



NEWS

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SADC Purchases Development Rights to 126-Acre Warren County Farm

WHITE TWP. -- The State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) has purchased the development rights to the former Caruso farm, sealing the preservation of the 126-acre farm that had been purchased by White Township to protect it from development, Agriculture Secretary Charles M. Kuperus announced today.

“White Township stepped up to the plate to purchase this farm to eliminate the possibility of development, then applied to us to sell the development rights,” said Secretary Kuperus. “This kind of proactive move is a model for towns everywhere that are on the front line in the battle against sprawl. We applaud White Township for their efforts and are pleased to partner with them in this preservation of the Caruso farm.”

The township purchased the farm outright in December 2003 for \$780,000 from a developer who planned to build more than 30 houses on the property. After a zoning change affected those plans, the developer approached the township to offer the land for sale. Once the township purchased the farm, it applied to the SADC to sell the development rights. Yesterday, that transaction was completed, with the SADC paying White Township \$673,716 for the development rights.

When development rights are sold under the Farmland Preservation Program, landowners continue to own the land but agree the land will be permanently maintained for agricultural use. The farmland may be sold, but the deed restrictions run with the land and all future owners must abide by them. White Township plans to resell the permanently preserved Caruso farm at auction at a later date to be determined.

The township purchased the farm using funds collected from its 2-cent open space preservation tax. White Township Mayor Walter J. Menegus credited the township’s Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee – led by Chair Tim Matthews and Nevitt Duveneck – for pursuing the sale of the development rights to the SADC.

“We want to preserve as many farms and acres as we can,” said Mayor Menegus. “Once it’s gone, it’s built forever. We need to keep up this type of partnership.”

The State Agriculture Development Committee administers the state Farmland Preservation Program. To date, more than 1,200 farms covering more than 134,000 acres have been permanently preserved statewide, including 101 farms covering 12,491 acres in Warren County.

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