

Farmland Conservation Easement Commission

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

Monday, March 8, 2010 12:00 pm

Members present: John Molinaro (Chairman), Steve Nass (Secretary), Daphne Holterman, and County Board Chairman Sharon Schmeling (ex-officio). County staff present was Mark Watkins (Land and Water Conservation Dept.) and Phil Ristow, Corporation Counsel. Also, Jim Welsh, Natural Heritage Land Trust.

Absent: Margaret Burlingham (Vice Chairman)

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, Nass, Schmeling, and Holterman.

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

Items 8 (Discussion and possible action on monitoring requirements) and 13 (Discussion and possible action on MOA) were moved up on the agenda to be addressed first.

5. Public Comment

Sue Marx presented a copy of the Ag Enterprise Area (AEA) application several landowners have submitted to the state. They will hear back from the state mid-year and may be accepted into the state pilot program

6. Review and Approval of Dec. 14, 2009, and Feb. 8, 2010 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Holterman, second by Molinaro to approve the Dec. 14, 2009 meeting minutes and minutes from Feb. 8, 2010 meeting. **Motion carried** on a voice vote with no objection.

7. Correspondence

A PACE program application from J. Hillmann had been received after the application deadline and will be retained for the second application round. Molinaro will send a letter to landowner with this information.

8. Discussion and possible action on monitoring requirements

In order to receive state and federal funds, the county must have in place a process to monitor the conservation easements. Land and Water Conservation Department's (LWCD) Mark Watkins offered to do this as they complete about 300 farm/field inspections annually for other programs. He will get a checklist from Jim Welsh and they will work together to see that this happens. Development rights and other items will be monitored. Each property will have also have a baseline report prepared and LWCD will store these records.

9 or #13??

13. Discussion and possible action on MOA with Corporation Counsel Phil Ristow

Two checks were received, one from Soleska and one from Lea for \$1000 each towards the appraisals that must be done on their properties. A check had not yet been received from Schultz; Jim Welsh will contact him.

Four bids for the “package” of 3 appraisals came in ranging from \$4700 up to \$9000. Details were listed in separate memo from Jim Welsh. **Motion by Molinaro**, second by Nass, to accept low bid from Tenny Albert of \$4,700 to perform 3 appraisals in 60 days. The commission accepted the offer by Mark Watkins at LWCD to write up a purchase order for the lowest bid with Tenny Albert.

The commission’s goal with the landowner payments was to secure a portion of the appraisal cost beforehand and since the bid came in lower than expected, each landowner will only have to pay \$873 in this instance. Our policy will be to ask landowners for 50% of the appraisal cost as an application fee, not to exceed \$1,000. **Motion by Nass**, second by Holterman; motion carried on a voice vote with no objection.

Welsh will ask Schultz to pay \$873 before the appraisal is done on his property. The other two landowners will receive refunds from the county.

The Drumlin Area Land Trust is working with applicant 4, Brattset.

Ristow left the meeting.

9. Discussion and possible action on PACE applications

Jim Welsh passed out a memo detailing new deadlines for the state and national application process for matching funds. Some dates are moved up, but it will allow applicants to apply for both programs in 2010.

Welsh also provided a detailed memo listing easement term details from NRCS/USDA. One of the applicants had several questions about specific terms in the conservation easements. Welsh will clarify several issues as we proceed.

Finally, Welsh presented a memo asking for numerous items so our landowners’ applications will maximize points available for the state Working Lands Initiative PACE program. Molinaro will help secure resolutions of support from various towns and the county. Holterman and Burlingham will assist with creating the documents citing ag infrastructure. Welsh will contact Land Information to secure other needed items.

Motion by Nass, second by Molinaro to create a resolution from this commission to present to the county board at the April meeting for approval. It will support the county’s applications to the state’s Working Lands Initiative (WLI) PACE program.

10. Update and Discussion on new LESA maps

Professor Poulson continues to work on this and will be asked to attend the next meeting with a report.

11. Discussion Agricultural Enterprise Areas proposed by DATCP

Marx’s AEA proposal (noted in public comment) was submitted to the state and included a letter of support written by County Board Chair Schmeling.

12. Discussion on Chapter 91, State Statues, Farmland Preservation Program

There has been no action on these.

14. Suggestions for the Next Agenda

Discussion and possible action on PACE applications, update and discussion on new LESA maps, discussion of Agricultural Enterprise Areas proposed by DATCP, Farmland Preservation Program, monitoring requirements including a list of county agribusinesses.

15. Future Meeting Dates

- a. Wed. April 21, 2010 at Noon, Room 202
- b. Mon. May 10, 2010 at Noon, Room 202
- c. Mon. June 14, 2010 at Noon, Room 202

16. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Nass, second by Holterman. Motion carried on a voice vote with no objection.
Meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m

Minutes by Daphne Holterman