



Waukesha County Farmland Preservation Planning Advisory Committee Meeting Notes (Draft)- June 17, 2010

1. Introductions

Meeting was called to order by Committee Chairman Gary Goodchild at approximately 10:00 a.m. All committee members were in attendance (Goodchild, Bartholomew, Koepke, Oberhaus, Herrmann, Holtz, Anderson, Rolfs, Schwecke). County Staff in attendance included Shaver, Lindquist, Rose, Fruth. Committee members and staff introduced themselves to start the meeting.

2. Overview of 2009 State Law changes relating to farmland preservation

Perry Lindquist presented a Power Point detailing the Working Lands Initiative and the history of farmland preservation in Waukesha County.

Questions from committee:

- Are conversion fees applicable in cases of annexation?

**Editorial Note- DATCP may be able to best answer this question, although DATCP's preliminary guidance has suggested that Chapter 91 of the Statutes is not entirely clear on this issue. Further clarification will be sought from DATCP at next meeting.*

- Does conversion fee apply to all lands in a parcel/farm?

Answer- fee only applies to actual acres rezoned.

3. Review Scope of Committee Assignment

Dale Shaver introduced the committee's role in the development of a new County Farmland Preservation Plan. He also explained past farmland preservation planning activities in Waukesha County and discussed objectives relative to farmland preservation within the recently adopted County Development Plan. Specific sections of the Development Plan that need to be updated as part of the Farmland Plan process were identified.

4. Review Agricultural Preservation Standards (Objective #2) in the adopted 2009 Comprehensive Development Plan for Waukesha County

Shaver and Lindquist referenced and explained the handout that was provided in advance of the meeting (Objective 2 from 2009 County Development Plan). The secondary agricultural area concept that was considered in past planning efforts was explained. The rationale for the existing agricultural preservation criteria and mapping was explained, and some of the challenges of past agricultural tax benefit programs were discussed.

Questions/Comments from committee:

- Has Town of Merton been approached again relative to farmland preservation mapping within that Town?

Answer- Town is aware of loss of potential tax benefits by not mapping farmland preservation and, to County's knowledge, has not changed its position (petition signed by landowners was referenced).

- How will local communities be involved in the farmland planning process?

**Editorial Note- Draft materials will be provided to communities for comment.*

- How was 5 square mile block threshold arrived at?

Answer- prior approaches (including 100 acre blocks were not effective). Five square miles was used in early SEWRPC planning efforts and is believed to nurture agriculture and its needed space and services.

- Are environmental corridors included in 5 square mile blocks?

Answer- yes, environmental corridors are an acceptable inclusion.

- Concern was expressed as to whether 5 square mile blocks work in considering orchards, small farms, farmers markets and a question was raised as to whether a tiered approach of larger blocks and smaller blocks might be possible.

Answer- A secondary agricultural preservation area using 3 square miles blocks was considered by the advisory committee during the county comprehensive planning process, but was not adopted.

- How do extra-territorial plans affect farmland preservation planning?

Answer- County Development Plan set forth that only those communities with boundary agreements will have extra-territorial land use plans honored within County Development Plan.

- A number of questions were asked about the PACE program with concern that many areas wouldn't be made eligible as part of this grant process.

Answer- Statutes require that only lands mapped within a farmland preservation area are eligible for PACE grants, and only lands that will be preserved in agriculture for a minimum of 15 years can be mapped as farmland preservation areas. Other discussion on the topic included suggestions that other federal and non-government funds may also be available for PDR initiatives. Comments were also offered suggesting that the County devote funds to PDR and for

preservation of groundwater recharge areas. Lindquist noted that the existing storm water ordinance offers groundwater protection.

- Can a town have their own Farmland Preservation Plan?

Answer – No. State statutes say the county is responsible for FP planning. There was some discussion that perhaps the county plan could allow future additions to farmland preservation areas if an AEA was advanced and adequately supported at the local level and DATCP.

- What was the result of the County Development Plan survey relative to agriculture?

Answer- results are on County website. See the 2035 Comprehensive Development Plan Update section of the County Planning and Zoning Division webpage (www.waukeshacounty.gov).

- Should additional Kincaid farm holdings in Ottawa be mapped in the AP category. What about the proposed 4000 acre addition to the Kettle Moraine State Forest in Ottawa?

Answer- Staff will closely re-examine all agricultural mapping as part of this process.

- Will lands within AEAs likely be the only areas eligible for PACE in the near future?

Editorial Note: Staff will ask DATCP to answer- hopefully in conjunction with their attendance at the next committee meeting.

5. Topics, date and time for next meeting

- DATCP will be invited to attend next committee meeting.
- The concept of allowing future AEAs to be added to the county Farmland Preservation Plan will be further considered.
- The objectives for the plan will be further discussed.
- Next meeting date set- July 29, 2010 (10:00a.m.-12:00p.m.)

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:10 p.m.