



Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MEMORANDUM

TO: Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: Robert L. Tetens, Director
DATE: September 11, 2012
RE: Recommendation: Drake Property – Lodi Township

Background

In August 2012, a parcel of property located in Lodi Township was referred to the Washtenaw County Natural Areas Preservation Program for consideration as part of Round 12. The property, originally submitted to the City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt Program, is owned by the Drake Family, and comprises approximately 124 acres. The owners are interested in selling a conservation easement on the property.

The Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee, along with Parks and Recreation Commission staff and a representative from the Ann Arbor Greenbelt, visited the Drake Property. It is located on Waters Road, in the northwestern portion of the township. The parcel nominated for consideration is part of a large farm, with an additional acreage located on the north side of Waters Road. Approximately 50% of the nominated property is in active agricultural use. The undeveloped portion includes a high quality woodlot, exhibiting a diversity of tree types and ages. While some selective logging has taken place, there are a number of significant trees, including a substantial number of mature beech trees. In addition, the property contains a large button bush swamp and other associated wetland areas.

Discussion

Preservation of the Hornback Property is a high priority for both the Ann Arbor Greenbelt and Lodi Township. A collaborative or partnership approach has been proposed, with Lodi Township, Ann Arbor Greenbelt Program and NAPP all contributing. The property owners have also expressed a willingness to participate in the partnership, offering a 10% reduction in the price of the conservation easement as their contribution.

An appraisal of the property has been prepared by Williams & Associates, Inc., identifying a value of \$549,320 for a conservation easement on 124 acres (approximately \$4,430 / acre). The City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt Program is proposing a collaborative approach, with their contribution representing 80% of the price of the conservation easement or \$439,456. NAPP would contribute 20% of the cost or \$109,864. The Greenbelt Program would be the holder of the conservation easement. In return for contributing 20% of the cost of the conservation easement, NAPP ensures the property is protected and also guarantees public access.

Recommendation

Based upon the review by both staff and the Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee, it is my recommendation the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission authorize commitment of \$109,864 toward the purchase of a conservation easement on 124 acres of the Drake Property (Lodi Township), contingent upon completion of all necessary due diligence and final approval by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Attachments

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