

Agenda  
Ottawa County Agricultural Preservation Board  
West Olive Administration Building – Conference Room C  
12220 Fillmore Street, West Olive, MI 49460  
Wednesday, August 7, 2024  
8:00am – 9:30am



- I. Call to Order
- II. Establish Quorum
- III. Invocation
- IV. Approval of the Agenda for August 7, 2024
- V. Approval of the [Minutes](#) from June 5, 2024
- VI. Public Comment
- VII. New Business

A. Rillema Farm

**Motion:** To authorize staff to order a development rights appraisal of the Rillema farm at a not-to-exceed cost of \$3,000.

**Motion:** To approve and forward to the Board of Commissioners a Purchase Agreement for the development rights to the Rillema farm.

VIII. Discussion Items

- A. [Financial Review](#)
- B. [Farm Updates](#)
- C. Fundraising
  - i. Farms are the Tapas 2024!
  - ii. Culver's Share Night Recap
- D. [2025 Scoring Criteria](#) – Final Discussion
- E. Appraisal procurement update

IX. Old Business

- A. NRCS appeal

X. Next Meeting Date: September 4, 2024

XI. Adjournment

**UNOFFICIAL MINUTES****OTTAWA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION BOARD**

DATE: June 5, 2024

PLACE: Ottawa County Fillmore Street Complex, Conference Room C

PRESENT: Chair Josh Hucul, Mike Bronkema, Lukas Hill, Kelly Goward, Nate Pyle, Allison Miedema, Paul Windemuller (virtual)

ABSENT: Jasmine Kober (Ad Hoc Youth)

STAFF: Becky Huttenga, Julie Lamer, Paul Sachs

PUBLIC: Cliff Meeuwsen, Gary Boersen

**CALL TO ORDER / ESTABLISH QUORUM / INVOCATION**

The Ottawa County Agricultural Preservation Board met on Wednesday, June 5, 2024. Chair Hucul called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. A quorum was present to do business. Pyle gave the invocation.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND MINUTES**

APB 24-16	Motion: Approve the agenda for the June 5, 2024 Moved by Miedema	UNANIMOUS
APB 24-17	Motion: Approve the minutes from the May 1, 2024 meeting. Moved by Hill	UNANIMOUS

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Cliff Meeuwsen, Gary Boersen

**NEW BUSINESS**

A. 2024 Farm Selection

APB 24-18	Motion: To preserve the Lee Rillema property, 47 +/- acres in Blendon Township contingent on available funding. Moved by Hill	UNANIMOUS
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**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

A. FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Board reviewed the 2nd quarter Non-Endowed and Endowed fund

B. FARM UPDATES

Molyneux property was awarded ACEP funding then funding was rescinded. The County can and will appeal this decision. The Rasch appraisal came in at 917,000. The Board decided to get a 2<sup>nd</sup> appraisal. Huttenga will send an email update following receiving the 2<sup>nd</sup> appraisal. The Veldheer property has a practice in place so funded is confirmed with RCPP. Their appraisal went up slightly so we will ask RCPP for a small increase.

**UNOFFICIAL MINUTES****C. FUNDRAISING**

1. Farms are the Tapas 2024! Lamer shared the latest flyer and encouraged Board members to invite guests to attend the event.
2. Culver's Share Night. Huttenga shared that the event will be taking place in Kent County. If the event is successful, Ottawa County will organize an event. The date is June 25, 5pm-8pm, with 8 locations in Kent County participating. Culvers donates 10% of the proceeds from the evening.

**D. PRESERVATION SIGN SUGGESTION CHANGE ON PURCHASE AGREEMENT**

Lamer shared a concern regarding the preservation sign not being installed in the time listed on the purchase agreement. The Board discussed options and decided to leave the suggested timeline on the purchase agreement.

**E. SCORING CRITERIA WORK SESSION – CRITERION 2  
FUTURE SUSTANABILITY DISCUSSION**

Staff will use the updated scoring system and re-rank the last 2 years and compare how the new ranking may change the scores.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Lamer shared with the Board that staff will have a booth at the Farm to Zeel event in Zeeland on June 22 from 10am-3pm.

**NEXT MEETING**

August 7, 2024.

**ADJOURNMENT**

APB 24-19      Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 9:33 a.m.  
Moved by Miedema

UNANIMOUS

## CONSERVATION EASEMENT OPTION AGREEMENT

This Conservation Easement Option Agreement ("Agreement") is made and entered into this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024, by and between **LEE J. AND LISA E. RILLEMA**, husband and wife, whose address is 8088 New Holland Street, Zeeland, Michigan 49464 and the **COUNTY OF OTTAWA**, a political subdivision of the State of Michigan, on behalf of the **Ottawa County Farmland Preservation Board** ("County"), whose address is 12220 Fillmore Street, West Olive, Michigan 49460.

1. **Agreement.** In consideration of One and no/100 (\$1.00) Dollar, Sellers grant the County an exclusive option to purchase a Permanent Conservation Easement ("Easement") over, under, upon and across the following-described real property located in the **Township of Blendon, Ottawa County, Michigan**, to-wit:

See legal description attached as Exhibit A (the "Description").

2. **Term and Exercise of Agreement.** This Agreement shall remain in effect for a two (2) year term from the date of this Agreement first appearing above. The County may exercise the Agreement by giving written notice to the Sellers at the address set forth above, prior to the expiration of the term.

3. **Purchase Price.** The total estimated Purchase Price for the Easement, based on local data, is Five Hundred Seventeen Five Hundred (\$517,500) Dollars, payable in cash and/or collectible funds at closing, allocated as follows, contingent upon any changes in value pursuant to a future appraisal:

(i)	Grant funds (+/-49%):	\$253,575
(ii)	Sellers' contribution (+/-26%) by gift at closing	\$134,550
(iii)	County PDR funds (+/-25%):	<u>\$129,375</u>
	Total:	\$517,500

4. **Specific Performance.** The Sellers and the County have entered into this Agreement voluntarily, with the intent of each to encourage the permanent preservation of farmland. Upon signing this Agreement, the Sellers have agreed to donate, at the Sellers' option and discretion, not less than 26% (twenty-six percent) of the Purchase Price. Sellers further agree to pay a Grant Processing Fee of 2% (two percent) of the appraised fair market value of the easement.

5. **Closing.** A Closing of the purchase and sale of the Easement pursuant to this Agreement shall be held within a reasonable time after the County's exercise of this Agreement, at the offices of a title insurance company. Sellers shall execute and deliver at Closing an Easement in recordable form that is substantially similar to the document attached as Exhibit B, and such other documents as are typical for this matter and required by the title insurance company acting as Closing Agent for the parties. Upon conveyance of the Easement, Sellers shall pay all applicable real estate transfer taxes and the Grant Processing Fee. The County shall pay all other closing costs.

6. **Taxes.** Sellers shall pay all real property taxes. The County shall have no responsibility for real property taxes.

7. **Preserved Farm Sign.** Sellers agrees to install a Permanently Preserved Farm sign (sign and materials to be provided by the County) in a location visible from the road, secure any permits required for sign installation; install the sign within thirty days of the Closing date, and keep the sign in good repair.

8. **Binding Effect.** This Agreement becomes effective when signed by the parties and shall then apply to and bind the Sellers and the Sellers' heirs, executors, administrators, successors, and assigns.

9. **Waivers.** No failure or delay on the part of either of the parties to this Agreement in exercising any right, power or privilege set forth herein shall operate as a waiver thereof, nor shall a single or partial exercise of any rights, power or privilege preclude any other or further exercise of any other right, power, or privilege.

10. **Amendments.** Modifications, amendments, or waivers of any provision of this Agreement shall be made only by the written mutual consent of the parties.

11. **Complete Agreement.** This Agreement and any additional or supplementary documents incorporated herein by specific reference contain all the terms and conditions agreed upon by the parties, including any Statement of Just Compensation. No other agreements, oral or otherwise, regarding the subject property of this Agreement or any part thereof shall have the validity or bind any of the parties.

12. **Certification of Authority to Sign Agreement.** The persons signing this Agreement on behalf of the Sellers and the County certify by their signatures that they are authorized to sign this Agreement on behalf of the respective parties, and that this Agreement has been authorized by any organization represented by an individual signing this Agreement. This Agreement authorizes the County Administrator to sign all subsequent agreements, contracts, and documents related to creating the Easement on the Property.

LEE J. AND LISA E. RILLEMA  
SELLERS

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lee J. Rillema

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa E. Rillema

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
COUNTY OF OTTAWA

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a Notary Public, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024,  
by \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public  
Ottawa County, Michigan  
Acting in Ottawa County, Michigan  
My Commission Expires: \_\_\_\_\_

OTTAWA COUNTY

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Joe Moss, Chairperson,  
Ottawa County Board of Commissioners

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Justin F. Roebuck, Clerk/Register,  
Ottawa County

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
COUNTY OF OTTAWA

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a Notary Public, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024, by  
Joe Moss, Chairperson of the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners and Justin F.  
Roebuck, Ottawa County Clerk/Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public  
Ottawa County, Michigan  
Acting in Ottawa County, Michigan  
My Commission Expires: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Exhibit A**

Lands and premises located in the **Township of Blendon, County of Ottawa and State of Michigan**, described as follows, to-wit:

Parcel Number:

70-13-33-300-004

Legal Description:

The South<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of the West<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> of the Southwest<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, except commencing 1027.78 feet East of the Southwest corner, thence North 00 degrees 00 minutes 30 seconds West 1978.8 feet to the North line, thence East to the Northeast corner, thence South to the Southeast corner, thence West to beginning, Section 33, Town 6 North, Range 14 West, subject to easements and building and use restrictions of record.



## Agricultural Preservation Board

### Ottawa County Farmland Preservation Non-Endowed Fund Statement of Activity - 2nd Quarter 2024

#### Expenses

Date	Vendor	Description	Amount
5/30/2024	The Red Shed LLC	Reservation Fee (Tapas 2024)	\$600.00
5/30/2024	Peoples Company	Appraisal (Veldheer Supplemental)	\$1,180.00
6/5/2024	Lowes Home Centers	Sign Supplies (Holstege & Jonekrijg)	\$110.82
6/13/2024	Peoples Company	Appraisal (Rasch)	\$3,000.00
6/30/2024	Pitney Bowes Bank	Postage (3rd Quarter)	\$13.17
6/30/2024	CFHZ	Unrealized Gains/Losses	\$2,846.30
6/30/2024	CFHZ	Administrative Expenses/Fees	\$190.57

Total Quarter Expenses:

**\$7,940.86**

#### Revenue

Date	Description of Donation	Amount
4/17/2024	Farms are the Tapas Sponsorship	\$400.00
4/26/2024	Farms are the Tapas Sponsorship	\$400.00
4/29/2024	Farms are the Tapas Sponsorship	\$500.00
5/1/2024	Farms are the Tapas Sponsorship	\$400.00
5/1/2024	Farms are the Tapas Sponsorship	\$400.00
5/8/2024	Farmland Preservation Donation	\$25,000.00
5/15/2024	Farms are the Tapas Sponsorship	\$400.00
5/23/2024	Farms are the Tapas Sponsorship	\$400.00
6/3/2024	Farms are the Tapas Sponsorship	\$800.00
6/3/2024	Farms are the Tapas Sponsorship	\$250.00
6/10/2024	Farms are the Tapas Sponsorship	\$400.00
6/10/2024	Farms are the Tapas Sponsorship	\$800.00
6/17/2024	Farms are the Tapas Sponsorship	\$800.00
6/30/2024	Interest & Dividends	\$394.38
6/30/2024	Realized Gains/Losses	\$4,472.44
6/30/2024	Other additions/subtractions	\$1,282.50

Total Quarter Revenue:

**\$37,099.32**

Beginning Balance	<b>\$173,121.49</b>	3/31/2024
Expenses	<b>-\$7,940.86</b>	
Revenue	<b>\$37,099.32</b>	
Ending Balance	<b>\$202,279.95</b>	6/30/2024
Restricted Funds	<b>\$79,000.00</b>	Veldheer Farm \$79,000
Available Balance	<b>\$123,279.95</b>	



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## Agricultural Preservation Board

### Ottawa County Farmland Preservation Non-Endowed Fund #2 Statement of Activity - 2nd Quarter 2024

#### Expenses

Date	Vendor	Description	Amount

Total Quarter Expenses:

**\$0.00**

#### Revenue

Date	Description of Donation	Amount
6/30/2024	Interest & Dividends	\$8,030.16

Total Quarter Revenue:

**\$8,030.16**

Beginning Balance	<b>\$1,024,413.07</b>	3/31/2024
Expenses	<b>\$0.00</b>	
Revenue	<b>\$8,030.16</b>	
Ending Balance	<b>\$1,032,443.23</b>	6/30/2024
Restricted Funds	<b>\$0.00</b>	
Available Balance	<b>\$1,032,443.23</b>	



## Agricultural Preservation Board

### Ottawa County Farmland Preservation Endowed Fund

#### Statement of Activity - 2nd Quarter 2024

#### Expenses

Date	Vendor	Description	Amount
6/30/2024	CFHZ	Unrealized Gains/Losses	\$935.56

Total Quarter Expenses: **\$935.56**

#### Revenue

Date	Description of Donation	Amount
6/30/2024	Interest & Dividends	\$133.38
6/30/2024	Realized Gains/Losses	\$1,440.58

Total Quarter Revenue: **\$1,573.96**

Beginning Balance	<b>\$53,768.45</b>	3/31/2024
Expenses	<b>-\$935.56</b>	
Revenue	<b>\$1,573.96</b>	
Ending Balance	<b>\$54,406.85</b>	6/30/2024
Restricted Funds	<b>\$0.00</b>	
Available Balance	<b>\$54,406.85</b>	



## Agricultural Preservation Board

### Ottawa County Farmland Preservation Non-Endowed Fund

#### Statement of Activity - 3rd Quarter 2024

#### Expenses

Date	Vendor	Description	Amount

Total Quarter Expenses:

**\$0.00**

#### Revenue

Date	Description of Donation	Amount
7/11/2024	Farmland Preservation Donation	\$25.00
7/17/2024	Tapas Ticket Sales	\$491.70
7/18/2024	Tapas Ticket Sales	\$100.00
7/22/2024	Tapas Ticket Sales	\$91.70
7/25/2024	Tapas Ticket Sales	\$591.00
7/29/2024	Tapas Ticket Sales	\$100.00

Total Quarter Revenue:

**\$1,399.40**

Beginning Balance	<b>\$202,279.95</b>	6/30/2024
Expenses	<b>\$0.00</b>	
Revenue	<b>\$1,399.40</b>	
Ending Balance	<b>\$203,679.35</b>	7/31/2024
Restricted Funds	<b>\$79,000.00</b>	Veldheer Farm \$79,000
Available Balance	<b>\$124,679.35</b>	



## Agricultural Preservation Board

### Ottawa County Farmland Preservation Non-Endowed Fund #2 Statement of Activity - 3rd Quarter 2024

#### Expenses

Date	Vendor	Description	Amount

Total Quarter Expenses:

**\$0.00**

#### Revenue

Date	Description of Donation	Amount

Total Quarter Revenue:

**\$0.00**

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Beginning Balance	<b>\$1,032,443.23</b>	6/30/2024
Expenses	<b>\$0.00</b>	
Revenue	<b>\$0.00</b>	
Ending Balance	<b>\$1,032,443.23</b>	7/31/2024
Restricted Funds	<b>\$0.00</b>	
Available Balance	<b>\$1,032,443.23</b>	



## Agricultural Preservation Board

### Ottawa County Farmland Preservation Endowed Fund

#### Statement of Activity - 3rd Quarter 2024

#### Expenses

Date	Vendor	Description	Amount

Total Quarter Expenses:

**\$0.00**

#### Revenue

Date	Description of Donation	Amount

Total Quarter Revenue:

**\$0.00**

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Beginning Balance	<b>\$54,406.85</b>	6/30/2024
Expenses	<b>\$0.00</b>	
Revenue	<b>\$0.00</b>	
Ending Balance	<b>\$54,406.85</b>	7/31/2024
Restricted Funds	<b>\$0.00</b>	
Available Balance	<b>\$54,406.85</b>	



## Farm Updates – August 2024

### **Rillema Property** – Blendon Township

*+/- 47 acres; field crops; 2024 applicant; estimated value \$517,500*

- Viability for RCPP funding is being determined; purchase agreement ready for Board approval; appraisal scheduled for mid-August; landowner is scheduling survey

### **Molyneux Property** – Wright Township

*155.1 acres; field crops; 2023 applicant; appraised at \$1,239,000*

- Appeal hearing held July 2; USDA-NRCS reconsideration response expected in early August

### **Rasch Property** – Chester Township

*74.32 acres; apples and peaches; 2023 applicant; appraisal value unconfirmed*

- Original appraisal value = \$917,000; revised appraisal value = \$606,000

### **Veldheer Property** – Olive Township

*36 acres; cattle, sheep, and field crops; 2022 applicant; appraised at \$316,000*

- Parcel contract is executed and staff is preparing for closing in 2024

### **Jongekrijg Property** – Zeeland Township

*92.55 acres; beef cattle and field crops; 2022 applicant; preserved for \$981,000 in March 2024*

### **Holstege Property** – Zeeland Township

*38.1 acres; beef cattle and field crops; 2021 applicant; preserved for \$393,000 in February 2024*

### **Bronkema Property** – Olive Township

*123.12 acres; sheep, dry beans, and field crops; 2020 applicant; preserved for \$675,000 in December 2022*

### **DeHaan Property** – Blendon Township

*37 acres; beef cattle and field crops; 2019 applicant; preserved for \$315,000 in September 2021*

### **Jim Klein Property** – Chester Township

*168.2 acres; field crops; 2019 applicant; preserved for \$585,000 in November 2020*





## Farm Updates – August 2024

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**Kruithoff Property** – Chester & Wright Townships

*148.3 acres; hog & cash Crop; 2018 applicant; preserved for \$405,000 in July 2020*

**Klein Property** – Chester Township

*55.63-acres; beef cattle and field crops; 2017 applicant; preserved for \$160,000 in July 2018*

**Hehl Property** – Polkton Township

*34.9-acres; hogs, beef cattle, and poultry; 2015 applicant; preserved for \$87,000 in August 2016*

***Total acres preserved to date: 697.27***

## Justification for Changes to 2025 Scoring Criteria

### Criterion: ACEP Score

Changes(s): none

Purpose: Getting USDA-NRCS funding

Discussion notes: Without a dedicated funding stream, scoring well with funders must remain a priority over other characteristics of applicant properties.

### Criterion: Development Pressure

Changes(s): added rating for population density and combined with population growth for a single score.

Purpose: to better reflect communities that actually have higher development pressure. Our ordinance mandates that ‘threat of development’ is included in our scoring system.

Discussion notes: Many of the possible metrics to evaluate development pressure take time to develop and need to be updated regularly which takes significant staff time - preserving one property per year probably does not warrant that investment until the County establishes a dedicated funding stream for preservation. Metrics discussed included distance from sewer lines, land use cover change, building permit data, acres under PA116 agreements, zoning environment. Another program used distance to population centers. Other common indicators included distance to water lines and road frontage (captured on ACEP score). Adjacent land use was also used by other programs. We do also but we capture that under the Future Sustainability criterion

Therefore, using readily available and easy to update metrics such as population growth and population density was determined to be the right approach. Additionally, distance from water lines is an indicator that is reflected in the ACEP score.

### Criterion: Economic Impact

Changes(s) made: points are awarded for specialty crop production and direct marketing

Purpose: to simplify this criterion, which reflects the stated purpose of the Ordinance.

Discussion notes: not all communities score on economic impact, but our ordinance mentions economic impact numerous times throughout, so it must be included in our scoring. Those communities that did include it had widely varied methods, some very simple and some very complex. Because Ottawa has many specialty crop producers, and most of our current properties are commodity crops, we decided to use specialty crop production to reflect economic impact and to a lesser degree, we award points for marketing directly, which keeps dollars local, increases freshness and quality, lowers carbon footprint, and lowers shipping costs and shrink.

### Criterion: Conservation Practices

Changes(s) made: added Irrigation Management Plan and points for cropping and livestock systems in MAEAP rather than just points for MAEAP of any kind.

Purpose: to achieve more points with funders, protect water resources, reward applicants for being good stewards of the land being preserved.

Discussion notes: debate was given as to whether it made sense to award points for something that could easily change with a new operator and does not remain constant over time like soil type. But ultimately, enhancing the soil and keeping the soil in place on that property, as well as protecting the water the operation will require and the water the operation impacts, lend to the resiliency and future sustainability for farming. Also elevates the application for State funding.

#### Criterion: Future Sustainability for Agricultural Production

Changes(s) made: change 'master planned' to 'future land use planned'. Removed points for the 75%-99% level. Added points for succession/transfer plans.

Purpose: to avoid preserving land that is likely to become an 'island'; creating tracts and zones dedicated predominantly to ag.

Discussion notes: properties that have less than 100% adjacent ag parcels will still benefit from the points for future land use planned for ag, so the 75-99 level was removed. Added succession and land transfer in the scoring even though it will be hard to document. But it is only 10 points out of 600, and it gets it in the mind of every applicant. Applicants also get points on ACEP, but it is important enough that we are doubling down on the points for this criterion like we have for MAEAP.

#### Future Opportunities to Consider:

Elevate the opportunity to increase landowner match when conferring with applicants.

Ask Townships to consider donating when asking for approval, maybe match what the landowner donates.

In the ordinance, "specific criteria may be based on soil classifications (blueberry ground?) . . . agricultural income. But neither of these get us closer to State or Federal funding. The former could have the opposite effect, but the latter is doable and also speaks to the purpose stated in the ordinance.

Potentially reduce their land owner donation in exchange for a signed commitment to completing a succession/transfer plan within a defined timeframe.

#### Ideas for Reprioritization of Parcels:

Township match commitment

Engagement with Beginning Farmer and/or Land Transfer Navigator

"Demo project"

Engagement with Land Transfer Navigator

Blueberry ground that is highly productive but not necessarily prime/locally important/unique

Proximity to existing municipal sewer system

Allowing a monitoring well on property

Final thoughts:

Big parcels always beat little parcels with funders.

Add questions to our monitoring report regarding succession and transfer – this creates an opportunity to assist each year.

Our emphasis on development pressure negates properties that will score well with funders, e.g. Chester properties. How do we address development pressure and still select parcels that rank high for funding? Or do we require a higher match percentage from landowners with less dev pressure?