



**Washtenaw County**  
**Department of Planning and Environment**

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November 10, 2008

Michele Manning  
Northfield Township Clerk  
75 Barker Road  
P.O. Box 576  
Whitmore Lake, MI 48189

**RE: PA 116 Farmland Agreement Applications Review –Zeeb Farm –Northfield Township  
(116-PAB-859-2008, 116-PAB-860-2008)**

Dear Ms. Manning:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the two Public Act 116 Farmland Agreement Applications pertaining to the Zeeb Farm in Northfield Township. In accordance with PA 116, the Washtenaw County Planning Advisory Board can provide comments and forward them to the local governing body with jurisdiction (Northfield Township). Staff reviewed the Zeeb Farm PA 116 applications, and the County finds them to be consistent with planning goals and policies on the local and county levels, and provides the following comments:

1. Maintaining the property as an active agricultural use meets the goals of *A Comprehensive Plan for Washtenaw County*, specifically with respect to the Agriculture Recommendation 4.2.1 – “Encourage landowners to apply for local, state and federal programs and encourage local governments to identify funding methods for farmland preservation.”
2. The subject parcel is located in the Rural Residential land use designation found in Northfield Township’s Growth Management Plan, and within the Agricultural zoning designation. The land designated for Rural Residential future land use is described as being either “residential orientation or “agricultural orientation”, although agricultural activities are permitted within both. From the maps provided within the Township Plan, these parcels lie within the “residential orientation” subarea. The Township Plan has the objective to “Preserve a portion of Northfield Township for Rural Uses” which provides a location for agricultural activities. Rural Residential is encouraged in transition zones between agricultural, open space/conservation areas, and residential development. The plan provides language to encourage and approve applications for P.A. 116 in the rural residential use with the agricultural areas.
3. The application is further supported by the enrollment of nearby parcels to the east in the PA 116 program, supporting a large, contiguous agricultural area.
4. Sewer and water services are not planned to extend into the areas designated as rural residential. Although nearby areas to the north are designated for suburban residential density, the subject parcel does not appear to be experiencing development pressure and staff found no indication

that the area will receive water and sewer services within the life of the PA 116 agreement (10 years).

On behalf of the Washtenaw County Planning Advisory Board I would like to thank you for the opportunity to review this application, and your effort in promoting a shared vision for Washtenaw County.

Sincerely,

Patricia Denig, Planning Services Director  
Department of Planning and Environment  
AD/PD

Encl. Staff Report

DRAFT



# Washtenaw County Department of Planning and Environment

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**Date:** November 7, 2008

## **STAFF REPORT: PUBLIC ACT 116 FARMLAND AGREEMENT APPLICATION REVIEW**

Zeeb Farm, Northfield Township 116-PAB-859-2008, 116-PAB-860-2008

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### **Background**

Public Act 116 is an act that enables a landowner to enter into an agreement with the state, whereby the property owner agrees to keep the enrolled land for agricultural use, or use as open space, in return for a credit on the respective landowner's income tax. The minimum duration of an agreement is ten years, but it may be for a longer period (up to 99 years). Agreements can also be renewed.

The PA 116 act was rolled-up into the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act of 1994 (Act 451 of 1994, Part 361). Below are steps 1 through 5 of the application process that are relevant to the County:

1. An owner of land desiring a farmland development rights agreement (PA 116) may apply by filing an application with the local governing body (Township).
2. Upon receipt of the application, the local governing body (Township) shall notify the county planning commission or the regional planning commission and the soil conservation district agency.
3. An agency or local governing body receiving notice has 30 days to review, comment, and make recommendations to the local governing body with which the application is filed. These reviewing agencies do not have an approval or rejection power over the application.
4. After considering the comments and recommendations of the reviewing agencies and local governing bodies, the local governing body holding the application shall approve or reject the application within 45 days after the application is received, unless that period is extended by agreement of the parties involved.
5. If an application for a farmland development rights agreement (PA 116) is approved by the local governing body having jurisdiction, the local governing body shall forward a copy, along with the comments and recommendations of the reviewing bodies, to the state land use agency (Michigan Department of Agriculture). The application shall contain a statement from the assessing officer where the property is located specifying the current fair market value of the land and structures in compliance with the agricultural section of the Michigan state tax commission assessor manual. If action is not taken by the local governing body within the time prescribed or agreed upon, the applicant may proceed as provided in subsection (6) as if the application was rejected.

The Planning Advisory Board can make comments and forward those comments back to the local governing body (Township). Below is the staff review and comments on this PA 116 application:

## 1. Farm Information

Township: Northfield Section: 35 Owner(s): Kenneth & JoAnn Zeeb

<u>Size of Farm (acres):</u>	130.84	<u>Total Number of Acres being applied for:</u>	130.84
		<u>Acreage in Cultivation:</u>	105.6
		<u>Acreage in Grassland:</u>	0
		<u>All other acres: (swamp, woods, etc.)</u>	25.24 (wetlands and woods)

Existing Buildings 0

Residence: 0 Grain Drying Facility: 0

Barn: 0 Poultry House: 0

Tool Shed: 0 Milking Parlor: 0

Silo: 0 Milk House: 0

Grain Storage Facility: 0 Other: 0

Surrounding Land Use: According to the 2005 SEMCOG Land Use Inventory, the site is composed of Active Agriculture and is surrounded by agricultural land use to the east and west, with some residential across the street to the north and south. Woodlands are present on the site.

Number of Years Applied for: 10

## 2. Land Use Plans

Township Designation: Residential

Is agricultural use consistent?  YES  NO (Permitted as a use)

County Designation (Recommended Potential Future Landscapes): Rural

Is agricultural use consistent?  YES  NO

**3. Zoning District:** Agriculture

**4. Is sewer service anticipated during the life of this agreement?**  YES  NO

**5. Does the farm meet PA 116 technical requirements?**  YES  NO

## 6. Additional Comments:

The subject parcel is located in the Rural Residential land use designation found in Northfield Township's Growth Management Plan, and within the Agricultural zoning designation. The land designated for Rural Residential future land use is described as being either "residential orientation or "agricultural orientation", although agricultural activities are permitted within both. From the maps provided within the Township Plan, these parcels lie within the "residential orientation" subarea. The Township Plan has the objective to "Preserve a portion of Northfield Township for Rural Uses" which provides a location for agricultural activities. Rural

Residential is encouraged in transition zones between agricultural, open space/conservation areas, and residential development. The plan provides language to encourage and approve applications for P.A. 116 in the rural residential use with the agricultural areas.

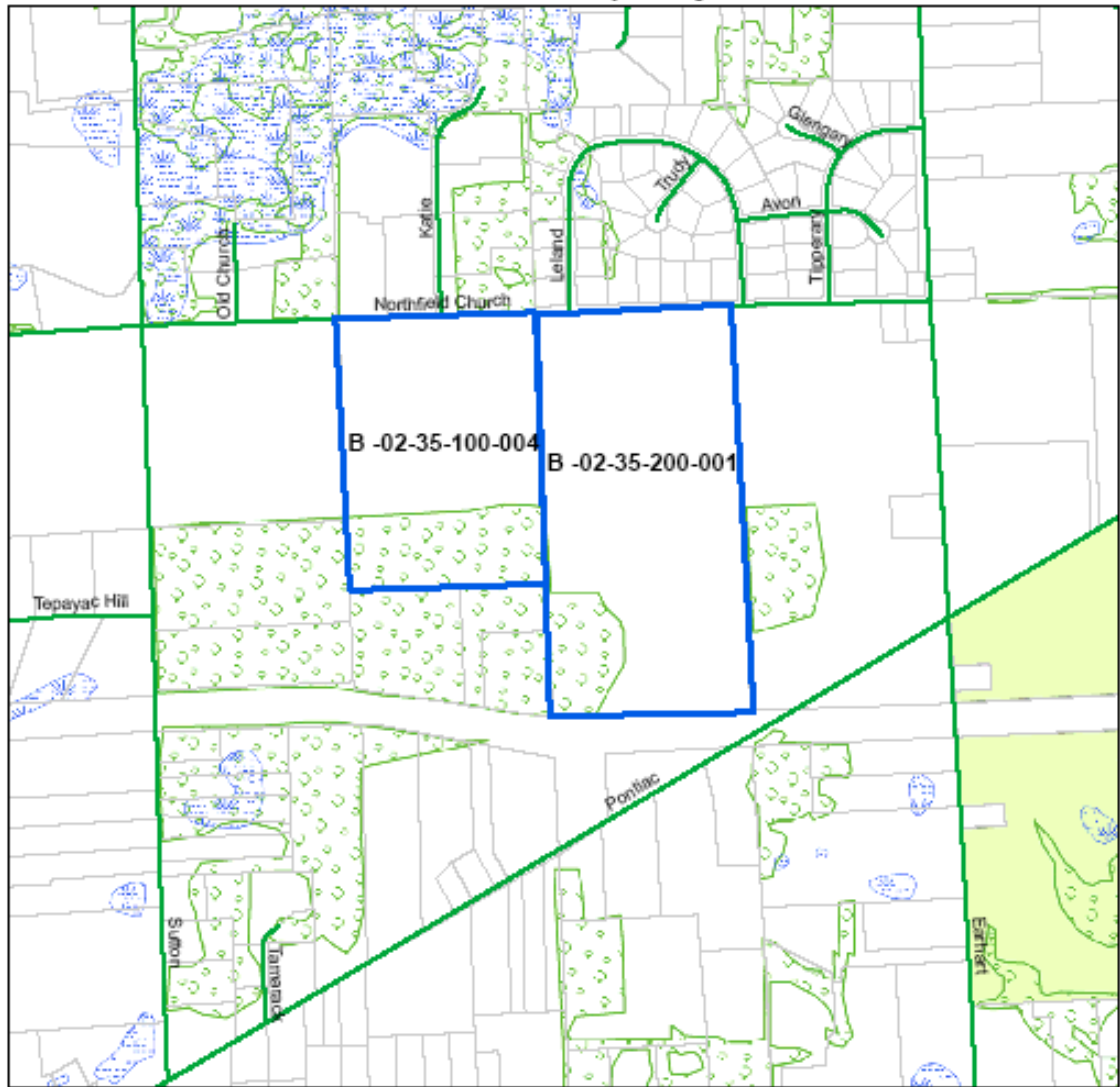
Sewer and water services are not planned to extend into the areas designated as rural residential. Although nearby areas to the north are designated for suburban residential density, the subject parcel does not appear to be experiencing development pressure and staff found no indication that the area will receive water and sewer services within the life of the PA 116 agreement (10 years).

According to *A Comprehensive Plan for Washtenaw County*, the Landscapes Goal is to “Promote an efficient pattern of development that maintains our sense of place, preserves our natural resources and reduces the effects of sprawl.” Further, Landscapes Objective 3 states “Maintain our rural sense of place through land use techniques, economic viability of agriculture and alternatives that provide rural tax base for local governments.” In addition this also supports Agriculture Objective #2 which identifies the following Agricultural Recommendation that supports these efforts:

- 2.1: “Encourage landowners to apply for local, state and federal programs and encourage local governments to identify funding methods for farmland preservation.”

Planning and Environment Department staff finds this PA 116 application consistent with planning goals and policies on the local and county level, and supports this application.

# Zeeb Property



116-PAB-859-2008, 116-PAB-860-2008

Washtenaw County Department of Planning and Environment

## STAFF REPORT

00.0388075 0.15 Miles  
[Scale bar]

### Legend

- Roads
- Wetlands
- Woodlands
- PA116

