

Farmland Conservation Easement Commission

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

Monday, November 9, 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 2:05 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Commission members present included Molinaro, Nass, Schmeling, and Burlingham. Holterman was absent. County staff present were Steve Grabow (UW-Extension), Mark Watkins (Land and Water Conservation) 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. Public Comment

None

6. Correspondence

No correspondence

7. Status update on PACE Applications

Staff reported that the application has been sent with the press release to the media such as newspapers, radio, and public television. She also sent it out to all Town Boards, Town Clerks, Town Plan Commissions, and to all the attendees of the public forums.

8. Review Budget and Finances for 2010

Molinaro reported that \$10,000 is in the county budget for operating expenses for the Commission, in addition to the \$250,000 for the purchase of conservation easements. Staff reported that the Treasurer's Office has been submitting monthly interest reports on those monies.

10. Discussion regarding assignment of support staff duties

There was discussion on how much Jim Welsh from Natural Heritage Land Trust would help the Commission. Staff mentioned that all the county maps are on line. Burlingham stated that the application process will take many months. Welsh stated that the Federal grant applications are due in early April. Tom Lyon stated that the PACE Committee at the State was meeting on

November 18 to discuss State criteria for grant applications, with another meeting in December.

Nass arrived at 2:20 pm

Molinaro stated that we should wait until the Commission knows how many applications are submitted before deciding on assignment of support staff duties. After November 24th Staff can communicate to Welsh and Molinaro on how many applications were submitted.

11. Discussion on Chapter 91, State Statutes, Farmland Preservation Program

There will be a county budget amendment to remove the conversion fees. Torres may be withdrawing the amendment because it was discussed in the Finance Committee meeting that it was a bad idea to have a policy issue in with the budget. It was recommended by the Finance Committee that the Farmland Commission, Zoning and LWCD Committees continue to discuss this issue together.

Nass explained meeting with Rep. Andy Jorgenson. Nass stated he was trying to get across to DATCP fairness in treating conditional use the same as rezoning. In addition, Nass explained that he related to DATCP that the County felt the conversion fees should not be for all rezoning, such as natural resource zone. Watkins expressed his concern that farms would not be able to receive the tax credits if the County was not in the program.

Molinaro asked if the County is going to participate in the Agricultural Enterprise Areas. Discussion between the Commissions on types of farmers that may be interested in this program. Lyon stated that if you get 5-6 landowners interested, they may petition for the area. Watkins will be willing to contact some farmers that may be interested in the program.

Grabow stated that next Monday in Portage, the ICC will meet and discuss Chapter 91. They will be discussing the main concerns and have some followup activities.

13. Suggestions for the Next agenda

Chapter 91 update, discuss Enterprise Areas, LESA map from Professor Paulsen, evaluate applications that are received, discussion on ranking for the applications. Molinaro asked Staff to put on the agenda discussion on staffing issues. Molinaro will be responsible for the agenda and Burlingham will do the minutes while Staff is on maternity leave. Molinaro stated that next meeting the Commission will have to discuss overall workload and available staffing.

14. Future Meeting Dates

- a. January 11, 2010 at Noon, Room 202 Meeting
- b. February 8, 2010 at Noon, Room 202 Meeting

15. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:45 p.m. was made by Nass, seconded by Burlingham. Motion carried on a voice vote with no objection.