



Update: Acme Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program

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On August 10, 2004 the Acme Township Board of Trustees adopted the Acme Township Farmland and Open Space Development Rights Ordinance. In November 2004 Acme Township voters approved a 10 year –1 mil assessment for the purpose of preserving Acme Township farmland via a purchase of development rights (PDR) program. This 2004 Acme Township Farmland PDR program has been very successful, protecting five working farms and over 810 acres of land identified as eligible for preservation in Acme Township’s Master Plan.

To date, the millage has generated approximately \$2.7 million dollars for farmland protection. These township funds have been matched nearly 1:1 by funds brought to the table by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy and the Federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program. Landowners themselves have contributed to the program by agreeing to sell their development rights to the township for less than full fair market value of their conservation easement.

Our Next Opportunity: 2014 Acme Farmland and Open Space Preservation Renewal

Demand for the Acme Township PDR program has increased over the last ten years. There are currently eight landowners involving thirteen farms and 1,200 acres in the Acme Township Farmland Preservation Zone who have made formal application for inclusion in the second round of Acme Township farmland preservation. Much of this farmland is situated along US-31 and includes more than a mile of frontage on that stretch of highway though the township. However, the township’s program funds to complete more projects and garner matching funds are now depleted. While matching funds to protect farmland remain available, especially through the 2014 Farm Bill, there is little opportunity to access those dollars without a committed source of local funding.

Given the success of the township’s PDR program to date and the continued interest in the program from Acme’s farm families, citizens have approached the township board requesting that the millage for the program be renewed. At their July 1, 2014 meeting, the township board unanimously passed a

resolution to place a question on the November 2014 ballot allowing Acme Township's citizens to determine if they would like to renew the program and continue its success. The renewal will continue the program at its current tax rate of .73 mils (the millage rate has been reduced over the years due to Michigan tax law) and thereby will not increase residents' present taxes.

For more information about Acme Township's farmland program, please contact Brian Bourdages, the Farmland Program Manager at the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy. Brian has managed the program for the township since 2006 through collaboration with the Conservancy. Brian can be reached at 231-929-7911 or by email at brian@gtrlc.org. Feel free to contact Township Supervisor Jay Zollinger with any questions as well. Jay can be reached at 938-1350 or at zollinger@acmetownship.org.

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