

# Farmland Conservation Easement Commission

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

Monday, October 19, 2009 2:00 pm

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

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Molinaro at 2:00 p.m.

**2. Roll Call**

Commission members present included Molinaro, Nass, Holterman, Schmeling, and Burlingham. County staff present was 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 August 31, 2009, September 14, 2009 and September 21, 2009 Meeting Minutes**

Burlingham stated that in the September 21, 2009 minutes Tom Lyon's and Bill Uphoff's names were spelled wrong. **Motion** by Holterman, seconded by Burlingham to approve the August 31, 2009, September 14, 2009 and September 21, 2009 minutes with changes indicated by Burlingham. **Motion carried** on a voice vote with no objection.

**6. Public Comment**

None

**7. Correspondence**

DATCP Working Land Training Sessions will be available in late October and early November. Staff handed out flyers indicating times and places.

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

None at this time.

2:07pm Schmeling arrived

**9. Discuss continuing Natural Heritage Land Trust contract – Jim Welsh**

Molinaro would like to keep the relationship with the Natural Heritage Land Trust at least until the County goes through the first round of applications. Molinaro also stated that the Commission is limited in the amount of monies that can be spent. For next meeting, Molinaro would like to review the budget for 2010.

## **10. Discuss and review criteria and incorporate comments received from the public forums**

Welsh explained the proposed criteria sent to the Commission via e-mail last week. Welsh started with item #1 on the proposed criteria limiting portions of the farm. Welsh recommended that the easement be on the entire farm, that it be all contiguous lands but that you don't have to donate all rights. There was no objection from the Commission. Item #2 was discussed and the Commission felt that you needed rights on the property for purchase but that landowners could donate the lands to protect from further development. Item #3 pertained to clear title of the property before purchasing easement. Commission felt that any landowner could apply and if there wasn't a clear title possible, the bank could sign off on the purchase. Section 1 of the criteria involved discussion amongst the Commission on soil types and size of parcels. Nass would like 2 points removed from "soil types" and added to "size of parcels." There was discussion on prime soils and the difference between definitions from the USDA and the county. It was decided after further discussion to leave points as is. Section 1.C. woodlands was discussed. Welsh indicated that FSA does not have tract maps of tree farms. Commission decided to add a note to this column that landowners could enroll tree farms.

Section 2.A. Welsh recommended using the lower figure and the Commission agreed with Welsh. The Commission discussed definition of farm and number of development rights. Welsh indicated that the USDA definition of contiguous lands includes lands across the roads and must include a homestead. The Jefferson County Zoning definition of contiguous recognizes roads as dividers. In order to receive matching funds from the USDA, the Commission will recognize the USDA definition of contiguous when purchasing easements.

2:45 pm Nass leaves

Section 2.B. Urban Service Area will honor the 1999 urban service area maps as designated in the Jefferson County Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Plan. The Commission discussed preserving lands closer to the urban service area vs. out further from the urban service area. The Commission agreed with Welsh's points as presented. Section 2.C. the Commission agreed with Professor Kurt Paulsen's comments on this issue. Section 3.B. Jefferson County does not have any military installations. Section 3.C. The Commission agreed to eliminate the bottom two and then distribute the rest of the points between the remaining categories. Section 3.E. the Commission agreed to evaluate the land and not the farming operation. Will omit letters (a) and (f); the categories remaining will be (b),(c),(d), and (e). Schmeling recommended that the Commission evaluate the criteria on an annual basis. The Commission discussed the merits of annual evaluations but no decision was made on this issue.

3:20 pm Schmeling leaves

## **11. Discuss and review application process and form.**

Welsh suggested having the applications in by late November and will have the applications forms completed in the next 2 weeks. The Commission would like the County Board Supervisors, Town Plan Commissions, Town Clerks, Town Board members, the press and all the citizens that attended the public forums, etc. to receive a press release and application when they are available. The deadline for the applications will be November 23, 2009.

## **12. Discussion on Chapter 91, State Statutes, Farmland Preservation Program**

Staff reminded the Commission of the new Working Lands program workshops at the end of October and the first part of November. She recommended that all members go to a workshop. Molinaro stated that Nass is setting up a meeting with Representative Andy Jorgenson.

## **13. Suggestions for Next Meeting**

Update on applications, keep track of the applications sent out and review the 2010 budget. Molinaro would like #9 on the agenda to be changed to possible land applications. Molinaro also wanted to remind the Commission about replying to all on e-mails because of the possible implications of having a quorum and violating the open meetings law.

**14. Future Meeting Dates**

- a. November 9, 2009 at Noon Room 202
- b. December 14, 2009 at Noon Room 202

**15. Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:37 p.m. was made by Holterman, seconded by Nass.  
Motion carried on a voice vote with no objection.