

Farmland Conservation Easement Commission

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

Monday, January 10, 2011 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 8:36 a.m.

2. Roll Call

Commission members present included Burlingham, Rinard, Nass, Hadler, Poulson, and Molinaro (ex-officio). County staff present was Mark Watkins (Director of Land and Water Conservation) 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

Burlingham stated that the Federal Government reissued the tax incentives for the donation of buildable lots. Molinaro stated that Tom Lyon's son, Jeff Lyon, was appointed by Secretary Ben Brancel as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

6. Review & Approval of the December 8, 2010 minutes

Motion by Rinard, seconded by Hadler to postpone to the February 14, 2011 meeting to give the Commission time to read them.

7. Correspondence

Burlingham was to write a letter to DNR asking them to reconsider their 5-year time limit that states that properties acquired by Stewardship Fund must cease agricultural practices. Burlingham reviewed the grant and didn't see that language in it and found out that this is a DNR policy. Burlingham will check further into this issue.

8. Discuss DATCP/Federal Funding, Survey, Grant Requirements for the Lea and Schultz Conservation Easements

Burlingham, Nass and Staff inspected the Schultz property. It snowed that day but it appeared the property had been cleaned up. Watkins stated that Mr. Schultz does not have a nutrient management plan and he will not be able to sign the Certificate of Compliance until that is completed. Watkins stated Lea has a slight drainage issue but is confident that it will be resolved. Burlingham will contact Corporation Counsel Phil Ristow on the purchase agreements and request escrow closing of FRPP funds no later than February 17th.

9. Discussion, Ranking and possible action on PACE applications

Each landowner will need to submit a \$750 application fee with the new applications. Currently, we have Neupert and Wilke, with Hookstead and Gerner interested. Hillman has lands in WRP and has less than 50%

tillable lands so will not meet that requirement. Watkins stated that Hookstead and Wilke conservation plans are released and Gerner needs additional lands to be planned. Watkins stated that all the requirements of the new farmland program such as a nutrient management plan, farm visits, etc. must be completed before they issue a Certificate of Compliance. Burlingham stated that the Commission needs to contract out bids for appraisals.

Motion was made by Hadler and seconded by Rinard to delegate the authority in approving the bids for the appraisals to Margaret Burlingham, Chair of the Farmland Conservation Easement Commission. Motion passed on a voice vote with no objection.

Resolutions for the new applications must be taken to the County Board on February 8th. In addition, the Commission needs to contact the Towns and get on their agendas to approve resolutions. Molinaro was going to contact the Town of Oakland. Burlingham was going to contact Towns of Cold Spring and Koshkonong. Nass was going to contact the Town of Waterloo. There will be individual meetings at the farms and a base line review. See Welsh memo for additional steps for the new applications. Molinaro will sign the grant applications.

10. Discuss co-applicant/co-holder with Natural Heritage Land Trust

Burlingham gave a brief history on how the Natural Heritage Land Trust has provided services to the Commission in the past. Last year, Natural Heritage Land Trust added their organization on the grant application but this year they are asking to be co-holder with a fee of \$8,000 per application. Commission discussed the benefits of their being co-holders, in addition to the Federal and State governments being co-holders.

Motion was made by Nass, and seconded by Poulson to keep the Natural Heritage Land Trust as a consultant and not a co-holder for these new applications. The motion was passed on a voice vote with no objection.

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

Further information will be given to the Commission when available.

12. Update on Agricultural Enterprise Zones proposed by DATCP

None

13. Future Meeting Dates

February 14th at 12:30 pm

March 14th at 12:30 pm

April 11th at 8:30 am

14. 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.

Commission discussed that there should be applications available for non-profits to apply for monies. Burlingham will review other applications and present a draft application for next meeting. Burlingham asked Steve Grabow to contact Professor Kurt Paulsen, but Grabow did not hear back from him. Burlingham will follow up.

15. Suggestions for the Next Agenda

Remove number 10 and 16 and we will have two months of minutes on the next agenda.

BREAK 9:45 am to 10:00 am

16. Applicants information session 10 am

The Commission introduced themselves to the applicants. Burlingham went over Welsh’s “next steps for 2010 accepted applicants” document. Burlingham explained the \$750 administration fee. She explained that all the applicants need to have a compliant conservation plan and possible nutrient management plan with Land Conservation. Burlingham explained current tax deductions for donation of conservation easements. Burlingham asked if the applicants have any questions for the Commission. Questions asked were if the main homestead has to be a part of the easement and could you split off and sell existing farmstead? Can you rebuild an existing home on the easement? Can you have an existing game farm on the easement? Can all lands with the game farm be part of the easement? What if you are cropping over 50% of the lands but in the future it drops to less than 50%, is that a violation of the easement? Burlingham explained that she will ask these questions to the State and NRCS and get the answers back to each of the applicants. Burlingham briefly explained the point systems to the applicants.

17. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:30 a.m. was made by Hadler, 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