

Farmland Conservation Easement Commission

**Jefferson County Courthouse, Room 202
320 S. Main St.
Jefferson, WI 53549**

Monday, January 12, 2009 12:00 pm

Members: John Molinaro (Chairman), Margaret Burlingham (Vice Chairman), Steve Nass (Secretary), Daphne Holterman, Carlton Zentner and County Board Chairman Sharon Schmeling, ex-officio.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Molinaro at 12:03 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Commission members present included Molinaro, Schmeling, Holterman, Burlingham, Zentner, and Nass. County staff present were Steve Grabow (UW-Extension) and Michelle Staff (Zoning).

3. Certification of Compliance With Open Meetings Law Requirements

Staff verified that the meeting was being held in compliance with open meetings law requirements.

4. Review of Agenda

No changes were proposed.

5. Review and Approval of December 8, 2008 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Burlingham, seconded by Holterman to approve the December 8, 2008. **Motion carried** on a voice vote with no objection.

6. Public Comment

Sue Marx was present to express her concern about the property on CTH D which the County owns. She believes this is an opportunity for the County to preserve the farmland and voluntarily put a conservation easement on the property. Molinaro stated that is a discussion for the Finance Committee to discuss which it is on the agenda for Thursday. Molinaro encouraged Marks to be at the Thursday meeting to express her concerns.

7. Possible land application for donation of Farmland Conservaiton Easements

None

8. Discuss possilbe grant requests from other organizations

Holterman contact Molinaro on possible grant monies from the Jefferson County Agria Business club. Holterman applied for \$500 of grant money for public

outreach to the farm community. The Commission may have to work at the Agria business booth at the County Fair. Motion made by Holertman approving the grant application, seconded by Zentner. Motion carried on a voice vote no objection.

9. Development of Commission Overall Strategy/Work Plan Review

Includes items 10 and 11. Molinaro sent a letter to every Town chairman encouraging them to start up their own Farmland Commission. Members of the Commission have already talked to several towns such as Jefferson, Watertown, Hebron, Palmyra and Oakland.

Nass arrived 12:20 pm.

Burlingham stressed the need to develop and move the program forward. She stressed that the Commission needed to gain public support, work with other groups, educate the County Board, etc. Burlingham stated that Gather Waters recommended that the County have an ordinance and resolution for the program. Tom Lyons stated that Bob Wagner from the American Farmland Trust would be in our area and may be able to talk to the Commission. Lyons also stated there are other organizations that give our grants to the local community such as United Bank in Cambridge. Molinaro stated that the Commission has a lot of information but it's in many different places. Burlingham suggested we build on what the commission has already accomplished such as the fact sheet, the interest form, criteria for donation, purchase criteria, etc. She explained to the Commission that they needed outside help that would be willing to work with the Commission. Nass stated it is important to weight the criteria so it is not perceived by the public that the Commission is "playing favorites". Molinaro would like to base it on the merits of the property.

Grabow handed out his proposed strategy scenario for the Commission. He is suggesting that the Commission develop an overall work plan. He also believes there should be a framework with 5 to 6 foundations; technical research, education, policy initiatives, coalition building and planning strategies. See attached detailed recommendations from Professor Grabow.

Burlingham again stressed that we need someone who has done this process and need them to come and advise the Commission. It was discussed if the Commission could hire outside help. This would need a general scoping document defining the type of duties this person would be hired to do. Grabow talked about the scoping process.

Lyons suggested that the Commission sit down with Bob Wagner and present to him all materials the Commission has worked on. Then ask Wagner what needs to be worked on. Burlingham and Zentner volunteered to meet with Wagner and report back to the Commission. Commission would like this item put on the next

agenda but will need to reschedule the meeting due to the fact that not all members could be present.

10. Review and weight Criteria for the purchase of Conservation Easements

This item also includes number 12 on the agenda. The Commission discussed having focus groups. Having one map with all the criteria on one map then take a draft to the public.

11. Suggestions for the Next Agenda

The Commission will work on work plan for this year, start a document on how the PACE program is going to run and scope how to develop the plan. Commission ask Grabow if he would help them with this process. Grabow agreed.

12. Future Meeting Dates

The February meeting will be moved to February 16th at 2:30pm Room 202 with the next meeting to be March 9th at 12:00 pm Room 202

13. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:35 p.m. was made by Nass, seconded by Holterman. Motion carried on a voice vote with no objection.

***The Commission may discuss and/or take action on any item specifically listed on the agenda.

Individuals requiring special accommodations for attendance at the meeting should contact the County Administrator at 920-674-7101 24 hours prior to the meeting so appropriate arrangements can be made.

MJS