



DEXTER TOWNSHIP

OPEN SPACE AND LAND PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

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SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL EVENT OF THE OSLP COMMITTEE Thursday, March 3, 2022

In lieu of a formal meeting of the OSLP Committee, we are hosting a special educational event for farmland and natural area landowners to learn about their options to preserve their land when selling it.

7:00 Meet and Greet with refreshments:

Chairperson Laura Sanders introduced herself, welcomed everyone to the informational land preservation event, and introduced the committee members: Michelle Stamboulellis, Ginny Leikam, Mark Teicher, Dianne Monier, Kathy Bradbury, and Dale Lesser.

7:15 Introduction by Dale Lesser:

Dale opened with the question of what to do with the farm[land] when it is time to retire. Farmers and property owners struggle with the question of land use, zoning, and making enough on the farm to pay taxes. Farmland does not get back in services what it pays in taxes. Purchasing Development Rights gives the farmer an option to not sell to developers but in the future to sell to another farmer at a lower cost. PDR's keep the land in private hands, still producing and paying taxes, and thereby keeping it open space [rural character].

7:30 Overview of Farmland Preservation by Ginny Leikam:

Ginny gave an overview of what it means and how it works to protect the farm. She started with a history of land conservancy in Washtenaw County and noted those townships who are currently participating in PDR's. To show the impact of land conservancy in Washtenaw County she showed comparison maps of 2000 and 2020, about 19,000 acres preserved over that time period. When entering into a Property Rights Development agreement, the farmer still holds title to the property. The conservation restrictions remain with the property and are passed to the next owner(s). She explained the different terms that define easements. Ginny also touched on the monitoring and enforcing PDR's.

8:00 Introduction and conservation with farmers who have already preserved their land:

Tom Bloomer, Webster Township, and Bill Fishbeck, Superior and Salem Townships, commented on what preserving their farms meant to them and their families.

8:30 Questions and Answers:

What commercial businesses can occur in a PDR?

Anything that is Agricultural related: corn mazes, farm stands, u-pick, hunting, fishing, etc.
Wind and solar [structures] are permitted for farm use only, not for energy resale.

How is a property deemed eligible for purchasing of development rights?

Dexter Township Ordinance 37 contains a scoring matrix that is applied to each land application.

Where does the money come from to purchase open spaces and farmland?

There will be a ballot initiative in November to seek voter approval of a millage earmarked for purchasing development rights. In addition, there are State and Federal matching funds/grants available.

How much farmland is left in Dexter Township?

Approximately 4,000 to 5,000 acres of farmland and natural areas.

What farmland would be considered for development rights?

All open spaces can be considered for purchase of development rights but the priority would be open areas prime for development (housing developments).

What if the land doesn't perk?

Dexter Township does not perform perk tests but looks at the soil suitability.

Does a PDR prevent any building on the property?

It is addressed in the easement by doing a "Building Envelope" around existing structures, creating flexibility for different types of farming structures.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne Monier, Secretary

Janis Miller, Recording Secretary