

## Minutes of the Farmland Conservation Easement Commission

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

**Monday, January 9, 2012 8:30 a.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 8:36 a.m.
2. Roll Call  
Commission members present included Burlingham, Rinard, John Molinaro (ex-officio) and Hadler. Nass and Poulson were absent. County staff present was Steve Grabow and Michelle Staff.
3. Certification of Compliance With Open Meetings Law Requirements  
Burlingham and Staff verified that the meeting was being held in compliance with open meetings law requirements.
4. Review of Agenda  
No changes to agenda.
5. Public Comment  
None
6. Review & Approval of the December 10, 2011 minutes  
**Motion** made by Hadler, seconded by Rinard to approve the December 12, 2011 minutes with the change that the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m. on a Motion made by Nass and seconded by Poulson. Motion passed on a voice vote with no objection.
7. Correspondence  
None
8. NRCS/Federal update on Conservation Easements  
The enhanced credit has expired. Molinaro suggested we contact our legislators to reinstate the credit due to the fact that in the past, Congress has reinstated it and made it retroactive. Burlingham stated that Land Trust Alliance has a list of contacts at the federal level. Landowners can still get a tax credit for a donated easement but with a lesser tax incentive than the enhanced credit.
9. Discussion and possible action on County/DATCP/Federal Funding, grant requirements for the 2010 Lea Conservation Easement  
Molinaro reported that the Lea conservation easement closed on December 28, 2011. Molinaro commended Phil Ristow on a job well done in making sure the easement closed. The Commission felt that they should contact the press and write an article about this easement. Discussion amongst Committee members on different media

outlets to run an article such as the County newsletter, Watertown Times, Daily Union, etc. Rinard will write an article to forward to Tammie Jaeger to forward to the County's media contacts.

10. Discussion and possible action on 2011 PACE applications  
Dale Neupert, Jeffrey & Monica Gerner and Greg Wilke.  
Neupert could not make today's meeting but would like to participate and is willing to give a partial donation. Gerner was to meet with the Town of Oakland to make sure splits were available at the Town level before the County went through with an appraisal. Wilke was present and the Commission will be discussing his easement in the closed session.
11. Discussion and possible action on Timothy Hunn Interest Form  
Burlingham explained that Hunn needs to wait until the County adopts the new Farmland Preservation Plan to bring his property outside of the urban service area. Once the appraisal is done, the owner has 60 days to close on the easement. The Commission needs to wait until Hunn property is outside of the urban service area and he is ready to proceed before the donated easement can move forward.
12. Update on Agricultural Enterprise Zones  
DATCP is having an information workshop on AEA on January 12 from 10-2:30 p.m. The state is currently taking applications for new AEA areas until March 30.
13. Work Plan, Outreach and Communications Implementation  
Grabow handed out process report from the Workplan Workshop last meeting. Grabow directed the Commission to the last page labeled "2012 Strategies, Initiatives and Tasks" and started to discuss the timeline. Under Staff/Resources/Consultants, discussion on b. was moved to March so Burlingham could talk to Mark Watkins, Land and Water Conservation Department Director. For letter d., Molinaro would talk to Rob Klotz, Planning and Zoning Department Director. Letter e. would be added to February's agenda. Letter f. would change from Tom Everett to Jeff Everett. The Commission discussed "charitable trust" as a unit of government.

On the detailing PACE, the Commission wants to discuss their role in the AEA zones. For Outreach/Communications, the role of the advisory group will be added and we need to add Lea to that group. Need to work on brochures for the Commission. Hadler will look into this further for the Commission.

On the last section, the Commission needs to discuss the next round of applications. Grabow will make changes as discussed in today's meeting and give the Commission a new copy of the report.

14. Closed Session pursuant S.19.85(1)(e), Statutes, to discuss terms of offers to purchase Neupert and Wilke easements. (roll call vote to go in closed session)  
Motion made by Rinard, seconded by Hadler to go into closed session. Motion passed on a roll call vote: Hadler-aye, Rinard-aye and Burlingham-aye. Moved into closed session at 8:57 am.

Motion by Hadler, second by Rinard to reconvene in open session and take action on items discussed in closed session. Roll call taken with all present responding “aye”. Reconvened into open session at 9:17 am.

15. Reconvene in open session and take action on subject of the closed session.  
Motion made by Hadler, seconded by Rinard to proceed with the Wilke easement with a 20% donation of the easement from Wilke. Motion passed on a voice vote with no objection.

Motion made by Hadler, seconded by Burlingham to proceed with the Neupert easement with a 20% to 30% donation from Neupert. Motion passed on a voice vote with no objection.

Motion made by Burlingham, seconded by Rinard to apply to NRCS for grant monies to purchase the Wilke and Neupert easements. NRCS will grant monies up to 50% of the cost of the easement. Motion passed on a voice vote with no objection.

The Commission discussed appraisal costs for these easements. The landowners have already paid the County \$750 towards the cost of the appraisals with the County paying the difference on the appraisal costs. There will be no additional reimbursement monies for appraisals from either the County or NRCS for these easements.

Burlingham will be contacting Mark Watkins from Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation about preparing the baseline reports for these easements. The baseline reports must be completed at the time of closing with signatures from the landowners and governmental entity.

16. Future Meeting Dates  
Burlingham indicated she would not be able to make the February 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Commission discussed changing the date. It was decided that the meeting will be changed to February 6<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 am.

17. Suggestions for the Next Agenda  
It was suggested that the Committee should tour the farms so they would be familiar with them. It was decided that after the normal meeting the Commission will go out to the farms. Burlingham stated that they can't discuss the farms on site but all Commission members could see the properties and at a later meeting discuss what they viewed.

The Commission suggested including an item on how to involve volunteers such as the advisory members. In April they should start to discuss all of the summer events such as the dairy breakfasts.

18. Adjourn  
Motion by Rinard, seconded by Hadler to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 a.m. 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.

Minutes by Michelle Staff, Zoning Technician, Jefferson County Planning and Zoning Department

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Secretary Signature

Date