

Farmland Conservation Easement Commission

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

Monday, June 8, 2009 12:00 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 12:07 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Commission members present included Molinaro, Nass, Zentner, Holterman, Schmeling and Burlingham. Members absent none. County staff present was Sharon Ehrhardt (Zoning).

3. Certification of Compliance With Open Meetings Law Requirements

Molinaro 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 May 11, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Holterman, seconded by Burlingham to approve the May 11, 2009 minutes.
Motion carried on a voice vote with no objection.

6. Public Comment

Holterman announced that the Agri Business food stand needs volunteers for the County Fair. Commission members please sign up for a date and time.

7. Correspondence

None

8. Possible land application for donation of Farmland Conservation Easements

None

9. Continue discussion on PACE selection criteria by Jim Welsh – Natural Heritage Land Trust

Welsh referred to his draft criteria sheet and explained it to the Commission. Commission discussed rural hamlets and agreed that the points should be eliminated from rural hamlets and dispersed in other areas. Zentner has concerns about quality of farmland and size of farms. Welsh explained that to qualify for Federal Programs they rank on the amount of prime farm soils on the farm. In addition, each grant program may have different criteria concerning soils. The Commission then discussed the size of farms. Welsh explained the Federal process when qualifying for grant monies concerning the size of properties. The more acreage preserved the higher the points received through the Federal programs. The Commission had a discussion on large farms vs. small farms. The Commission moved some categories' within the spreadsheet.

The Commission would like to change acreage on percentage of workland from 75 to 100 and change the point system for this category. Welsh explained that workland is defined by FSA. The Commission wanted to add points for Century Farm, if the property has been designated as a state or local landmark, historic or archeological sites, if the property has a nutrient management plan, if the property is enrolled in CREP or other buffer programs and if the farm is an Organic Producer. Welsh will change the spread sheet with the changes requested by the Commission and sent an updated version via e-mail before the next meeting. Welsh wanted clarification from the Commission if they would like to use the 1999 Land Use Plan's Urban Service Areas or the Cities or Villages more recently adopted versions. The Commission agreed to use the 1999 Urban Service Areas located in the Jefferson County Land Use Plan.

10. Discussion of Outreach Activities for this Summer/Fall

The Commission agreed that once they have their criteria finalized they will get it to the public and use the \$500 granted award to them from the Agri Business Club for this purpose. The Commission then discussed the public forum and presenting the proposed criteria to the public. They would like to get a flyer out and distributed it at the County Fair. The Commission agreed upon three public forums at Waterloo, Jefferson and Palmyra. The public forums will start at 7:00pm and the first half will be a presentation by the Commission and the second half will be a question and answer session. The forums will be in late August and September. They would like the public to fill out the criteria point system to see how they would rank. The Commission would like to publish the forum announcements in newsletters such as Land and Water Conservation, FSA, Farm Bureau, etc. Next the Commission discussed the content of the public forum. Molinaro suggested to start with an introduction of the Commission and then the purpose and process of the PACE program. It was suggested to have a draft application at the forum. Also suggested to talk about the benefits of the program. The Commission would like to talk more about the pros of the program. Welsh will be willing to share some materials with the Commission. The Commission will talk more about this issue next month.

11. Discussion and Possible action Regarding Assembly Bill AB75

Molinaro read the proposed resolution to County Board on the Working Land Initiative portion of AB75. Nass explains that the Zoning Committee had some concerns about some of the language in the rule and suggested it be taken out of the budget bill and go through the regular legislative process. The Commission agreed no action was necessary since the resolution would be presented to the County Board tomorrow night.

12. Discuss County Fair Exhibit

Molinaro, Nass and Zeneter will already be at the Fair and there will be materials available at the Zoning or County Board booth.

13. Suggestions for the Next Agenda

Discuss why PDR's are a benefit to farmers, want an update of the Working Land bill,
Review timeline and continue discussion on criteria with Jim Welsh.

14. Future Meeting Dates

- a. July 13, 2009 at Noon Room 202 – Holterman will not be present at the July meeting.
- b. August 10, 2009 at Noon Room 202

15. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:55 p.m. was made by Nass, seconded by Holterman.
Motion carried on a voice vote with no objection.