

Minutes of the Farmland Conservation Easement Commission

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

Monday, November 14, 2011 12:30 p.m

Members: Margaret Burlingham (Chairperson), Amy Rinard (Vice-Chairperson), Mariah Hadler (Secretary), Steve Nass and Blane Poulson.

1. Call to Order
The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Burlingham at 12:30 p.m.
2. Roll Call
Commission members present included Burlingham, Rinard, Poulson, John Molinaro (ex-officio), Hadler and Nass. County staff present was Michelle Staff.
3. Certification of Compliance With Open Meetings Law Requirement
Burlingham and Staff verified that the meeting was being held in compliance with open meetings law requirements.
4. Review of Agenda
No changes to agenda.
5. Public Comment
None
6. Review & Approval of the October 17, 2011 minutes
Motion made by Rinard, seconded by Hadler to approve the October 17, 2011 minutes. Motion passed on a voice vote, with no objection.
7. Correspondence
None
8. Discussion on 2012 Budget
Molinaro explained the budget process to the Commission and talked about the proposed budget amendment that affected the Commission.
9. NRCS/Federal update on Conservation Easements
Burlingham reported that at this point in time it was unclear if the federal incentives for donation of conservation easements will be changing.
10. Discussion and possible action on Klaas & Susan van Zanten Interest Form
Burlingham discussed the donation process and the appraisal with the van Zantens. The van Zantens informed Burlingham that they have an error in their legal description and their lot line overlaps with the neighbors'. They need to fix this before they move on. Burlingham asked that the item be removed from the agenda until the van Zantens have an appraisal completed.

11. Discussion and possible action on County/DATCP/Federal Funding, grant requirements for the 2010 Lea Conservation Easement

Welsh updated the Commission about the closing on the Lea easement. Welsh explained that there was some concern from NRCS about the storage tanks on the Lea farm. NRCS may require a phase 2 investigation on the farm and would involve digging. NRCS is concerned about groundwater contamination from the tanks. Lea would like to close by December 12 but if further investigation is needed, it probably will not happen at that time. Burlingham and Molinaro will contact Ron Howard from NRCS and discuss the issues.

Welsh indicated that for the baseline report he will need signatures from the county, acknowledging the conditions of the report. It was discussed that it will be co-signed by Burlingham and Mark Watkins, the director of Land and Water Conservation. It was unclear at this point who would be signing as the contact for the easement and Molinaro will be following up on that with Philip Ristow, Jefferson County Corporation Counsel.

12. Discussion and possible action on 2011 PACE applications

Dale Neupert, Jeffrey & Monica Gerner and Greg Wilke.

Welsh indicated that Scott Appraisal has asked the County for a two week extension on the appraisals for these easements. The Commission will have the results of these appraisals by the December meeting. When results are available, Welsh will give them to the landowners so they may decide if they would like to continue the process. The Commission then can apply to NRCS for matching funds for the landowners that still want to participate. Welsh went on to explain that if the landowner chooses to donate part of the easement, additional appraisals will be needed.

13. Discussion of Alternative Funding Sources for Conservation Easements and Partnering with the Glacial Heritage Area Acquisition Team.

There was discussion on the possibility of partnering with the Glacial Heritage to secure grants for agricultural conservation easements. The Commission indicated three possible landowners to contact (Schwemmer, Cushman and Lehmann), to see if they would be interested in a farmland conservation easement.

14. Update on the Jefferson County Farmland Preservation Plan

Staff indicated that the County Board of Supervisors will be getting the final draft of the plan and a copy of a presentation which included the timeline for the adoption process at the next County Board meeting.

15. Update on Agricultural Enterprise Zones

Burlingham announced that DATCP is having workshops in November on establishing an AEA zone.

16. Work Plan, Outreach and Communications Implementation

A) Work Plan Review

Professor Steve Grabow will be coming to the December 12 meeting to work on a new work plan.

B) Discuss and possibly take action on brochures, signs, and publicity.

None

C) Discussion on farm-related events

Nass spoke to the Farmer's Union at their meeting two weeks ago.

17. Future Meeting Dates

- a. November 14, 2011 at 12:30 pm in Room 202
- b. December 12, 2011 at 12:30 pm in Room 202
- c. January 9, 2012 at 8:30 am in Room 112
- d. February 13, 2012 at 12:30 pm in Room 202

No members indicated a conflict with any of the meeting dates.

18. Suggestions for the Next Agenda

19. Adjourn

Motion by Hadler, seconded by Rinard to adjourn the meeting at 1:46 p.m. 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.

Minutes by Michelle Staff, Zoning Technician, Jefferson County Planning and Zoning Department

Secretary Signature

Date