

## **Farmland Conservation Easement Commission Minutes**

**Jefferson County Courthouse, Room 112  
320 S. Main St.  
Jefferson, WI 53549**

**Monday, June 9, 2008 12 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 John Molinaro at 12:02 p.m.

**2. Roll Call**

Committee members present included Molinaro, Holterman, Nass, Burlingham Schmeling and Zentner. Members absent Nass. County staff present were Grabow, Haukom, and Staff.

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

Molinaro and Staff reported that the meeting was being held in compliance with open meetings law requirements.

**4. Review of Agenda**

There were no changes proposed.

**5. Review and Approval of April 14, 2008 and May 12, 2008 Meeting Minutes**

Motion by Holterman/Burlingham to approve the April 14, 2008 minutes as presented. Motion carried on a voice vote with no objection.

Zentner had a question about item 10. Molinaro explained Mr. Meyer's property restrictions to Zentner. Motion by Zentner/Holterman to approve the May 12, 2008 minutes as presented. Motion carried on a voice vote with no objection.

**6. Public Comment**

Professor Eric Compas from UW-Whitewater was present. He was interested in the commission as a potential research opportunity.

**7. Review Board Rule related to Farmland Conservation Easement Commission**

Schmeling stated that this is a reminder to the Commission to review the rules printed in the County Board handbook.

**8. Continue discussion on establishing goals and vision for the program**

Steve Grabow recapped last month's discussion. Professor Kurt Paulsen was available to answer any LESA questions. For further information see Jefferson County Farmland Conservation Easement Commission Vision Statement Workshop I (May 12, 2008) And Commission "Work Plan" Outcomes Workshops 2 (June 9, 2008) Proceedings Report at the end of these minutes.

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

No formal applications at this time. Molinaro stated that he will be writing letters to two landowners which have expressed interest in the program.

**10. Farm Bill and Working Land Initiative update**

It appears the farm bill has passed but pages of the document were missing and it appears it needs to be readopted. At this time it is unclear if it has passed.

Molinaro will talk Atty Ristow to confirm the status of the bill. In addition, it appears the IRS has been investigating claims of the conservation easement for possible fraud.

Schmeling arrived 1:29 pm.

Schmeling stated currently there is no funding for the farmland conservation easement program but the State may have possible funding in the future. The State is also looking at short term easements called Agricultural Enterprise areas. These would be short term agricultural easement for example, with easement for 10 to 20 years. Schmeling encouraged the Commission to keep working on the program, encouraging donations and hopefully when funds are available our County will be able to take advantage of these funds.

**11. Review Protected Land Maps**

Molinaro introduces the purpose and intent of the map. Staff explains the key on the map. The Commission discusses the map while Haukom was available to answer zoning questions. There was discussion between the Commission on the clustering concept vs the patch work concept. Zentner pointed out that many rural landowners are not farmers. Molinaro stated that maybe the commission should contact the large operators who rent these lands and talk to the landowners about the program.

**12. Discuss Communication Plan in Relation to the Public**

Molinaro shows Commission letterhead. The Commission discusses possible advisory board. They would assist the Commission only. Dairy breakfast in Watertown this Friday on Aliceton Drive. Holterman will take information to the dairy breakfast. The Commission will contact Bolton's office in August to start regular articles in the UW-Extension newsletters.

County Fair will be July 9-13 and there will be a tent again as last year. Further details will be given to the Commission via e-mail.

**13. Discuss Commission Schedule for the year**

This item will be forwarded to next month's agenda for further discussion.

**14. Suggestions for the Next Agenda**

Talk about possible partners to the Commission such as Parks Dept., Glacial Heritage Trail, Department of Natural Resources, landowners renting out, etc. Further discuss possible Advisory Committee members. Add item 13 from this agenda to the next agenda. Have Ristow available to discuss the Farm Bill.

**15. Future Meeting Dates**

- a. July 14, 2008 at Noon in Room 202  
Grabow will not be able to attend the July meeting
- b. August 11, 2008 at Noon in Room 202

**16. Adjourn**

Motion by Burlingham/Holterman to adjourn at 2:15 pm. Motion carried on a voice vote with no objection.

***Jefferson County  
Farmland Conservation Easement Commission***

**Vision Statement Workshop I (May 12, 2008)  
And Commission "Work Plan" Outcomes Workshops 2 (June 9, 2008)  
Proceedings Report**

**Participants**

**Farmland Conservation Easement Commission:**

**John Molinaro  
Steve Nass (Workshop 1 Only)  
Carl Zentner  
Margaret Burlingham  
Daphne Holterman**

**Facilitated and Compiled By:**

**Steve Grabow  
Professor and Community Resource Development Educator  
University of Wisconsin-Extension, Jefferson County**

**June 25, 2008**

**SECTION 1**  
**Proposed Vision Statements by**  
**the Jefferson County Farmland Conservation Easement Commission**

*The Farmland Conservation Easement Commission reviewed vision-like statements from the 1999 Jefferson County Comprehensive Plan (Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Plan), Vision Statements from the UW-Madison Department of Urban and Regional Planning Graduate Workshop (2007) and other suggestions (See Appendix). They then proposed the following “Vision Statements with Apparent Consensus”. Also included are other “Statements Without Consensus, and Rationale”.*

**Question 1**

**In your words, describe what the landscape in Jefferson County (both urban and rural) will look like in the future...according to your vision.**

**Vision Statements with Apparent Consensus:**

- a. Hope to protect our natural resources including land, water and air.
- b. Hope for a protected agricultural land base.
- c. Hope to help our farmers to farm.
- d. Hope to have a land base necessary for food production, water quality and water availability.
- e. Hope to have in place a sustainable rural economy including:
  - ◆ Affordable land for farming.
  - ◆ A new generation of farmers.
  - ◆ A strong market for local ag products.
- f. Hope to preserve our aesthetic and scenic landscapes and our rural character.\*
- g. Hope for compatibility of urban and rural life with understanding between agricultural and residential communities.

\* Note:

- ◆ Carl interested in link to tourism.
- ◆ Other Commissioners believe tourism is other governing bodies’ mission (and not the Farmland Conservation Easement Commission’s mission).

### **Statements Without Consensus, and Rationale**

- a. Preserved natural resources and environmentally sensitive land (modified “D: in Appendix)

#### Rationale

- ◆ Keep for now
- ◆ Important for urban/community interests
- ◆ Farmers don’t like the use of the “wetland” term
- ◆ Carl thinks this conflicts with “A” in the Appendix

- b. Hope to preserve productive ag land

#### Rationale

- ◆ Need to define “productive”

## SECTION 2

### Commission “Work Plan” Outcomes Workshop (June 9, 2008):

*The Question 2 below identified some of the tangible “work plan” ideas that the Commission would like to accomplish over the next year.*

*Listed below are the Farmland Conservation Easement Commission’s initial list of work projects for the next year. These ideas were suggested by the Commission members to help guide their tasks, actions, program activities. The Commission has not yet “tested” the level of agreement on each of these suggestions, and they have not yet arranged these into a “sequencing order” or “timeline”.*

#### **Question 2**

**What are some “process” outcomes, outputs, hopes that you would like to have accomplished by the Farmland Conservation Easement Commission in the next year or so?**

#### **Strategy A: Purchase of Conservation Easements**

##### Process/Procedures

- a. To determine “where we are at” with our “purchase program”.
- b. To obtain “technical” help on developing this process.
- c. Set up “ground rules” for a purchase program.
- d. To come up with solid procedures for a purchase program.
- e. Complete the process for purchasing conservation easements.
- f. The Commission “needs to be more patient” in developing this complex plan and policies.

##### Criteria for Priority Land

- a. To determine process to come up with “criteria” (put this in writing!).
- b. To conduct a public input process on “criteria”.
- c. To come up with a process for “criteria” involving land owners.

##### Mapping Scenarios/Alternatives

- a. To get input and assistance from UW-Madison, Department of Urban and Regional Planning (URPL) on criteria for mapping.
- b. To come up with a map of three scenarios (using LESA software) with possible outside help from UW.

## **Strategy B: Capacity Building**

### **Education and Understanding**

- a. To educate people so they support us.
- b. To influence the County Board that a certain percentage of funding (from sale of land) goes to the Farmland Conservation Easement Commission.
- c. To develop a “Friends of the FCE Commission” effort.
- d. To determine internal FCE Commission consensus on countywide effort versus targeted efforts.
- e. To continue discussions on how to have both countywide and targeted efforts.

### **Communication**

- a. To advertise our program.
- b. To send letter to all farmers and ask them to sign up in “registry”.
- c. To get out information in UW-Extension Ag newsletters for all the farmers and service professionals in Jefferson County.
- d. To get Zoning to hand out packets in zoning applications.

## **Strategy C: Refine “Conservation Easement Donation Program”**

- a. To pay for land owners’ fee (out-of-pocket costs) for an easement donation.
- b. Determine “policies and procedures” for paying “out-of-pocket” for land donation.

## **Strategy D: Identify Other Strategies and Areas for Preservation**

- a. To identify Ag enterprise areas.
- b. To target State efforts to geographic areas.
- c. To make knowledge available of “areas to focus” on farmland preservation.
- d. To contact farmers in identified areas (i.e. near potential parks/conservation areas/ DNR wildlife areas).
- e. To contact landowners, possibly in conjunction with DNR and County Parks.
- f. To consider new strategies for farmland preservation beyond just “purchase of conservation easement”.
- g. To consider and integrate promising ideas from “renewed” State “Working Lands Initiative”.

## APPENDIX

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Prompts for Farmland Conservation Easement Vision</b></p>
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Interpretation By UW-Graduates Workshop/Professor Kurt Paulsen\*/Jefferson County 1999 Comprehensive Plan (Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Plan)

*These statements were used to prompt discussion and consideration of proposed vision statements by the Farmland Conservation Easement Commission.*

- A. Hope to preserve productive ag land (quality farmland).
- B. Have in place a sustainable rural economy (affordable land, new generation of farmers, strong market for local ag products).
- C. Aesthetic and scenic landscape (a preserved rural character).
- D. Preserved open space, natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas.
- E. Hope for compatibility of urban and rural life (including limited conflicts between agricultural and residential uses).

\*Professor Kurt Paulsen, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Department of Urban and Regional Planning (URPL). Advisor for "Jefferson County Farmland Preservation Report" by UW-Madison, URPL Graduate Workshop, December 14, 2007.