

Farmland Conservation Easement Commission

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

Wednesday, December 8, 2010 8:30 am

Members: Margaret Burlingham (Chair), Amy Rinard (Vice-Chair), Mariah Hadler (Secretary), Steve Nass and Blane Poulson.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Burlingham at 8:34 a.m.

2. Roll Call

Commission members present included Burlingham, Rinard, Nass, and Molinaro (ex-officio). Hadler and Poulson were absent. County staff present was Mark Watkins (Director of Land and Water Conservation), Andy Erdman (Director of Land Information), Tom Wollin (County Surveyor), Phil Ristow (Corporation Counsel) and Michelle Staff (Zoning Technician, Zoning Department).

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 change to the agenda.

5. Public Comment

None

6. Review & Approval of the November 10, 2010 minutes

Motion by Nass, seconded by Rinard to approve the November 10, 2010 minutes with the clarification that Rinard was not working with the Town of Ixonia for a AEA but simply had contacted Perry Goetsch, Town of Ixonia Chairperson to make them aware of the program and, if interested, to contact the Ashippun/Oconomowoc AEA. **Motion carried** on a voice vote with no objection and as amended.

7. Correspondence

None

8. Discuss Budget in reference to monitoring the Conservation Easements

Burlingham gave a brief background of the required monitoring for any conservation easements purchased by the County. Burlingham was concerned because Land and Water Conservation could not do the base reports this year. Welsh and Burlingham did the initial inspection and report. Burlingham asked Watkins if his department was still willing to monitor the easements. Watkins stated that his department could not do it this fall because of the new working lands and NR151 requirements but once these programs were underway, by next year his department is more than willing to monitor the easements.

9. Discuss DATCP/Federal Funding, Survey, grant requirements for the Lea and Schultz Conservation Easements

Welsh stated that the County must close on these easements by April 18th, or new appraisals will be required by the Federal government. The easement language has been finalized by the State of Wisconsin and the Federal government. Welsh stated that if there are no changes, the governmental units will sign them without delay. If there are changes to the easement language, it will delay the easements at least another 6 weeks. The Commission briefly discussed the easement language in general with Ristow. It was agreed upon by the Commission that no

changes would be made to the easements so they could be signed without delay. Welsh explained that the closing costs and purchase of the easements must come from the County at time of closing then will be reimbursed by the State and Federal government. The final easement resolution for purchase must be put on the February or March County Board agenda so the easements may close by April.

Welsh informed the Commission that Lea would like to exclude the second existing homestead with possibly four acres from the easement for possible separation from the farm in the future. Staff and Ristow explained the zoning implications of the possible split and explained that there will be changes to the zoning ordinance within the next year. Wollin will establish a metes and bounds description for the easement. Welsh will contact Lea and inform him that Wollin will be coming out to the property and to call Staff with any questions on zoning.

Welsh stated that Schultz has until December 15th to clean up the property. Welsh also informed the Commission that the easement language stated that Schultz cannot dump materials on this property in the future. Burlingham will call Schultz to inform him of an inspection with Nass, Staff and herself on December 15th at 1:00 pm. If this property is not in compliance, the County will not purchase the easement.

10. Discussion, Ranking and possible action on PACE applications

Welsh explained that Hunn was in the County's urban service area and would not qualify for the state grant monies. Burlingham will call Hunn and explain the situation. Zastrow does not have more than 50% of tillable lands due to the fact that most of it is in WRP. The Commission discussed that the Zastrow land would be a good candidate for the Stewardship program through the GHA monies, considering that he is surrounded by Department of Natural Resources lands.

Welsh handed out the ranking worksheet with each application ranked according to the Commission's criteria and another ranking of applications with the State criteria. There was discussion on ranking between Welsh and Commission members. Welsh explained that the Commission will receive more points with the Natural Heritage Land Trust as co-holders but it would require an \$8,000 fee for each easement. Burlingham asked if Natural Heritage would reduce that price if the County would be monitoring the easements. Welsh stated that he would report back to the Natural Heritage board and get back to the Commission on this request.

Welsh asked the Commission which applications they would like to pursue. All applicants scored high with the State criteria. The Commission suggested that they send all remaining applicants a draft easement and ask for the \$750 administrative fee and see who is still interested. Appraisals will be done of the properties by early February for the April applicants' deadline. It was agreed that the applicants will be invited to an information session at the next Commission meeting. Burlingham will call all the applicants plus write a letter to them. Burlingham asked Staff to mail out the ranking packet to Hadler and Poulson.

11. Update from Steering Committee from the 2010 Farmland Preservation Plan

None

12. Update on Agricultural Enterprise Zones proposed by DATCP

None

13. Suggestions for the Next Agenda

None

14. Future Meeting Dates

January 10th, 2010 at 8:30am

February 14th, 2010 at 8:30am

15. Work Plan, Outreach and Communications Implementation

- A) Discussion and development of application for Non-Profits to apply for Grant Monies from Jefferson County.**
- B) Discuss Mapping of State PACE Criteria.**
- C) Discuss Commission member roles.**

D) Discuss Waupaca County communication concerning Conservation Easements

Burlingham handed out an example of the State's application for non-profits to apply for conservation easement grants and suggested that Commission members read it for next time. At the next meeting there will be further discussion.

It was suggested that Professor Paulsen be contacted to map the state criteria with the LESA system. Burlingham will contact Professor Grabow to see the best way to get in touch with Professor Paulsen. It would help with public outreach.

Molinaro stated that Commission members' terms are for 3 years. The County members are appointed every two years at the time of election. Molinaro needs to appoint Burlingham for another 3 years.

Burlingham called Greg Blonde from Waupaca County, UW Extension. Burlingham explained that Waupaca County requires a 50% donation of the easements with the other half being funded by the Wisconsin Working Lands grant monies. Waupaca County does not have any budget to pursue these. In addition, they did get 41 applications for the next application process. Waupaca County has big vegetable farms and the landowners wanted to continue to expand their farming operations. Blonde suggested that the two Commissions meet to compare notes on their two programs.

18. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 a.m. was made by Nass, seconded by Rinard. Motion carried on a voice vote with no objection.

Minutes transcribed by Michelle Staff, Zoning Department

Mariah Hadler -- Farmland Conservation Easement Commission Secretary Date