County, and the Village would in turn allow the Little League to use the field. The Bellaire Rotary Club will work with the Little League to raise funds for construction of two Little League fields. The location is ideal because of the existence of a walkway from the Village to the rear of the property.

In response to questions from Bernie Blackmore, Gene Dawson and Russ Blasdel, Mr. Schuiteman stated that the Village was well aware of the need to provide parking. Most of the games will be in the evenings in the summer, so no lighting is necessary, and it is anticipated that after-workday Animal Shelter parking space can accommodate parking needs. Ken Stead noted that parking was always a concern with the Village, and the need was stressed for a parking lot on the same side of M-88 as the baseball fields. In the event of a reversion of the lot to the County, the Village investment would have been not much more than water supply and other minor facilities to the site.

Bernie Blackmore requested the architectural drawings for the site to review together with the Animal Shelter drawings. Howard will provide Mr. Schuiteman with a copy of the Animal Shelter site plan, and Mr. Schuiteman will incorporate the data into the drawings of the proposed fields for discussion at next month's CLAF meeting.

3. MCN Oil & Gas Lease

Chris Howser of MCN presented a proposal from MCN to CLAF and the Board of Commissioners. This proposal would provide access to a pipeline from properties lying to the south of Stover Road along the south end of the Jabara property (Cedar River Natural Area [CRNA]). The proposed alignment of the buried gas pipe would use a strip of land 25 feet from the Stover Road right-of-way (ROW) along Stover Road (on the County land side) for eventual connection of an existing well to the north and east of the Cedar River Natural Area, and would necessitate a buried pipe crossing across Cedar River outside County land. Mr. Howser indicated the proposed alignment on a map.

Responding to Bernie Blackmore, Laura Stanek voiced her opposition to this proposal on grounds that the Jabara purchase mandates that CRNA be kept in a natural state. Mike Meriwether noted that the pipe would cross the pine plantation portion of the CRNA. He also noted that he was not familiar with the deed restrictions stipulated in the Jabara property transaction. He will research the deed restrictions using information provided by Howard (originally meant for use in

developing the resource plan for the CRNA). Mike felt that the biggest opposition would center around the Cedar River crossing proposal.

Laura Stanek and Chris Howser discussed the nature of the adjacent landowners' opposition to the proposal. Jack White noted that Abdeen Jabara had some agreements with the Land Conservancy. Joe Allen noted that some gas pipeline alignments use public road ROWs, so this prohibition was confusing. Mike Meriwether noted that historically Board of Commissioners has allowed pipeline easements if there were no environmental concerns, and if neighbors all supported the project.

Bernie Blackmore then stated that the matter would be tabled until next month's meeting, by which time Mike Meriwether or staff will have researched deed restrictions. In the meantime, Chris Howser will send alignment plans (and river crossing details) to CLAF.

4. Ritt Road Timber Sale

Mike Meriwether briefed the new commissioners on the role of the Antrim Conservation District in managing the County's forestry program. Ongoing projects include Hawke Lake pine sale, Vandermark Road firewood cutting, Ritt Road timber stand improvement and sale, Valley Road pine sale, Skaff Property management plan, and Jabara Property management plan. Mike noted that Janet Person and Jack White opened bids for the Ritt Road timber sale, as CLAF was not yet organized at the time of the bid opening. Bids were: Silver Leaf (Elmira): \$5,300; Lake Forest (Mancelona): \$13,301; Paris Sawmill (Paris): \$13,721; and Janes Golf (Vanderbilt): \$650. The contract was awarded to Paris.

5. Mark Bryan Property

Mike Meriwether briefed CLAF on a purchase opportunity for a 40 ac parcel on Lewis Road, contiguous to an 80-acre landlocked county forest property. The GT Land Conservancy is not interested in this hardwood stand. Owner will ask for \$80K on the open market, will sell to County for \$60K. This purchase will not gain access to the existing 80 county-owned acres. There will be no timber value until 25 or so yrs in the future (after area re-planted). Mineral rights will not come with property.

Joe Allen noted that \$60,000 is high for a landlocked, stripped property with no mineral rights. Laura Stanek suggested purchase if price were lower. Jack White opined that even so, the price is high. Gene Dawson agreed that the price seems high, but with fewer public lands available, we should take the opportunity.

Motion by Gene Dawson, supported by Bernie Blackmore, to recommend to the Board of Commissioners to offer Mr. Mark Bryan \$40,000 toward the purchase of a 40-acre forest property adjacent to the 80-acre county forest land. Yea: Blackmore, Dawson. Nay: Allen. Motion Passed, 2-1.

6. Member/Public Comment

Howard briefed CLAF on upcoming master plan activities in subject areas under CLAF's purview.

Jack White discussed need to save funds for purchase of less marginal areas. Laura Stanek briefed CLAF on recent activities by the state and individual oil and gas rights lessors to investigate MCN and other oil/gas company dealings.

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes March 3, 2003

Members Present: Bernie Blackmore, Joe Allen, and Gene Dawson
Members Absent: None
Staff Present: Howard Yamaguchi
Others Present: Mike Meriwether, Russ Blasdell, Laura Stanek (9:45 a.m.), Chris Howser, Kim Sanders, Don Schuiteman, Cathy Odom, and Patricia Drollinger

1. Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Bernie Blackmore.

2. Little League Field Lease

Don Schuiteman, Rotary Club member, distributed a site plan and aerial photographs of the proposed ball fields across from Meadow Brook Medical Care Facility. Mr. Schuiteman explained the site plan, the berm around the animal shelter, and the entrance through the animal shelter road to the parking lot and proposed ball fields.

Bellaire Little League likes the plan and the Rotary Club volunteered to help in building the park. Art Lennox, County Surveyor has written a description of the field. The village attorneys are drawing up a lease agreement. The Committee will ask Charlie Koop to review the lease agreement, possibly in time for the Board of Commissioner meeting on March 13, 2003.

Motion by Gene Dawson, supported by Joe Allen, to recommend that the Board of Commissioners:

- **consider approval of the site plan proposed by the Rotary Club, and**
- **initiate the lease process through examination of, and report on, the proposed lease document by the County Prosecutor's office.**

Motion carried - unanimous.

Mr. Schuiteman also reminded the County that it had given the easement for a walking path through the Meadow Brook sewage lagoon area to the village in 1999. No descriptions of the property are on record as of today. The easement needs to be recorded, and will be taken up later in the CLAF meeting by Ms.Drollinger.

3. Oil and Gas Lease Request

Chris Howser from MCN presented an expanded proposal from MCN to CLAF regarding the Jabara property. This proposal was tabled at the previous CLAF meeting to allow Mike Meriwether time to research restrictions on the property.

Kim Sanders, Land Manager for MCN, explained that they are a sister company to MichCon, now owned by DTE (Detroit Edison). Mr. Sanders brought a map of wells and pipelines in the vicinity of the Jabara property. MCN is requesting permission for a pipeline alignment (non-development lease) along Stover Road to join Kearney Section 33 projects to the existing collection/processing system components located north of the Jabara property. He distributed a plan/profile sheet of the proposed Cedar River pipe crossing to the east of the Jabara property.

Mike Meriwether reported that the property was purchased with state funding, and mineral

exploitation is not necessarily restricted or prohibited. However, any lease needs the State's approval (Trust Fund Board and DNR) before County approval. County has a policy not to grant easements to private individuals, except if there is a definite public interest. Mike does not know if this falls under the "individuals" category. Kim Sanders replied that MCN will approach the Trust Fund Board for details and permission before returning to CLAF.

4. Village Walkway Easement Recording Request

Ms. Patricia Drollinger, representing the Bellaire Village Council, informed the Committee that the 1999 decision by the Board of Commissioners granted an easement to the Village for a walkway through the property where a lease for little league baseball fields is currently being requested. The Village now wishes to pave the walkway using a MDOT grant. MDOT requires that a recorded easement exist before their funds can be expended for the project. The Village is requesting an easement be recorded at the office of the Register of Deeds. The Village attorney and surveyor Art Lennox have prepared a description, and are forwarding the proposed language to the Prosecuting Attorney for review. The easement will follow the lot line of Holiday Acres, consistent with the proposed baseball field layout.

Motion by Joe Allen, supported by Gene Dawson, to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that the easement description from the Village be incorporated and recorded. Motion carried - unanimous.

5. Cedar River Natural Area Improvements

Mike Meriwether informed the Committee that, of the \$70,000 requested from the Tribes for various improvements at the Cedar River Natural Area (former Jabara and Skaff properties), only \$10,000 were granted. The work program requested included nature walks, parking area, two bridges, fish habitat improvements, and erosion control work. He wished to know if CLAF would be willing to contribute to the fund, and possibly the Friends of the Cedar River?

Extensive discussion ensued on the proposed replacement of the existing railroad trestle. Friends of the Cedar River would like the trestle to be left in its original configuration, or at the very least, with much of the original material re-used in a design that as much as possible re-creates the original. Replacement of the original, however, implies heavy vehicular traffic. There is a case for replacement with a lighter load-bearing bridge to discourage such traffic. The deteriorated bridge as it stands now is a liability to the County. Estimated cost of bridge demolition and replacement (with an alternative design) is \$25,000.

Mike Meriwether will return next month with a prioritized list of projects and required funding for action by CLAF.

6. Other Matters

The Committee discussed the letter from Meadow Brook inquiring about revenues from the pine timber thinning from Meadow Brook property. Mike Meriwether noted that the revenues will be in the low thousands of dollars, if at all, and the Conservation District could receive up to 75% of that revenue. Laura Stanek suggested following standard County procedure: 75% of revenue to the Conservation District, and the balance to the County.

Motion by Gene Dawson, supported by Joe Allen, to follow regular County procedure for timber revenues at Meadowbrook. Motion carried – unanimous.

Bernie Blackmore briefed the Committee on Wetzel Lake park planning activities to date.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore
Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes

March 31, 2003

Members Present: Joe Allen and Gene Dawson
Members Absent: Bernie Blackmore
Staff Present: Howard Yamaguchi
Others Present: Laura Stanek, Don Schuiteman, Roger Rainey, Patricia Drollinger, Dave Howelman, and Stan Moore

1. Meeting called to order at 9:02 a.m. by Joe Allen.

2. Little League Field Lease

Don Schuiteman, Rotary Club member, briefed the Committee on the status of the Little League field lease. He stated that the changes requested by the County Prosecuting Attorney had been incorporated by the Village Attorney. Mr. Schuiteman distributed the revised lease agreement, and the committee reviewed the lease. Mr. Schuiteman expressed concern that the current version of the lease would require the Village to request permission from the County for every minor improvement. Joe Allen pointed out that improvements are defined in the agreement, so anything related to items on that list can probably be permitted. In the liability section, the sum of \$2 million was changed to \$1 million to reflect current village practice. Laura Stanek discussed the reimbursement provision in section 6.

Motion by Gene Dawson, supported by Joe Allen, to recommend that the Board of Commissioners accept the proposed (revised) lease agreement for the little league field on the Meadow Brook property (attached) as written, pending approval by the Prosecuting Attorney's office. Motion carried - unanimous.

3. Easement Grant and Agreement

Trish Drollinger briefed the Committee on the new Grant of Easement form and the proposed new easement agreement for the non-motorized trail (formerly "walking path") along the northern edge of the little league field area. The easement agreement mirrors the little league field lease agreement in terms of lease length and most of the provisions so that both can be renewed at the same time. Discussion ensued on vehicles (electric wheelchairs, bikes, etc.) permissible on the path. The proposed agreement also needs to have the insurance amount changed from \$2 million to \$1 million in Section 6.

Motion by Gene Dawson, supported by Joe Allen, to recommend that the Board of Commissioners accept the proposed easement agreement and Grant of Easement for the non-motorized path on the Meadow Brook property (attached) as written, pending approval by the Prosecuting Attorney's office. Motion carried - unanimous.

4. Meadow Brook Annexation, Richardi Park and County Parking Lot

Dave Howelman briefed the Committee on the meeting between Pete Garwood, Bob Shumaker, and himself on the Meadow Brook property annexation, Richardi Park lot and the County Parking lot. Annexation of the Meadow Brook property by the Village would lower sewer connection fees by 50%, and would require an agreement with the County. He then briefed the Committee on the proposed deeding or leasing by the County of the lot adjacent to the Bellaire Dam spillway to the Village. As a result of the earlier preliminary meeting between Garwood, Shumaker, and Howelman, a proposed lot boundary was drawn for lease/deeding purposes. Extensive discussion took place on the reasons for the inability of the Village and County to come to agreement on this issue. Laura Stanek and Trish Drollinger added information from their recollection of the talks. The County's concern is the access through the lot for heavy equipment for dam repair and maintenance. The Village would like use of the lot for park activities and future improvements to the facilities already on the site (half of a barbeque pit), but understands the need for access by heavy equipment. Dave Howelman also noted that the village is amenable to a long-term (15 to 20 years) lease extension for the parking lot currently used by the county (next to the Red Cross building). Trish Drollinger added that the Village would soon start enforcing two-hour parking restrictions on Broad Street. The consensus of the Committee was that the Village and the County would be able to reach mutually satisfactory agreements on these issues.

Motion by Gene Dawson, supported by Joe Allen, to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that they direct the Coordinator/Planner office to enter into negotiations with the Village of Bellaire to resolve the following issues:

- **Meadow Brook property annexation;**
- **Richardi Park/Bellaire dam property deeding/lease; and**
- **Parking lot long-term lease extension.**

Motion carried - unanimous.

4. Elk Rapids Dam Parking Lot Development

Howard informed the Committee that the Parks Committee requests permission from both the CLAF and the Public Works Committees to proceed with the joint planning of the Elk Rapids dam parking lot (into a park-like facility). The Public Works committee gave their approval last month. Brief discussion ensued on the current (1995) plans. The Committee gave their approval, but requested that extra care be taken to ensure that all DEQ environmental requirements be met.

5. Land Use Forum and Farmland Preservation

Stan Moore informed the Committee about the land-use forum being planned for May 15. It is a joint project between the County Planning Commission and the MSUE Council, and is an information-sharing meeting on the current state of county growth and demographics. Stan also briefed the Committee about the farmland preservation task force and committee efforts. Brief discussion ensued on the work to date.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore
Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes

April 28, 2003

Members Present: Bernie Blackmore, Joe Allen and Gene Dawson
Members Absent: None.
Staff Present: Howard Yamaguchi, Pete Garwood (for item)
Others Present: Janet Person, Mike Meriwether, Russ Blasdell

1. Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Bernie Blackmore.

2. Mark Bryan Property

Mike Meriwether, per the March 31, 2003 County Lands Agriculture and Forestry Committee (CLAF) meeting, informed Mr. Bryan that the County was not interested in a purchase unless the price was in the vicinity of \$1,000/acre. Mr. Bryan then contacted Mike Meriwether and stated that he is willing to sell property for \$40,000. Gene Dawson noted that the County should take advantage of land purchase opportunities as the properties become more valuable as time goes on. Mike reminded the CLAF that the original underlying interest by the County in acquiring property was because the County is interested in picking up adjoining lands to existing County properties. Pieces giving the County to landlocked properties will be very high priority; this one will not help us with access right now, but is not to say won't help us in future. We usually plant trees on it if it's open. Bernie Blackmore requested a recommendation from Mike Meriwether: purchase or not? Mike is researching easements, as Gale Murphy notes that the County may have an easement. The matter was tabled until next month.

3. Cedar River Natural Area (CRNA)

Mike Meriwether reminded CLAF that at the last meeting, replacement of the old railroad bridge was a priority for the committee. He was told by Charlie Koop that if Mike thinks there may be a liability issue with the existing bridge, then there probably is one. Mike showed CLAF some photos of the current, deteriorated condition of the bridge. Mike also distributed a cost sheet for proposed demolition of the existing bridge and cost for replacement. Demo alone will cost \$6,600, and cost of replacement with a 6' wide bridge would be an additional \$18,400, for a total bridge cost of \$25,000. Russ Blasdell of the Friends of the Cedar River agreed with Mike. Instead of staging the project (demo this year, construction the next), Mike Meriwether recommends implementing the entire project this year, with funds from the forestry account (Russ Blasdell concurring).

Motion by Gene Dawson, supported by Joe Allen, to recommend that the Board of Commissioners allocate \$25,000 from the County forestry fund to pay for the replacement of the existing railroad bridge on the Cedar River Natural Area. Motion carried - unanimous.

Howard requested assurance that the replacement bridge will be designed by professional engineers. Janet Person will have DNR, NRCS, or Road Commission engineer review and sign off on the design. Howard further noted to CLAF that the

County Board of Public Works is also available to review design drawings and provide second opinions.

Russ Blasdell emphasized that the bridge must tie into the overall plan for CRNA trail system. Mike Meriwether drew a diagram of the proposed trail system. The trail will link the proposed CRNA parking lot to the Village of Bellaire Craven Park. The \$10,000 Tribal grant recently obtained will allow for a trail up to the RR grade, in addition to fish habitats plus tree plantings in the CRNA. If the County matches the tribal grant of \$10,000, the trail can be extended to the Village, per plans for CRNA.

Motion by Joe Allen, supported by Gene Dawson, to recommend to the Board of Commissioners to allocate \$10,000 from the forestry fund to match the \$10,000 Tribal grant for Cedar River Natural Area to allow completion of the trail system to Bellaire as well as for additional tree planting and stream habitat restoration. Motion carried - unanimous.

4. SB 244

Janet Person informed CLAF that the proposed Senate Bill 244 would allow property owners to groom beachfronts and remove up to 4" of topsoil without obtaining a DEQ permit. The Antrim Conservation District is opposed to the measure. Gene Dawson, Joe Allen, and Bernie Blackmore stated opinions against the measure. Janet noted that EPA is against this legislation, and that its passage may result in EPA's withdrawal of delegated regulation status for wetlands and coastal matters from the State DEQ. This would mean direct EPA regulation of wetlands and the coastline. Russ Blasdell will obtain a copy of the resolution opposing SB 244 for the Commissioners for their May meeting.

Motion by Joe Allen, supported by Gene Dawson, to recommend to the Board of Commissioners to adopt the attached resolution against the passage of SB 244. Motion carried - unanimous.

5. Easements on Marcial Reiley Property and Derrer Property

Mike Meriwether is trying to purchase two easements. One is through the Marcial Reiley property off Dickenson Rd. in Echo Twp. This will give the County access from Dickenson Rd. to 159 acres of County land. A public easement is being requested. Charlie Koop is working on the easement document, and CLAF may need to act on the document next month. The other easement is from Valley Rd. in Mancelona Twp, through the Derrer property providing access to 40 acres of landlocked County property. The easement offer (not yet accepted by the Derrers) is for a forestry (not public) easement.

6. Master Plan – Land Use Forum and Visioning Sessions

Howard updated CLAF on the planned dates for the upcoming MSU Extension-sponsored land-use forum and the eight subsequent visioning sessions.

7. Walker Property – Helena Twp.

Pete Garwood joined the meeting around 10:00 a.m. Discussion took place about the Walker property, and potential county involvement if township withdraws its application for a state grant for property acquisition. The property has about 6,000' of Torch Lake frontage, for a total of about 15 acres. Pete Garwood noted that the County does not have public lands on Torch Lake, and that it is a goal of the County Parks & Recreation plan to acquire lake access.

8. Negotiations with Village of Bellaire

Pete Garwood reminded CLAF that last month, the Board Of Commissioners (BOC) tasked Pete with negotiating with the Village of Bellaire about Meadow Brook annexation, Richardi Park/Dam Property transfer, and extension of the Broad Street parking lot lease. Pete would like to negotiate all three matters as a package with the Village. Pete thinks it would be beneficial if the BOC could go into closed session at

the May meeting to decide on an acceptable position for the County owned property in Richardi Park all of those issues. Bernie Blackmore agreed to ask for a closed session on these issues at the May meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes

June 02, 2003

Members Present: Bernie Blackmore, Joe Allen and Gene Dawson
Members Absent: None.
Staff Present: Howard Yamaguchi
Others Present: Janet Person, Mike Meriwether, Russ Blasdel, Jim Ferguson

1. Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Bernie Blackmore.

2. Parks & Recreation Goal-setting – CLAF Input

Jim Ferguson of the Parks & Recreation Commission noted that because there is no clear direction from the Board of Commissioners on what to tackle for 2004, Parks & Rec will hold a meeting to set goals for themselves for 2004 and beyond. This will enable Parks & Rec to come up with a coherent budget request for 2004. Is there anything CLAF wants for Parks & Rec for 2004?

Bernie Blackmore opined that the 2004 Parks & Rec goals should be Elk Rapids and Wetzel Lake, and maintaining what we have already.

Jim Ferguson inquired about other issues such as trails, etc. He also noted that Parks & Rec should also have representation from Antrim Creek Natural Area and Grass River. Bernie noted that there is no reason not to have that. Janet also noted that much of the “parks” area is forest land, planned and managed by the Conservation District, not Parks & Rec.

Mike Meriwether noted that the current Parks & Rec Commission has a project planning orientation, and needs to show completed successes. Bernie suggested that Parks & Rec invite the other entities, including the Parks Committee, to its meetings.

3. Master Plan: Land Use Forum

Jim Ferguson also briefed CLAF on the Master Plan process. The first session (Land Use Forum) was held at the Bellaire High School – he was underwhelmed by the attendance. At the summer visioning sessions we will present definite questions for obtaining public input. We will seek attendance by folks from various townships. We will ask the Commissioners to convince the Township supervisor and the Boards to attend. MSUE will facilitate. Joe Allen suggested that invitation letters for ALL meetings be sent to ALL the Boards.

Mike Meriwether noted that the forestry income figures for the County as presented at the Forum was grossly underestimated. Based on statistics regularly submitted to the State (but never used by the State to update their own statistics), \$20 million is the probable forestry income figure for the County, possibly surpassing agriculture.

4. Antrim County Airport Wetland Mitigation

Mike Meriwether reported that both John Strehl and Bob McLeod had asked him to suggest mitigation sites for the proposed airport wetland fill. Bob McLeod specifically requested County lands. Possibilities include the Jabara property, other areas in Simpson road, and Grass River.

Mike noted that he appeared to be placed in the role of suggesting a solution to the problem, whereas the preferred role would be to have the airport decide on a solution, then ask Mike for

sites that would comply with that solution. Mike asked CLAF for guidance. Bernie Blackmore noted that he does not want to downgrade the airport, but also does not want to fill wetland. The Transportation Committee needs to resolve the issue first, then sell it to Board of Commissioners (BOC) and the public.

Gene Dawson noted that the "wetland" near airport was a hayfield 20 years ago. Janet noted that the wetland is also stormwater retention area for the airport.

Jim Ferguson asked whether any studies have been done on benefits and costs of airport expansion. Gene Dawson stated that we need to bring to public all the facts, pros and cons, about the issue to let the people and the BOC make the correct decision. How about a forum to get public input on this issue? Howard and Jim also noted that the Master Plan visioning sessions were set to discuss such issues. Mike concurred with the need to obtain additional input from more entities.

5. Oil Well on County Property

- Jeff Schimmer will drill an oil well on County property (40 ac) in Custer Township off Frog Hollow Road. The County owns the property, but does not own the mineral rights.

6. Various Matters

- Mike reported that Charlie Koop is still working on writing easements for various properties discussed in the April meeting.

Janet Person reported that trees have been planted in the embankments around the gravel pit on Derenzy Road.

Janet also reported that the friends of Cedar had a concern with replacement of the bridge on the Jabara property, and wanted engineers to take a look. Janet noted that the balance of a previous CMI grant is available to use by June 30, may not need most of \$25K approved last meeting by CLAF. NRCS has signed off on the bridge plans. She requested confirmation that CLAF still wishes to go ahead with the replacement of the bridge. Bernie Blackmore noted that the bridge is still a County liability, and suggested that the Board of Public Works review the design.

Howard updated CLAF on the discrepancies in the wetland classifications that have become apparent in the County land use atlas. He noted that the Planning Commission will decide on whether or not to publish the atlas, and if so, with what caveats.

Meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes

June 30, 2003

Members Present: Bernie Blackmore, Joe Allen and Gene Dawson

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Howard Yamaguchi and Jack White

Others Present: Russ Blasdel

1. Meeting called to order at 9:04 a.m. by Bernie Blackmore.

2. Budget Request – MSU Extension

Stan Moore, County Extension Director presented the MSU Extension budget request.

Gene Dawson made a motion, seconded by Joe Allen to recommend the Finance Committee approve the MSU Extension budget request as presented. Motion carried – unanimous.

Mr. Moore also presented the capital purchase items for the MSU Extension office. 3 items: copier \$1,466 to replace non-operational one; roll laminator (poster size) \$999; Dell workstation \$2,239.

Motion by Gene Dawson, seconded by Joe Allen to recommend the Finance Committee approve the MSU Extension capital outlay request. Motion carried – unanimous.

3. Budget Request – Antrim County Fair Board

Cheryl Gardener, Treasurer of the Fair Board updated the CLAF Committee on the activities at the fair. This year's fair starts August 6.

Motion by Bernie Blackmore, seconded by Gene Dawson to recommend the Finance Committee approve the Antrim County Fair Board budget request of \$6,000. Motion carried – unanimous.

4. Antrim Conservation District – Budget Requests

Antrim Conservation District representatives, Janet Person, Bill White and Jim Ferguson presented several budget requests on behalf of the ACD:

Forestry Budget: Bill White updated the Committee on the forestry budget request.

Motion by Joe Allen, seconded by Gene Dawson to recommend the Finance Committee approve the ACD Forestry Budget requesting 80% of forestry funds (a 5% increase over previous year). Motion carried – unanimous.

River Restoration: ACD is asking for \$20,000 from the \$25,000 that was returned to the County from the Grand Traverse Land Conservancy (GTLC) for the Skaff property easement as well as \$25,000 from Jabara property Cedar River bridge return funds.

Motion by Gene Dawson, seconded by Joe Allen to recommend the Finance

Committee approve \$45,000 for the River Restoration program (ACD is asking to keep the \$20,000 coming to ACD from the US Fish & Wildlife Service to reimburse the County for money spent from Forestry for the Skaff purchase, and \$25,000 allocated from forestry funds that was previously allocated for the Cedar River bridge replacement project). Motion carried – unanimous.

ACD General Funds: Janet Person presented the budget request for ACD general funds. Requesting the same amount as the previous year, \$19,000.

Motion by Gene Dawson, seconded by Joe Allen to recommend the Finance Committee approve \$19,000 for Antrim Conservation District – General Funds. Motion carried – unanimous.

Discussion took place regarding ACD considering a millage be place on the primary ballot for 2004, asking for approximately .15 mil. (1 mil is almost \$1 million).

5. Conservation Resource Alliance (CRA) Budget Request

Motion by Gene Dawson, seconded by Joe Allen to recommend the Finance Committee renew the CRA appropriation of \$1,000. Motion carried – unanimous.

6. Various Matters

Wetzel Lake: Janet Person reported that the porta-potty structure is complete and we now have one unit at the site. A split-rail fence is being erected to separate the boat launch from the swim area. The beach is being groomed. Problem with the road eroding into the beach. A possible solution is to implement rock chutes. A camera survey of the lake bottom has been completed. Found one drum which, if full the DNR will have to remove it. If it is just an empty can, ACD can remove it. Boats and tires that were found should remain. Signs: the DNR will put up a “no lifeguard” sign, other than one more sign, no other signs will be needed. State Police and local law enforcement will patrol the area during the July 4 holiday weekend. No picnic tables or trash receptacles will be placed this year. So far, the District has spent approximately \$600) not including monthly porta-potty expenses).

County Access Book: Janet reported that the County Access Book is ready to print, but they are waiting for input from township supervisors. Jabara Property will be added.

Visioning Sessions: Howard Yamaguchi updated the Committee regarding the land use visioning sessions taking place around the County this summer.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes

August 04, 2003

Members Present: Bernie Blackmore, Joe Allen and Gene Dawson
Members Absent: None.
Staff Present: Howard Yamaguchi, Laura Sexton, and Mike Meriwether
Others Present: Russ Blasdell and Anne Brasie

1. Meeting called to order at 9:02 a.m. by Bernie Blackmore.

2. Watershed Center Appropriation

Anne Brasie of the Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Center briefed the County Lands Agriculture and Forestry Committee (CLAF) on the current activities of the Watershed Center. General discussion ensued on lake water quality, stormwater programs, and other activities. This is the third year of a three-year commitment made by the Board of Commissioners to support the Watershed Center.

Motion by Gene Dawson, seconded by Joe Allen, to recommend the Board of Commissioners (BOC) to appropriate \$1,000 in 2004 for the third of the three annual contributions promised to the Watershed Center. Motion carried – unanimous. Laura Sexton left the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

3. Antrim Conservation District – Various Matters

Mike Meriwether reported that the Prosecutor had completed a draft of the proposed forestry easement agreement from County forest land to Valley Road through the Derrer property, about 500 feet for slightly more than \$3/foot. No action is required now.

Mike also briefed CLAF on eagle scout candidate Nathan Graham in cutting trails and placing picnic tables in Morhmann Park. Some discussion ensued on the consequences to Mr. Gary Rush, adjoining landowner, and to the trash situation as more users may bring in food to enjoy at the new picnic tables. Nathan will make a presentation to the Board of Commissioners at their September meeting.

Mike concluded his report with news about the start of the replacement bridge at the Jabara property, and additional work (rocks, etc.) at Wetzel Lake. Bernie Blackmore instructed Howard to include the Jabara property bridge on the itinerary for the Wetzel Lake field trip following the August BOC meeting.

4. Other Matters

- Russ Blasdell noted that he and Mike Meriwether continue to search for a suitable property for a public shooting range. General discussion ensued on public shooting ranges, the NIMBY (“not in my back yard”) syndrome, and the County’s role in public shooting ranges. Bernie Blackmore reminded CLAF that the county Health, Animal Control, and Public Safety committee is taking the lead on the issue with the Sheriff and the Prosecutor.

Howard distributed a set of location drawings for some of the properties being repossessed to see if there is any interest from CLAF for any of the parcels. Only the first parcel, on US 131, adjacent to proposed Mancelona Industrial Park, may be of interest. No action is required.

- Howard noted that the Farmland Preservation Task Force has been progressing in its work. They will give a presentation to CLAF in September. A joint Antrim-Grand Traverse County BOC meeting is being proposed for October or November to take up the matter jointly.

Due to the Labor Day holiday, the CLAF meeting for September is scheduled for Wednesday, September 3, at 1 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 10:26 a.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes

September 03, 2003

Members Present: Bernie Blackmore, Joe Allen and Gene Dawson
Members Absent: None.
Staff Present: Howard Yamaguchi and Mike Meriwether
Others Present: Russ Blasdell, Laura Stanek, and Scott Everett

1. Meeting called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Bernie Blackmore.

2. Farmland Preservation Presentation

Scott Everett of the Farmland Trust gave a presentation on the work to date of the Farmland Preservation Task Force and the associated Advisory Committee. His presentation explained the background and philosophy of the purchase of development rights method of preservation. He explained the proposed bi-county ordinance using the slides, and distributed an almost-final version of the report. He will give the presentation and final report to the full Board of Commissioners meeting on September 11, 2003.

3. Oil and Gas Notices

Mike Meriwether reported that he received notification of gas pipelines and well developments in three county properties. Mike is currently preparing estimates of surface damages, which are the estimated future values of the timber that will be cut down to make way for the pipeline or the well. These will be the amounts the holders of the oil and gas leases will pay the County. The properties are: Del Mason Road, Frog Hollow, and Simpson Road.

4. Communications

Howard presented a letter from DEQ requesting access to the Simpson Road property to conduct water quality testing related to the contaminated plumes from Mancelona.

Motion by Gene Dawson, seconded by Joe Allen, to recommend to the Board of Commissioners to allow DEQ access to the county property to perform water quality testing related to the contaminated plumes. Motion passed – Unanimous.

5. Other Matters

Russ Blasdell noted that the Bellaire Conservation Club could, at very little cost to the county, set up and manage a public shooting range on county property. The committee requested a complete proposal from the Conservation Club for consideration.

Meeting adjourned at 2:40 a.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes

September 29, 2003

Members Present: Bernie Blackmore and Joe Allen
Members Absent: Gene Dawson
Staff Present: Howard Yamaguchi and Janet Person
Others Present: Russ Blasdell and Laura Sexton

1. Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Bernie Blackmore.

2. Elk Rapids Harbor Dredge Spoils

Howard presented a letter from the Elk Rapids harbormaster requesting use of the county property (sand beach upstream of the marina entrance breakwater) for temporary dewatering storage of harbor dredge spoils. Dewatered spoils would be trucked off to an approved disposal site. Howard noted that this is a regular practice, and that the county has routinely approved this. Janet clarified the location of their approved disposal site.

Motion by Joe Allen, seconded by Bernie Blackmore, to grant Elk Rapids' request to dewater spoils at requested location. Motion passed – unanimous.

3. Farmland Preservation Ordinance

Howard informed the committee that there is a public hearing scheduled at 11 a.m. during the October 9, 2003, Board of Commissioners meeting on the proposed Bi-County Farmland Preservation Ordinance. This hearing is being held to obtain public input before the Antrim County Board meets, in a joint session, with the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners to discuss the ordinance. The Antrim Board will not take any further action on the proposed ordinance until the Grand Traverse County and Antrim County have made agreed-upon changes to the proposed ordinance, based on public input and the wishes of the two Boards of Commissioners.

4. Trailhead Sign at Cedar River Natural Area (Jabara Property)

Howard noted that it is now time to erect the Mellem Family Trail sign whose mockup was first shown at the August 2002 dedication ceremony at the Jabara property (Cedar River Natural Area). Janet noted that the trail system is now complete. Discussion ensued on whether to use forestry fund or the county funds allocated for trail work (some \$1,000+ is still unspent out of the \$10,000 from the County, according to Janet). Jack White suggested using the forestry fund. The committee also discussed whether the sign would be a two-sided sign, and where it would be placed.

Motion by Joe Allen, seconded by Bernie Blackmore, to proceed with constructing the Mellem Family Trail sign at the Cedar River Natural Area, as presented at the 2002 dedication, at a size similar to the mock-up, at a cost (including installation) not to exceed \$1,000, to be taken out of the forestry fund. Motion passed – unanimous.

5. County Public Lands Book

Laura Sexton joined the meeting at 9:30 a.m. Janet informed the committee that the Conservation District (ACD) is starting the final update of the County public lands book before publication. ACD is updating the sites with visits and new photographs, noting, new

ownership (road end sites used to be ACRC, slowly going to townships), and generating the documents certifying annual inspections. The ACD needs an initial \$1,000 to print 200 copies, not budgeted. She projects \$4,000 profit, and expects the initial print run to sell out. Last printing came out of parks budget.

Bernie Blackmore asked Laura Sexton if the county has a fund for the public lands book. Laura responded that there is no fund, and the expenses for the last printing were appropriated by the Commissioners. She suggested that the County should set up separate fund. Jack White suggested that \$1,000 be taken from the general fund, to be paid back from the proceeds of the sale.

Motion by Joe Allen, seconded by Bernie Blackmore, to recommend to the Finance Committee that \$1,000 be advanced from the general fund toward funding the initial print run of the revised county public lands book, with the \$1,000 to be repaid into the General Fund from a public lands book publication fund to be established for the purpose of handing proceeds from the sales. Motion passed – Unanimous.

6. Skaff Property Appraisal

Janet Person explained that the ACD has completed all requirements for the grant which will, among other items, re-pay the county \$20,000 from ACD according to the Skaff property purchase arrangements. The grantors want an appraisal performed on the Skaff property before they will release the funds. The County has apparently not done an appraisal, even at the time of purchase.

Janet has obtained a quotation from a reputable appraiser, whose fees are \$300. Janet suggested that she can take the \$300 out of the \$20,000 due to the County. Jack White suggested using the County Appraiser. Janet will go to Equalization Department to obtain the services of the County Appraiser for the Skaff Property appraisal.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes

November 3, 2003

Members Present: Bernie Blackmore, Gene Dawson and Joe Allen
Members Absent: None.
Staff Present: Howard Yamaguchi, Eileen Wallick, Mike Meriwether, and Janet Person
Others Present: Russ Blasdell, Jack White, Al Luurtsema, and Jerry Basch

1. Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Bernie Blackmore.

2. TS Coughlin Oil & Gas Lease – Grass River Railroad Grade area

The matter was tabled until next month, as the TS Coughlin representative was not available and no response had been obtained from the Prosecuting Attorney's office.

3. Elk Rapids Day Park Management Plan

Mike Meriwether presented a preliminary proposal for a management plan for Elk Rapids Day Park, should the Antrim Conservation District manage the park as part of the county forestry lands. Mike based his work plan mostly on the results of the park survey by the ER Subcommittee of the Parks & Rec Commission. In his handout, he provided a work plan and cost estimates for fence removal, vegetation management, trail system establishment, park entrance area signage, bath house maintenance, and pavilion issues. He estimates \$9,300 for his first-year program of capital improvements, and an additional \$5,600 annually for maintenance.

Al Luurtsema and Jerry Basch of the County Parks & Recreation Commission briefed the Committee on the most recent results of the meeting where the ER Subcommittee refined its proposed work plan for the park. The resulting work items can be implemented by whoever manages the park. The consensus of the subcommittee was to keep the park "as natural as possible." (Mike Meriwether noted that the park is already partially developed. Howard noted that the subcommittee's "natural" baseline is what is there today.) Al Luurtsema urged the Committee not to make any rushed decisions on the park.

Extensive discussion ensued on the merits of operating the Elk Rapids Day Park under different models of management. Jack White noted that the Village has the public works infrastructure and staff to maintain the park, while the County has not provided sufficient levels of funding in the past. Jerry Basch expressed the hope that regardless of who is chosen to manage it, County residents everywhere will not be inhibited from using the facilities. Gene Dawson opined that he would like to see more people use the park, and have the Park remain in the County. Joe Allen sees no conflict in deeding the park over to the Village. Bernie Blackmore is undecided, but is wary of Village's intentions vis-à-vis the drainage pipe proposed through the park last year to drain the Elk Rapids Preserve.

Motion by Gene Dawson, seconded by Joe Allen, to recommend to the Parks Committee that the County continue to operate the Elk Rapids Day Park under the park system for one more year. Motion passed – unanimous.

4. Forestry Land Matters

Mike Meriwether reported on three items related to forestry management.

The first was an incident on Simpson Road on Friday. The field crew from the oil and gas drillers were on county property, preparing the land for a flowline and other work items before Mike had an opportunity to assess the surface damages from their operation and have the County Prosecutor finalize an agreement with the company. Mike ordered the work stopped, and sent the crew back. The firm has since apologized for the mix-up. However, Mike's estimate of the "lost opportunity" costs may be an item of contention between the county and the contractor. Mike has noted that such fees have been imposed in the past despite challenges.

Mike has also prepared the surface damages report for another proposed drilling operation on Del Mason Road. He estimates the damages at the site to be in the vicinity of \$5,500. A third estimate, for Frog Hollow, is also being prepared. The estimate will be much lower than the other two.

He has also received two bids on timber sale at Orchard Hill Road. The bids are: Weyerhaeuser: \$13,426.21 and Fall Forest Products, \$18,001.00. The Committee unanimously agreed to award the timber sale to Fall Forest Products for \$18,001.00

Meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes

December 1, 2003

Members Present: Bernie Blackmore, Gene Dawson and Joe Allen
Members Absent: None.
Staff Present: Charlie Koop, Howard Yamaguchi and Mike Meriwether
Others Present: Russ Blasdell and Mark Randolph

1. Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Bernie Blackmore.

2. TS Coughlin Oil & Gas Lease – Grass River Railroad Grade area

Mark Randolph spoke to the County Lands Agriculture and Forestry Committee (CLAF) on behalf of the Grass River Natural Area (GRNA) board. He noted that GRNA was deeded to the County as a recreational and natural area, and that it was probably not appropriate to be granting easements for flow lines. Mike Meriwether noted that because it is a state-recognized natural area, no flow lines are allowed unless the County sells an easement. Mark Randolph recommends that the Board of Commissioners (BOC) deny the request by T.S. Coughlin. Mark left the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Charlie Koop joined the meeting at 9:10 a.m. He noted that the BOC has not granted easements in the past for private mineral developments, unless the alternative routes were a lot more damaging to the environment. He also noted that the state owns 75% of the mineral rights, and their decision may be a problem in the future. Mike Meriwether reiterated his views above for Mr. Koop's benefit.

Motion by Joe Allen seconded by Gene Dawson, to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that the County deny T.S. Coughlin their request for an Oil and Gas Lease easement through Grass River Natural Area. Passed - unanimous.

3. Forestry Land Matters

Mike Meriwether followed up on some items discussed in the November CLAF meeting.

Mike reported that paperwork for the Simpson Road property, where he had shut down an earlier unauthorized site work by oil and gas lessees, was now all ready for signature by the BOC chairman. Surface damage assessments were completed and agreed upon with the lessee.

Frog Hollow by Shanty Creek: work is still in progress; surface damage report in preparation, but a release form is ready. Estimated surface damages are not high.

Mike has also prepared the surface damages report for another proposed drilling operation on Del Mason Road. These are precedent-setting damages, and may face some opposition in the future.

He also noted that he will commence the process of selling timber from Mohrmann Park. He estimates sales will be in the vicinity of \$10,000.

4. Rifle Range

Russ Blasdell and Mike Meriwether commenced discussion on the merits of using various County properties as a potential rifle range to be managed by the local Conservation Club for the public to use. Mike noted that if CLAF were serious about a rifle range on county property, he could go over each of the lands with Russ.

Extensive discussion ensued on the pros and cons of leasing public land for a shooting range versus assisting the local Conservation and Sportsman's Clubs locate and acquire appropriate lands for establishing new ranges. Apparently many organizations stand ready to assist financially in the establishment of properly managed shooting ranges. Bernie Blackmore noted that a possible recommendation from CLAF may be to assist the Conservation/Sportsman's Clubs in finding appropriate lots.

5. Other Matters

Howard briefed CLAF on the financial arrangements for the consultancy work for the proposed Farmland Preservation Ordinance. The work was funded by a Rotary Charities Grant of \$50,000, supplemented by a \$15,000 cash match from the five townships (Torch Lake, Milton, Elk Rapids, Whitewater, and Acme), for a total of \$65,000. Acme township acted as the fiduciary in the contract with Rotary Charities and the consultant, American Farmland Trust.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.