

## **Farmland Conservation Easement Commission**

**Jefferson County Courthouse, Room 202  
320 S. Main St.  
Jefferson, WI 53549**

**Monday, February 16, 2009 2:30 pm**

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

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Molinaro at 2:40 p.m.

**2. Roll Call**

Commission members present included Molinaro, Schmeling, Holterman, Burlingham, Zentner, and Nass. County staff present were Steve Grabow (UW-Extension) and Michelle Staff (Zoning).

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

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

**4. Review of Agenda**

No changes were proposed.

**5. Review and Approval of January 12, 2009 Meeting Minutes**

**Motion** by Burlingham, seconded by Holterman to approve the January 12, 2009. **Motion carried** on a voice vote with no objection.

**6. Public Comment**

Tom Lyons has read the draft of the Governor's Budget and explained the goals of the new state farmland preservation program versus the goals of the Commission. The federal government is giving monies to DATCP for the purchase of development rights or conservation easement.

Nass and Schmeling arrived at 2:46 pm.

The State budget has the farmland preservation program as budget neutral. There will be public hearings on the state budget in March and April.

**7. Possible land application for donation of Farmland Conservation Easements**

None

**8. Discuss and Review Burlingham & Zentner meeting with Vicki Elkin, American Farmland Trust Wisconsin liaison**

Burlingham and Zentner met with Vicki Elkin and asked Elkin what the Commission needed to do to be ready to accepting easements by fall 2009. Molinaro explained the budget process for the County and State and believes it will take longer than the fall to start accepting easements. Burlingham clarified by stating she asked Elkin what the Commission need to accomplish before purchasing easements. Burlingham handed out a sheet with the recommended work plan for the Commission. The Commission discussed suggestions in creating a purchase of development rights program such as write a short guideline on the program, lay out how the program will be run, weight criteria, have a County Ordinance, update application form, public hearings, monitor process, annual reviews, etc. Schmeling read the Farmland Commission ordinance which created the Commission. Molinaro is going to contract the Towns to see if they have organized farmland committees. Burlingham stressed that the Commission needed to start a draft and take it to the public. Molinaro stated that the Commission has everything they just need to piece it together.

**9. Development of Commission Overall Strategy/Work Plan Review**

Grabow had agenda for the work plan discussion.

- a. Purpose  
(eg. To develop a Commission Overall Strategy & Work Plan for 2009)
- b. Output/Outcomes for 2009  
(eg. Prompted by functions: Technical/Research; Educational/Publicity; Policy Initiatives; Coalition Building/Gains Support/Public Involvement; Planning Strategy/Process/Consulting/Pace Program Development)
- c. Operation Steps/Action Steps (including inputs)
- d. People to Enable the Work  
Other information resources/training; Environment physical & organizational

The Commission discussed items on Grabow agenda. Burlingham suggested that the Commission write a guide for the public to explain how one would apply for the program. It was recommended that the Commission have draft criteria and weight that criteria. Zentner would like criteria and have it weighted. Nass would like them weighted because then it does not appear that the Commission is favoring particular landowners. Molinaro would like to see a proposed work plan and then discuss the proposed work plan. It was mentioned to hire a consult to help the Commission. Molinaro asked Zentner and Burlingham to continue to work with Vicki Elkin to prepare a work plan for the Commission. In addition, Tom Lyon is willing to help. A proposed timeline was suggested as followed:

- Write guide on the program, start with an outline form for the draft
- Make Presentation
- Take to the public
- Work with others, write ordinance

The timeline would start with draft with the final step being accepting easements. Grabow will aid as a facilitator.

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

Talk about the policy of accepting easements in the urban service area.

## **11. Future Meeting Dates**

The Commission will move the March meeting date to March 15<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 pm to give the subcommittee time to meet before that date.

## **12. Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:28 p.m. was made by Nass, seconded by Holterman. 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.

MJS