

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore
Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes – January 29, 2007

Members Present: Gene Dawson, Bernie Blackmore, and Joe Allen
Members Absent: None
Staff Present: Joe Meyers
Others Present: Mike Meriwether, Peg Comfort and Mark Randolph

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

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Forestry Update

Mike Meriwether informed the Committee of activities regarding the Forestry Program.

Mike informed the Committee of the likelihood of SRW getting the permit for drilling in the Kirkpatrick Forest. Mike also indicated that the Sevald Property will be “on the table” until 2008.

Discussion ensued over the purchase of the Sevald property and different ways to acquire it.

The Committee tasked Mike to put together some numbers to get money out of the property.

4. Survey Specs

The Committee discussed the need to have all County surveys recorded with the Register of Deeds office.

Mike indicated the requirements he has requested from all surveys.

Motion by Joe Allen, supported by Gene Dawson, to recommend the Board of Commissioners require all surveys to get recorded through the Register of Deeds office, monuments to be placed at the corners of the property, the property lines staked approximately every 100 yards, and map the site. Motion carried – unanimous.

5. Carbon Credits

Mark Randolph handed out a presentation given in Lansing regarding carbon credits.

Mike informed the Committee of his understanding of carbon credits.

Motion by Gene Dawson, supported by Joe Allen, to direct Mike Meriwether to contact Todd Parker on getting a copy of the contract required to enroll the property in the Carbon Exchange for review. Motion carried – unanimous.

6. Communications

None.

7. Member/Public Comment

Gene Dawson spoke on the 40 acres near Shanty Creek as some possible revenue for the Sevald Property. Gene also spoke on 40 acres in Banks Township that could be used for trade for a boat launch. The Committee directed Joe Meyers and Gene to put together a letter to real estate agents to get a price for their services on selling the Shanty Creek Property.

Peg Comfort informed the Committee of a presentation on Natural Features Inventories at the Council of Governments.

Discussion ensued over natural features inventories.

Meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore
Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes – February 26, 2007

Members Present: Gene Dawson and Bernie Blackmore
Members Absent: Joe Allen
Staff Present: Joe Meyers
Others Present: Mike Meriwether and Mark Randolph

1. **Meeting called to order** at 9:00 a.m.

2. **Public Comment**

None.

3. **Forestry Update**

Mike Meriwether informed the Committee of activities regarding the Forestry Program.

Mike asked the Committee their opinions on the reverter forestry clause on the county lands acquired from the state. Bernie Blackmore indicated that we should remove them as necessary. Discussion ensued over deed-restricted properties and the Committee decided to invite legal counsel to the next meeting to discuss cleaning up the restrictions on the property.

Mike indicated that he received a quote from a company for inventorying all county forestland. The cost would be \$7,450 for 2,732 acres. Discussion ensued regarding whether Grass River Natural Area (GRNA) should be included in this figure. The Committee determined that if a survey was done than GRNA should be included.

Mike indicated that he would like to hold off on a survey until the state budget is completed due to the cuts in the Forestry Program that are potentially taking place.

Discussion ensued over the carbon credits as previously discussed at the last meeting. Mike indicated that during his research, the County would have to be an entity to where we would have to determine how much carbon we use and how much we sequester on an annual basis. Mike further indicated that he is still doing research on the program and would like to address this at another meeting.

The Committee discussed the future of the Forestry Program for the private lands and the public lands. Mike indicated that the State is planning to cut the entire private Forestry Program budget. Bernie indicated that he would like to have Mike put together some package options for the Forestry Program.

The Committee discussed the Sevald property. Mike indicated that there is not enough timber on the property to purchase a sizeable chunk of the land. Discussion ensued over a Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund grant for \$99,000 in the August round and because it would be under \$100,000, there is a greater chance of getting funding.

Discussion ensued over the Bachelder Road property.

Motion by Gene Dawson, supported by Bernie Blackmore to recommend the Board of Commissioners sell the 40 acres on Bachelder Road for not less than \$200,000 by first giving the three people that have given us quotes another chance to bid on the property and if none of them express interest to contact the local board of realtors to have them find a real estate agent to sell the property. Motion carried – unanimous.

4. **Communications**

Forest Home Property

The Committee discussed the property in Forest Home Township that the State is looking to sell. The Committee decided to encourage Forest Home Township to acquire the property.

5. Member/Public Comment

- None.

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore
Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes – March 26, 2007

Members Present: Gene Dawson, Joe Allen, and Bernie Blackmore
Members Absent: None
Staff Present: Joe Meyers and Charlie Koop
Others Present: Mike Meriwether, Greg Croftchik, and Jon Corcoran

1. **Meeting called to order** at 9:00 a.m.

2. **Public Comment**

None.

3. **Forestry Update**

Mike Meriwether informed the Committee of activities regarding the Forestry Program.

Mike spoke on the 40-acre parcel off Valley Road that is landlocked. Mike indicated that there was a property owner that would be willing to sell us an easement.

Motion by Joe Allen, supported by Gene Dawson to allow the County Forester to negotiate an easement for public access to the Valley Road property in Mancelona. Motion carried – unanimous.

Discussion ensued over cleaning up the titles on some forestry properties. Further discussion was delayed until later in the meeting.

4. **Oil and Gas Leases**

Charlie Koop indicated that we received two proposals for an oil and gas lease on the Cedar River Natural Area. Mr. Koop indicated that OIL and DTE have presented the County with leases. OIL indicated that they would consider leasing half of the property and letting DTE lease the other property. OIL also indicated that if they split the land for two leases that they would raise their offer to DTE's offer. Discussion ensued over leasing the property. OIL indicated that they would not be willing to lease the whole property for DTE's bid.

The Committee decided we should address this at a special meeting prior to the Board of Commissioner meeting on April 12.

5. **Forestry Property Title Restrictions**

Mike indicated that the state passed a law allowing counties to remove the "for forestry purposes only" restriction on all forestry parcels under 120 acres. Mike also indicated that he would like to see some protection of the property if these restrictions are lifted.

Motion by Gene Dawson, supported by Joe Allen, to recommend the Board of Commissioners apply to the State of Michigan to remove the "for forestry purposes only" restrictions on all county property under 120 acres and to not sell any of these county lands until an ordinance is passed protecting the land. Motion carried – unanimous.

6. Member/Public Comment

- Ed Martel spoke on personal property tax and the oil companies.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore
Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes – April 12, 2007

Members Present: Gene Dawson, Joe Allen, and Bernie Blackmore (entered at 8:45)

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Joe Meyers and Charlie Koop

Others Present: Mike Meriwether

1. Meeting called to order at 8:34 a.m.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Forestry Update

Charlie Koop indicated that he did not hear from the oil companies after our last meeting. The Commission discussed the two bids from OIL and DTE.

Motion by Gene Dawson, supported by Joe Allen, to accept the bid from DTE for the Cedar River Natural Area for \$175 and acre and 3/16th royalties. Motion carried – unanimous.

Mike Meriwether spoke on the Kirkpatrick Forest and how SRW should be receiving a developable lease on the property. Discussion ensued over the road, easements, and pipelines on the property.

Mike spoke on the process of developing the well sites and the engineering of the road.

Discussion ensued over the Antrim Conservation District's state funds for this budget cycle.

4. Member/Public Comment

- None.

Meeting adjourned at 8:54 a.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes – June 4, 2007

Members Present: Gene Dawson, Joe Allen, and Bernie Blackmore
Members Absent: None
Staff Present: Joe Meyers
Others Present: Mike Meriwether, Sherry Comben, Todd Vigland, and Charlie Koop

1. **Meeting called to order** at 9:04 a.m.

2. **Public Comment**

None.

3. **Forestry Update**

Mike Meriwether spoke on the Leonard Road property and the few issues with the adjoining property owners.

Mike also indicated that he wanted to survey the Skinkle Road property per a Commissioner's request.

Motion by Joe Allen, supported by Bernie Blackmore, to allow the County Forester to go out for bids to survey the Skinkle Road property. Motion carried – unanimous.

Discussion ensued over the Lore Road extension for the potential of a boat launch.

Mike indicated that we need an easement on the Valley Road property. Mike also indicated that a property owner adjacent to the property would be willing to sell us a public easement.

Motion by Joe Allen, supported by Bernie Blackmore, to give the County Forester the authority to negotiate a 33-foot easement to the Valley Road property. Motion carried – unanimous.

Discussion ensued over the Sevald property and how a private donor would like to give us \$200,000 to purchase the property if we add a protection to the Batchelder Road and the Frog Hollow properties and wants to know what the County will do to ensure that it is not sold. Further discussion ensued over what would best suit the donor.

Motion by Joe Allen, supported by Bernie Blackmore, to work with the private donor to protect the Frog Hollow and Batchelder Road properties for a \$200,000 donation to help with the purchase of the Sevald property.

4. **Oil & Gas Rights on Foreclosed Property**

Sherry Comben and Charlie Koop spoke on the fact that we have been keeping the mineral rights on all foreclosed properties and wanted direction on whether or not the County wanted to continue this practice. Discussion ensued over the pros and cons of keeping the minerals.

Motion by Joe Allen, supported by Bernie Blackmore, to recommend the Board of Commissioners continue the practice of retaining the mineral rights on tax foreclosed properties. Motion carried – unanimous.

5. **Chipping Trails at Barnes Park**

Discussion ensued over chipping the rest of the trails at Barnes Park.

Motion by Joe Allen, supported by Bernie Blackmore, to chip the rest of the trails at Barnes Park.

Motion carried – unanimous.

6. Member/Public Comment

- Mike indicated that construction of the road in the Kirkpatrick Forest should happen very shortly.

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore
Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes – July 2, 2007

Members Present: Bernie Blackmore, Gene Dawson and Joe Allen
Members Absent: None
Staff Present: Joe Meyers and Pete Garwood
Others Present: Stan Moore, Laura Sexton, Christy Roman, Gloria Campbell, Andy Knott, Amy Beyer, and Joe Variot

1. **Meeting called to order** at 9:00 p.m.

2. **Public Comment**

None.

3. **MSU Extension Budget Request**

Stan Moore, County Extension Director, presented the MSU Extension budget and capital outlay request. Discussion ensued over federal grants and what that brings to the office.

Motion by Joe Allen, supported by Gene Dawson, to approve the MSU Extension budget request as presented for submittal to the Finance Committee. Motion carried – unanimous.

4. **Antrim Conservation District Appropriation**

Christy Roman spoke on the different grant matches that the County appropriation has been used for. Discussion ensued over the different grants, the forestry fund, and the uncertainty of the state funding.

Motion by Gene Dawson, supported by Joe Allen, to approve the Antrim Conservation District appropriations for submittal to the Finance Committee. Motion carried – unanimous.

5. **Antrim County Fair Appropriation Request**

Gloria Campbell and Joe Variot presented the County Fair Appropriation.

Discussion ensued over the cuts from the state.

The Committee asked Gloria and Joe what they would do with more money.

The Committee indicated that they will address this at the next meeting.

6. **Watershed Center Appropriation Request**

Andy Knott, of the Watershed Center, introduced himself as the new director of the organization and presented the appropriation request for \$1,000.

Andy spoke on the green belt around Torch Lake and other projects in Antrim County.

Motion by Joe Allen, supported by Gene Dawson, to approve the Watershed Center appropriation of \$1,000 for submittal to the Finance Committee. Motion carried – unanimous.

7. Conservation Resource Alliance (CRA)

- Amy Beyer, of Conservation Resource Alliance (CRA), presented the appropriation request for \$1,000.

Amy spoke on the different projects that they are working on to help the Grand Traverse Bay. Discussion ensued over their wildlink program.

Motion by Joe Allen, supported by Gene Dawson, to approve the Conservation Resource Alliance appropriation of \$1,000 for submittal to the Finance Committee. Motion carried – unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 10:35 p.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore
Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes – July 30, 2007

Members Present: Gene Dawson and Joe Allen
Members Absent: Bernie Blackmore
Staff Present: Joe Meyers
Others Present: Gloria Campbell, Russ Blasdell, Mike Meriwether, and Todd Vigland

1. Meeting called to order at 9:00 p.m.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. County Fair Allocation

Gloria Campbell, Antrim County Fair Board member, informed the Committee of the possibilities for entertainment that the fair could provide. Gloria also indicated that for the 2007 and 2008 fair, they are going to concentrate more on advertising.

Discussion ensued over increasing the budget for advertising.

Motion by Gene Dawson, supported by Joe Allen, to recommend a \$10,000 appropriation for the Antrim County Fair to be submitted to the Finance Committee. Motion carried – unanimous.

4. Horses at Cedar River Natural Area

Mike Meriwether indicated that there might be some stable owners charging for a horse ride through the natural area. Mike spoke on how they were using the new bridge but he indicated that if they wanted to continue to use the bridge they would need to buy mats for the horse hoofs.

5. Forestry Program Update

Mike distributed a handout for his update.

Mike indicated that the County will be paid over \$30,000 for the oil and gas work that has been done on the Kirkpatrick Forest. Mike indicated that he would like to install a stream crossing on the property at a cost not to exceed \$5,000.

Motion by Gene Dawson, supported by Joe Allen, to recommend the Finance Committee approve the stream crossing on the Kirkpatrick Forest at a cost not to exceed \$5,000 to be taken out of the Forestry Fund. Motion carried – unanimous.

Mike discussed two parcels that are for sale in Lakes of the North that would give us access to our county land. Discussion ensued over the access to these properties.

Motion by Gene Dawson, supported by Joe Allen, to request the Finance Committee

allocate \$6,000 from the Forestry Fund to purchase two lots in Lakes of the North for access to the two parcels. Motion carried – unanimous.

Discussion ensued over the Skinkle Road property and Mike submitted quotes to survey it.

Motion by Gene Dawson, supported by Joe Allen, to request the Finance Committee allocate \$3,968 out of the Forestry Fund to survey the Skinkle Road property. Motion carried – unanimous.

Mike indicated that through discussions with the property owner adjacent to the Valley Road property, he would be willing to sell us an acre of his property for \$5,000 to gain access.

Motion by Gene Dawson, supported by Joe Allen, to purchase 1 acre of property to access the Valley Road property in Mancelona for \$5,000. Motion carried – unanimous.

Discussion ensued over the Frog Hollow and Del Mason Road properties.

Discussion ensued over the County Forestry Program.

6. Sevald Property

- Todd Vigland spoke on the Sevald property and GDO Investments. GDO Investments wants to close on the property as a whole (the Township and County properties). Discussion ensued over the closing of the properties. He would like to get a Memorandum of Understanding indicating that if we receive the grant that we would purchase the property.
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7. Public/Member Comment

- Eileen Wallick entered the meeting and indicated that Barnes Park was larger than we thought.

Discussion ensued over Sevald property.

Meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore
Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes – August 27, 2007

Members Present: Gene Dawson, Bernie Blackmore, and Joe Allen

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Joe Meyers

Others Present: Russ Blasdel, Charlie Koop, and Mike Meriwether

1. Meeting called to order at 9:00 p.m.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Forestry Program Update

Mike Meriwether spoke on the Valley Road Property and indicated that he will be adding a road and parking lot once we get the agreement finalized. Mike also discussed the progress of all of the acquisitions that happened since the last meeting.

Mike also spoke on the Cedar River Natural Area trail and how the Village of Bellaire and District will be working together in partnership to connect both trails so people don't get lost as much.

Mike discussed the interpretive signs at Barnes Park and indicated that he is going to have Ron put some trail posts throughout the trails.

Mike indicated that there would be an oil and gas well on one of the Star Township properties and indicated that legal counsel was currently reviewing the surface damages.

Discussion ensued over the memorandum of understanding with the land conservancy for the grant request.

Discussion ensued over the Barnes Park Ordinance. Discussion ensued over firearms in the park, hunting, and off road vehicles.

Motion by Gene Dawson, supported by Joe Allen, to pay for the closing costs for the Valley Road property out of the forestry fund. Motion carried – unanimous.

4. Public/Member Comment

- None.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore
Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes – October 1, 2007

Members Present: Gene Dawson and Joe Allen
Members Absent: Bernie Blackmore
Others Present: Jack White, Pete Garwood and Mark Randolph

1. Meeting called to order at 9:03 a.m.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Grass River Natural Area (GRNA) Non-Development Lease

Mark Randolph, Director of GRNA joined the meeting. Mr. Randolph informed the Committee that the GRNA Board of Directors does not oppose the proposed non-developmental lease for the GRNA property.

4. Memorandum of Understanding for the Sevald Property

The Committee thoroughly reviewed and discussed the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between the County and the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC).

Motion by Joe Allen, supported by Gene Dawson, to recommend the Board of Commissioners approve the Memorandum of Understanding between County and the Grand Travers Regional Land Conservancy for acquiring the Sevald Property.

Motion Carried – Unanimous.

5. Various Matters

- The Committee discussed the boat launch issue currently being explored by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore
Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes – October 25, 2007

Members Present: Bernie Blackmore, Gene Dawson and Joe Allen
Members Absent: None
Others Present: Joe Meyers, Lindsey Banwell and Mike Meriwether

1. **Meeting called to order** at 9:00 a.m.

2. **Public Comment**

None.

3. **Forestry Update**

- Mike Meriwether introduced Lindsey Banwell to the Committee as a new employee at the District. Lindsey spoke on the Beals Lake access and informed the committee that there was an unimproved boat launch that needed some work. Lindsey indicated that sediment was getting into the lake due to the condition of the boat launch. In addition, she indicated that through the grant she is working on, there is money to do some improvements on this site. Lindsey handed out a budget to do the improvements and indicated that the grant required some match.

Motion by Joe Allen, supported by Gene Dawson to recommend the finance committee approve spending \$1,000 out of the Forestry Fund, to match grant funds, to improve the Beals Lake Access Site. Motion carried – unanimous.

Discussion about GDO investments.

Charlie Koop entered the meeting at 9:15 a.m.

Discussion ensued over the Batchelder Road and the Frog Hollow Properties.

Discussion ensued over the “for forestry purposes only” deed restrictions on county properties.

Discussion ensued over the motion made at the April Board of Commissioners meeting removing the “for forestry purposes only” deed restriction on county properties and putting an ordinance in place to protect these properties.

Bernie Blackmore directed Legal Counsel to draft an ordinance on the sale of county land.

Mike informed the Committee of the development happening on the Kirkpatrick forest.

Mike spoke on the Del Mason Road Property and how an energy company wanted to drill on an adjacent property and they were seeking an easement across our property.

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Motion by Joe Allen, supported by Gene Dawson to not grant an easement across the Del Mason Road Property because of policy reasons and safety concerns. Motion

carried – unanimous.

Mike informed the Committee of some encroachment issues on the Del Mason Road Property; he indicated that the property owner would remove the items on county property.

Mike also spoke on a thinning on the Valley Road parcel, the Cedar River Natural Area Trails, and the Barnes Park signs.

4. Various Matters

- Gene Dawson spoke on the trails at Antrim Creek Natural Area.

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

County Lands, Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Joseph Allen

Bernie Blackmore
Chairman

Eugene Dawson

Minutes – December 3, 2007

Members Present: Bernie Blackmore, Gene Dawson and Joe Allen

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Joe Meyers and Mike Meriwether

1. **Meeting called to order** at 9:00 a.m.

2. **Public Comment**

None.

3. **Forestry Update**

- Discussion ensued over the private lands section of the forestry program in Antrim County. Mike indicated that the state has cut the funding for the program leaving the conservation district with one year of operating expenses to run the forestry program.

The Committee discussed the potential of charging for services on private land. Discussion ensued over what Mike does for private land owners.

Discussion ensued over the Conservation District and how it has evolved in the past few years.

Discussion ensued over the oil and gas fund and how the funds from that account are used.

Gene Dawson proposed that we could try to provide a forestry program on a trial period and re-assess it after a pre-determined amount of time.

Discussion ensued over the need of a county forester.

Further discussion ensued over bringing options regarding a Forestry Program to the Board of Commissioners. Mike indicated that he would put together three options for the next CLAF meeting.

Discussion ensued over the timber management on County land.

Charlie Koop entered the meeting to discuss leasing the property at Grass River Natural Area.

Charlie indicated that GRNA is in favor of a non-developmental lease.

Discussion ensued over the Oil and Gas Fund 144

Motion by Gene Dawson, supported by Joe Allen, to lease the 280 acres at GRNA to OIL Energy Company to go into the Oil and Gas Fund 144 for a lease that states no surface development. Motion carried – unanimous.

4. **Various Matters**

- None

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.