

## Minutes of the Farmland Conservation Easement Commission

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

Monday, May 14, 2012 12:30 pm

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 12:34 pm.
2. Roll Call  
Commission members present included Burlingham, Nass, Rinard, John Molinaro (ex-officio) and Hadler. Poulson was absent. County staff present was 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. Election of Officers  
A **motion** was made by Rinard, seconded by Hadler to elect Margaret Burlingham as chair of the Farmland Conservation Easement Commission. The **motion** carried on a voice vote with no objection.  
  
A **motion** was made by Hadler, seconded by Burlingham to elect Amy Rinard as vice chair of the Farmland Conservation Easement Commission. The motion carried on a voice vote with no objection.  
  
A **motion** was made by Rinard, seconded by Burlingham to elect Mariah Hadler as secretary of the Farmland Conservation Easement Commission. The **motion** carried on a voice vote with no objection.
5. Review of Agenda  
No changes to the agenda.
6. Public Comment  
Karyn Spory from the Daily Union was present and introduced herself.
7. Review & Approval of the April 9, 2012 minutes  
**Motion** made by Rinard, seconded by Hadler to approve the April 9, 2012 minutes.  
**Motion** carried on a voice vote with no objection.
8. Correspondence  
Burlingham brought in the Wisconsin Farmer showing the article that featured Jefferson County and the purchased farmland conservation easement on the Rod Lea farm.

Nass arrived at 12:45 pm.

Burlingham indicated that she attended a meeting with the Friends of Farmland Protection who are working with DATCP to revise the DATCP PACE program. DATCP is required to give a report about the PACE program by June to the State Legislature. Burlingham said that she believed the report was very fair concerning the problems that occurred in the PACE application period with the State. The goal is to evaluate the PACE program and to come up with alternatives to this program. It appears DATCP invited several entities that applied for Working Land Funds in previous years but Jefferson County was not asked to participate. She indicated that DATCP has invited Al Sweeny (Rock County Board Supervisor), John Kempke (Waukesha County) and Kara Slaughter (Farmers Union). In their meeting they didn't get to funding, but one of the ideas was that the PACE would be run like a grant where entities would apply for the money without additional involvement from DATCP. The next meeting is May 21<sup>st</sup> with DATCP and this meeting is open to the public. Burlingham indicated that she will attend this meeting. This issue will be added as an agenda item for further discussion.

9. NRCS/Federal update on Conservation Easements  
No further update.
10. Discussion on Timothy Hunn donated easement.  
Hunn is working with Land and Water Conservation on a conservation plan. Burlingham asked that this item remain on the agenda for future discussion.
11. Discussion and possible action on 2011 PACE applications  
Dale Neupert, Jeffrey & Monica Gerner and Greg Wilke.  
Burlingham visited all three farms with NRCS last Thursday. NRCS indicated there were 7 total applications for the State of Wisconsin (3 from Jefferson County, 3 from Tall Pines Land Conservancy and 1 from Rock County). They will be ranking them shortly. There are not enough available monies to fund all seven applications. Burlingham reported that Wilke will be working with NRCS on a barnyard issue and Gerner has some paperwork that needs to be filled out. NRCS had no problems with the other farms.
12. Discussion and possible action on Roger Lehmann 2011 application  
Roger Lehmann was present. Burlingham explained the situation to Lehmann on missing the NRCS grant deadline and noted that there may not be County monies available. Lehmann indicated that when meeting with the Town of Oakland, they said that Lehmann only had one development right. Burlingham further talked about donation of conservation easements. Burlingham further explained that the County cannot apply for grant monies until the spring of 2013. The Commission will contact Lehmann in October/November to follow up with an application.
13. Discussion on the Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Plan 15 year growth areas, Long Range Urban service areas and Limited Service areas with respect to accepting farmland conservation easements.  
Staff handed out County Land Use Maps, explained the 15-year growth areas, long range urban service areas and limited service areas. She indicated that the objective of the Jefferson County Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Plan is to encourage higher density residential development in areas where public utilities will be available, and to preserve sufficient area around existing municipalities to allow reasonable

municipal growth. Staff also indicated that these growth areas were based on current cities' and villages' land use plans. There was discussion between the Commission on the pros and cons of accepting easements in these areas. The County wants to partner with the cities and villages on this issue whether they agree or don't agree to protect agricultural lands within their growth areas. Molinaro stated that we only have had one request for an easement within the urban growth area near Fort Atkinson. Molinaro was chairperson of the Farmland Conservation Easement Commission at the time and he contacted the City of Fort Atkinson. They indicated that they would not be in favor of an agricultural easement so it was no longer pursued. Rinard commented that she believed NRCS does not rank applications highly if they are adjacent to urban areas. Molinaro suggested that the Commission take these requests on a case by case basis and then talk to the municipality if there is any objection. Motion by Nass, seconded by Rinard, to amend the policy to consider easements in the long range and limited service areas on a case by case basis. Motion carried on a voice vote with no objection.

14. Revise the Commission's Overall Strategy/Work Plan for 2012 and 2013  
Commission discussed the upcoming dairy breakfasts and indicated that they will use the portable display for the commission materials.
15. Discussion and possible action on proposed brochures  
Hadler handed out the revised brochure. Brochures will be made by the end of the week to be handed out at upcoming events.
16. Discussion on easement applications and criteria  
Burlingham talked with Jim Welsh and he indicated that the NRCS application has not changed and the County's criteria were based on that application. It was noted that the policy that refers to the urban service areas should be removed. The Commission stressed that it is the landowner's responsibility to check with the Town to see the number of available splits according to the Town Land Use Plan.
17. Discussion on accepting easements with no residential lot available  
Burlingham indicated that landowners can put deed restrictions on their land. If the county accepts them it will cost the county to monitor the easement. Molinaro stated that it would be a minor cost. Burlingham stated that if there were legal issues, then it wouldn't be a minor cost. Commission agreed that if a landowner is interested in donation of easements, even if there is no residential lot available, they would consider accepting it.
18. Discuss involvement of Farmland Commission Advisory Committee  
This item is to be removed from the agenda for next month.
19. Update on Agricultural Enterprise Zones  
Rod Lea contacted Burlingham and indicated that the Town of Oakland would be a good area for an AEA. Molinaro stated that DATCP put a lot of effect into the AEA and it hasn't caught on. Nass mentioned that he has talked to farmers that told him the tax credit isn't large enough to cover the cost of the soil tests and manure management plans that are required.
20. Future Meeting Dates  
All meetings will start at 12:30 pm. There were no changes to the dates.

21. Suggestions for the Next Agenda

Suggestions of agenda items were made throughout the meeting.

22. Adjourn

**Motion** by Hadler, seconded by Rinard, to adjourn the meeting at 2:06 p.m. **Motion** carried on a voice vote with no objection.

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

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Secretary Signature

Date