

# **Farmland Conservation Easement Commission Minutes**

**Jefferson County Courthouse, Room 112  
320 S. Main St.  
Jefferson, WI 53549**

**Monday, August 8, 2011 12:30 p.m.**

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

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Burlingham at 12:30 p.m.

**2. Roll Call**

Commission members present included Burlingham, Rinard, Hadler, Nass, and John Molinaro (ex-officio.) Member absent was Poulson. County staff present was Michelle Staff and Mark Watkins.

**3. Certification of Compliance with Open Meetings Law Requirements**

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

**4. Review of Agenda**

Burlingham stated that Mr. Everett's presentation (item 22) has been cancelled.

**5. Public Comment**

No Public Comment

**6. Review & Approval of the July 11, 2011 minutes**

**Motion** by Rinard, seconded by Hadler to approve the July 11, 2011 minutes. The motion was passed on a voice vote, with no objection.

**7. Correspondence**

Letter was received by John Molinaro from DATCP, that they will no longer be funding the easement on Schultz's property.

**8. Discussion on 2012 Budget**

Molinaro explained the 2012 budget for the Commission, in relationship to grants for possible easements. It was noted that the Lea easement should be completed by the end of the year. Molinaro asked the Commission if they expect additional grants for the 2012 budget year. Ron Howard from NRCS explained that there were still monies available from the Ranch Land's Protection Grant which would fund up to 50% of an easement purchase. Molinaro will estimate 2012 possible grant monies the Commission may receive from grants for potential of three easements.

**9. Discussion and possible action on Klaus & Susan van Zanten interest form**

The Commission has not heard from the van Zantens. Burlingham will contact them and see if they are still interested.

**10. Discussion and possible action on County/DATCP/Federal Funding and grant requirements for the 2010 Lea Conservation Easement.**

Welsh stated that the appraisal was updated and has not changed. In addition, Lea is compliant with Land Conservation and has completed the hazard assessment report. Currently, the DATCP and NRCS are working on the easement language. Welsh will send the final easement document to Attorney Phil Ristow.

**11. Discussion and possible action on County/DATCP/Federal Funding grant requirements for the 2010 Schultz Conservation Easement**

Howard explained that a site visit was conducted by DATCP and NRCS that revealed that additional junk items were placed on the property from last year's visit. Howard explained that NRCS has photos from the previous visit. Howard explained that if Jefferson County is unable to enforce the easement, NRCS is responsible for enforcement of the easement.

Nass arrived at 12:57 pm.

In addition, Howard explained that their programs would be audited. Howard went on to explain that the junk on the property is a public relations problem and there is accountability on how grant monies are spent. Howard stated that NRCS will remove grant funds for the Schultz easement and will be sending an updated grant notice to Molinaro.

**12. Discussion, Ranking and possible action on 2011 PACE applications**

As stated above, NRCS does have grant monies available for funding up to 50% of an easement but the County would have to fund at least 25% of the easement. The Commission discussed the possibility of funding the other 50% percent or possibly less with a donation from the landowner. Currently the Commission has 3 possible easements on hold (Gerner, Neupert and Wilke) that could be further pursued. Welsh passed out a sheet of possible conservation easement costs if land owners donated some of the easement costs. Mr. Gerner and Mr. Neupert were at the meeting and were given a sheet for their review. It was noted that Wilke was willing to donate some of the easement costs. It was discussed that if the Commission moves ahead with the easements, they will need to get appraisals and stress to the applicants that the application fee will not be refunded since the fee will go to appraisal costs. **Motion** made by Nass, **seconded** by Rinard to proceed with the appraisals for Gerner, Neupert and Wilke. Motion passed on a voice vote, with no objection.

**13. Discussion and action on returning Dan Hookstead's application fee**

Burlingham explained that Mr. Hookstead would like to have his \$750 application fee returned due to the fact that he would like a 100% funded easement. **Motion** made by Nass, **seconded** by Hadler to return Mr. Hookstead's \$750 application fee. Motion passed on a voice vote, with no objection.

**14. Discussion and action on request from the Land Trust Network for County Board resolution to support Edward Soleska's Agricultural Conservation Easement**

Martine Koepfel from the Land Trust Network presented to the Commission a resolution of support which their organization is pursuing. Koepfel explained easement and lands to Commission. **Motion** made by Nass, **seconded** by Rinard to forward resolution to the County Board, contingent upon Attorney Phil Ristow reviewing resolution. Motion called on a voice vote, with no objection.

**15. Easement Donation Application from Tom & Margaret Burlingham in the Town of Palmyra**

Burlingham stated that the appraiser completed the appraisal and her attorney is working with Attorney Ristow on the language. Next month a resolution will be brought to the Zoning Committee and the Farmland Commission because the County Board meeting is a day after the Farmland Commission meeting.

**16. Discussion and possibly take action on Federal Budget**

It was just discussed that donation tax credits may be revised or eliminated with the next federal budget.

**17. Update from the Steering Committee on the 2010 Farmland Preservation Plan**

The plan and ordinance are at DATCP for certification.

## **18. Update on Agricultural Enterprise Areas by DATCP**

It was noted that Burlingham was the only landowner who has applied for an agreement with DATCP.

## **19. Work Plan, Outreach and Communications Implementation**

### **A) Work Plan**

The work plan timeline was only until June 2011 and needs to be updated.

### **B) Discuss and possibly take action on brochures, signs, and publicity.**

Burlingham is still working with Slewfoot on the signs. Hopefully they will be completed by the next meeting.

### **C) Discussion on farm-related events and Jefferson County Fair materials**

Lea stated there was a sheep show at the County fairgrounds, otherwise, no other events for the Commission.

### **D) Land Trust Alliance National Land Conservation Conference October 13-16.**

Burlingham will not be available to attend the conference but she would strongly recommend that someone from the Commission attends.

## **20. Future Meeting Dates**

Burlingham will not be at the October 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## **21. Suggestions for the Next Agenda**

Burlingham suggested that the work plan be reviewed.

## **22. Jeffrey Everett Presentation-N/A**

## **23. Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:45 a.m. was made by Rinard, seconded by Nass. Motion carried on a voice vote with no objection.

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Mariah Hadler -- Farmland Conservation Easement Commission Secretary      Date

Minutes done by Michelle Staff, Zoning Department