



Minutes of the Farmland Conservation Easement Commission

**Jefferson County Courthouse, Room 203
320 S. Main St.
Jefferson, WI 53549**

Monday, October 22, 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 12:32 pm.
2. Roll Call
Commission members present included Burlingham, Rinard, John Molinaro (ex-officio), Nass and Poulson. Hadler was absent. County staff present was Michelle Staff (Zoning Department), Phil Ristow (Corporation Counsel), and Gerry Kokkonen (Land and Water Conservation Department).
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 the agenda.
5. Public Comment
No public comment.
6. Communications
None
7. Review & Approval of the September 17th, 2012 minutes
Motion made by Nass, seconded by Poulson to approve the September 17th, 2012 minutes. **Motion** carried on a voice vote with no objection.
8. Discussion on Baseline Report Documentation as required by the IRS
At the last meeting the Commission talked about the proposed policy guidelines for the baseline documents. **Motion** was made by Nass, seconded by Rinard, to adopt the Jefferson County Farmland Conservation Easement Commission Baseline Property Report Guidelines and report checklist as presented at the September 17th meeting. **Motion carried** on a voice vote with no objection. Kokkonen has completed Carlton Zentner's baseline report and will be visiting the additional two properties within the next couple of weeks.

9. NRCS/Federal Update on Conservation Easements
Congress has not passed the Farm Bill yet.

10. Discussion and Possible Action on 2011 PACE Applications
Dale Neupert, Jeffrey & Monica Gerner and Greg Wilke.
Burlingham stated that NRCS reviewed the appraisals for the three proposed easements and rejected them, but the reason for rejection was for technical corrections which the appraiser believes should be easy to resolve. Burlingham stated that NRCS has ordered environmental hazard assessments for the properties. Burlingham reported that Gerner asked to place his easement on hold because of family medical reasons. Neupert has been in contact with an appraiser for an appraisal of the donated part of the easement. It was discussed that the appraisals would expire within a year of November 21, 2011.

11. Discussion on action for forwarding a resolution to County Board for the purchase of 2011 easements.
There was a discussion on timing for a resolution to be forwarded to County Board regarding the purchase of the proposed easements. Neupert would like to close on the easement by the end of this year. Ristow was concerned that NRCS did not approve the appraisals and wanted to make sure the dollar amounts in the resolution are accurate. It was discussed that they would try to get a resolution to County Board in December which would mean that the resolution needs to be on the Farmland Commission agenda in November.

12. Discussion on Possible Funding Source for the PACE Program
Molinaro reported that the Finance Department voted down the request from the Farmland Commission for \$50,000 to fund easements. Molinaro stated that if the Farmland Commission wanted to ask for an amendment to the budget, those amendments need to be submitted by Thursday at noon. There was discussion on the pros and cons of asking for an amendment to the current proposed budget. Poulson stated that this is a want and not a need. It was recognized that the program needs taxpayers' support and monies to continue to purchase farmland easements. Nass suggested that for this year the Commission does not ask for an amendment to the budget, but next year ask for monies in the beginning of the budget process. There was a consensus between the Commission members to ask for monies to fund the easement program next budget cycle.

13. Discussion on possible 2013 PACE application submittal
It was discussed that there were other landowners interested in the program, such as Roger Lehmann, that could be contacted to see if they are still interested. There was discussion that NRCS grants are required to have at least 25% of the easement cost be matching funds from the County. Burlingham will be calling Lehmann to invite him to the next meeting.

14. Discussion on Community Outreach as presented by Land Trust Alliance Training
It was discussed that the Commission should start promoting community support for the program and start having fundraisers such as dinners, tours, photo contests, etc. Molinaro suggested that Heidi Johnson from UW-Extension would be a great resource in this issue.

15. Future Meeting Dates

All meeting dates were acceptable to the Commission.

16. Suggestions for the Next Agenda

No additional suggestions were made for agenda items.

17. Adjourn

Motion by Rinard, seconded by Poulson to adjourn the meeting at 1:32 p.m. **Motion** carried on a voice vote with no objection.

Secretary Signature

Date

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