

Farmland Conservation Easement Commission Minutes

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

Monday, March 10, 2008 12 pm

Members: John Molinaro (Chairman), Margaret Burlingham (Vice Chairman), Steve Nass (Secretary), Daphne Holterman, Blane Poulson, Carlton Zentner and County Board Chairman Sharon Schmeling, ex-officio.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman John Molinaro at 12:01 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Committee members present included Molinaro, Poulson, Holterman, Nass, Schmeling and Zentner. County staff present were Ristow, Grabow and Staff.

Committee members absent Burlingham.

3. Certification of Compliance With Open Meetings Law Requirements

Molinaro and Staff reported that the meeting was being held in compliance with open meetings law requirements.

4. Review of Agenda

There were no changes proposed.

5. Review and Approval of February 11, 2008 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Holterman/Nass to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried on a voice vote with no objection.

6. Public Comment

Greg David was present and gave to the Commission a DVD he produced of the December presentation given by the graduate students of the farmland preservation report. David stated he will discuss the item more when the commission gets to number 9 on the agenda.

Blane Poulson regrets that he will be resigning from the Commission. He understands that after the elections the commission may be reduced to 5 members. Molinaro thanked him for his work with the commission.

Poulson left at 12:07 pm

7. Discuss and Possible action on Student Intern for Spring Break

Holterman stated that Hilary Mess contacted her interested in participating in an internship with the Commission for spring break. Mess has the qualifications to work for the commission but may not be possible for spring break since it is next week. It was suggested that the Commission have a summer unpaid internship. Molinaro asked Holterman to talk to Mess and see if she would be interested in the summer. Commission discussed some projects that an student intern could potentially work on during the summer months.

8. Review, discussion and possible approval of criteria for the Conservation Easement Purchase

Molinaro gave the Commission 5 minutes to review Zentner's response to potential criteria from the February 11, 2008 meeting.

Schmeling arrives at 12:25 pm.

Commission went into a discussion about donate vs. purchase. Zentner stated that landowners should be able to donate a percentage of the value of the easements and then the county should purchase the remainder of that percentage. An example of this would be the CRP bidding process; you don't have to give direct figures, the landowner bids on what he is willing to get for rental rates on this property. Molinaro asked when do you have enough money to start buying the easements? Nass stated even if we started to pay for expenses first such as attorney fees, appraisal fees, at least that would be a start. Hopefully DATCP will have funding for this program. Molinaro stated we may not need financial solution until we actually have money to buy easements. Nass stated he believes the County should put the tools in place. Nass explained to Zentner that his concerns about turning people away will not happen because the Commission will have a weighting system and it doesn't rule anyone out, it just ranks them. Nass believes the Commission should stick with Town of Dunn's plan. Molinaro stated we don't have to finalize anything today and the funding source may have the final say on how we spend the money.

9. Review and discussion of the Jefferson County Farmland Preservation Report prepared by UW-Madison Graduate Students

Greg David produced a DVD from the student's presentation. Commission talked about sending the DVD to the area public access stations. Molinaro thanked David for taking his time to produce the video and the Commission appreciates it. Nass stated that Barb Frank framed the resolution signed by County Board for thanking the students for their report.

Commission started to discuss chapter 6, page 13, goal 3 and goal 4 of the report, specifically the section on protecting significant scenic resources. David and Nass stated that this was the goal of the glacial heritage project. Zentner asked the commission if they saw a conflict between historical and farmland preservation. Molinaro stated no, farmlands are buffers between the wildlife areas. Currently, the glacial heritage does not have any monies there could be a possibility to partner with their goals. There are additional programs such as the DNR wildlife enhancement program focusing on buffering state wildlife areas. David stressed that we need keep promoting our program.

Commission moved to discuss Goal 5, promote compatible existence of urban and rural life. It was suggested that the Commission start having meetings with the cities and villages to talk about how the program would benefit them. Nass stated that this is a huge educational issue between the cities and villages. The UW has done studies on costs of development vs. the cost to the tax base. The Commission suggests that maybe they can work with UW on this issue. Grabow stated he has been working with cities and villages on their comprehensive plans and does have a short presentation with graphics and maps showing densities. Grabow stated that LESA helps with scenarios on land use and it gives the commission what they scenarios would look like. Molinaro says this would be something to follow up on but hopefully there are ways the UW can help without money. Grabow was going to be in touch with Kurt Paulson and see if the UW can give the Commission GIS support.

10. Discussion and possible action on County Board Resolution regarding Farmland Preservation Funding

Ristow handled out the proposed resolution. Commission review resolution and had a couple of suggestions in words changes. It was suggested by Schmeling to put this resolution on the May county board agenda. Zentner stated we should put a set number the Commission wants back from the lands sales. Molinaro stated that each land sale would be different depending on the situation. Zentner stated that the Commission wasn't being bold enough. Molarino stated he wants to start at the committee level with discussions.

Schmeling left at 1:42

11. Discussion of speaking opportunities and education

Molinaro suggested starting with townships that are beginning their comprehensive plan such as Koshkonong, Concord, Jefferson, Aztalan and Oakland. Molinaro and Holterman went to Watertown in February.

12. Suggestions for the Next Agenda

Contacting Jim Arts to come to the Commission and speak. Holterman giving an updating to the Commission on the intern proposal. Grabow will contact Dr. Paulsen so see if he would be willing to come to the Commission and talk about the GIS options. Discuss the resolution to County Board on establishing mechanism to fund purchase of farmland conservation easements.

13. Future Meeting Dates

April 14, 2008

May 2008

14. Adjourn

Motion by Nass/Holterman to adjourn at 2:02 pm. Motion carried on a voice vote with no objection.

