

PLANNING, RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Monday, March 1, 2010

Administrative Center – Room 3220

3:30 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Don Meyer, Don Bina, Beverly Mach, Marilyn Pedretti

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Bob Keil, Dennis Manthei, Tina Wehrs

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF & GUESTS: Charles Handy, Bryan Meyer, Gregg Stangl, Jeff Bluske, Margaret Norden, Mike Weibel, Steve O'Malley, Jake VandeBerg

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chair Don Meyer called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

INTRODUCTION OF STEVEN MILLER – NEW FSA REPRESENTATIVE FOR PLANNING, RESOURCES & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Chair took the item out of order. Gregg Stangl introduced Steven Miller, who replaced Dave Hansen as FSA representative. Stangl also introduced Jake VandeBerg from the FSA.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 1, 2010

MOTION by Bina/Pedretti to approve Minutes from the February 1, 2010, meeting. **Motion carried unanimously.** Keil, Manthei, Wehrs excused.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Supervisor Bina spoke about attending the WCA Ag Steering Committee, which addressed the Working Lands Initiative. He also spoke about PETA raising the issue of how farmers care for animals, and that they have opened offices in Madison and Milwaukee. Supervisor Mach passed out bookmarks that were printed by the Historic Sites Preservation Commission. Mary Meehan-Strub distributed information on the 2010 WACEC conference.

APPROVE THE 2011 JOINT DATCP/DNR GRANTS APPLICATION

Gregg Stangl explained that DATCP/DNR grant monies are used to offset staff salaries and fringe benefits, to provide cost-share assistance to implement Land and Water Resource Management Plans, and to provide financial assistance to farmers who develop nutrient management plans. Base funding for counties that meet minimum qualifications is \$85,000.00. A second tier provides for a funding formula: one staff position at 100%, a second position at 70%, and a third (and subsequent positions) at 50%. Stangl explained they would receive less than requested because of the state deficit. He expects a staffing grant in the \$150,000.00 range. He expects cost share grants for conservation to be around \$60,000.00. Funds from the DATCP Segregated Funds are expected in the \$12,000.00 range. **MOTION** by Pedretti/Bina to approve the 2011 Joint DATCP/DNR Grant Application. **Motion carried unanimously.** Keil, Manthei, Wehrs excused.

REVIEW DEPARTMENT OF LAND CONSERVATION 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

Gregg Stangl provided a copy of his department's annual report that included sections on surface water quality management and monitoring, agricultural programs, and urban programs. Discussion was held regarding the effect of spring runoff on phosphorus levels. Stangl pointed out that although fertilizer affects phosphorus levels, phosphorus is also a naturally-occurring substance, and that nutrient management is working to reduce phosphorus levels in water.

REVIEW AND APPROVE 2010 LAND CONSERVATION COST SHARE POLICY

Gregg Stangl reported that Land Conservation reviews its cost share policy annually. He reported that due to the Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative, they anticipate that most of their available cost share monies will be requested by landowners that wish to meet the conservation requirements of the Farmland Preservation Program. He provided a handout of cost share rates. He did not propose any changes from the previous two years. He anticipates that the Gill's Coulee Creek and Burr Oak Creek watershed projects will be completed in 2010. He intends to use Wisconsin DNR and federal NRCS funds to get 100% funding. **MOTION** by Bina/Mach to approve the 2010 Land Conservation Cost Share Policy. **Motion carried unanimously.** Keil, Manthei, Wehrs excused.

DISCUSS CHARGING ADMINISTRATIVE FEES IN ADDITION TO THE CONVERSION FEE FOR REZONE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION DISTRICT LANDS TO ANY OTHER DISTRICT

Jeff Bluske reported that in the State 2009-2011 budget, DATCP instituted a conversion fee to be assessed to farmers/developers who wish to zone out of Exclusive Ag land. It is meant to be a deterrent to farmers who wish to convert farmland to other use. Legislation also allows counties to add an administrative fee. Bluske contacted other counties and reported on their plans regarding additional fees. He reported that legislation is being opposed by the Wisconsin Homeowners Association and some legislators. Lengthy discussion was held regarding the current rezoning fee, whether the county should charge a fee to offset additional staff time associated with the PACE program, the possible revenue stream to apply an administrative fee, and how to charge a fee, e.g. an additional conversion fee or through property taxes. Supervisor Bina noted that the Wisconsin Counties Association is not in favor of adding a fee. Committee consensus was to defer a decision or recommendation until discussion on the Farmland Preservation Ordinance.

UPDATE AND ACTION ON FARMLAND PRESERVATION GRANT

Charlie Handy reported that the Farmland Preservation Grant was awarded in the amount of \$30,000.00. He reported that they have requested an extension to update the Farmland Preservation Plan to be able to include 2010 Census data. Costs of the update, including printing, are anticipated to be \$60,000.00. **MOTION** by Pedretti/Mach to approve the Farmland Preservation Grant. **Motion carried unanimously.** Keil, Manthei, Wehrs excused.

ADOPTION OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

The Ordinance would create a nine-member Farmland Preservation Committee, and also establishes PACE program objectives, an application process, responsibilities, conservation easement provisions, and enforcement. Charlie Handy outlined the eligibility requirements and the selection process to achieve the goal of 500 acres per year, and spoke about the staff time to inspect and monitor applicant farms. Jeff Bluske pointed out that the County Board would determine an application fee to participate in the PACE program, and that the application fee, and other costs for surveying, title insurance, and attorney, recording, and appraisal fees, would be subtracted from the amount the farmer would get for the easement. Supervisor Bina stated he had not been able to review the ordinance. **MOTION** by Mach/Pedretti to approve adopting the Farmland Preservation Ordinance. **Motion carried 3-0-1.** Keil, Manthei, Wehrs excused, Bina abstained. Discussion was held about the timetable for a public hearing and first reading.

DISCUSS CHARGING ADMINISTRATIVE FEES IN ADDITION TO THE CONVERSION FEE FOR REZONE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION DISTRICT LANDS TO ANY OTHER DISTRICT, CONTINUED

The Chair returned to the prior item for further discussion. Charlie Handy stated that the Committee could direct the staff to contact WCA regarding the Committee's opinion, and/or to draft a Resolution for the County Board to consider in April, 2010.

MOTION by Pedretti/Bina to direct staff to write a letter to WCA in support of the conversion fee. **Motion carried unanimously.** Keil, Manthei, Wehrs excused.

MOTION by Pedretti/Mach to direct staff to draft a Resolution to support charging an administrative fee.

Charlie Handy stated that the Resolution could be to support the current conversion fee, or to support the current conversion fee and consider additional administrative fees. Pedretti/Mach agreed to a friendly amendment.

MOTION by Pedretti/Mach to direct staff to draft a Resolution to support the current conversion fee and consider an additional administrative fee. **Motion carried unanimously.** Keil, Manthei, Wehrs excused.

ADOPTION OF AMENDMENT TO THE LA CROSSE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2007-2027

Charlie Handy stated that an Ordinance and final map will be brought to the March 29, 2010, business meeting, and a public hearing scheduled for the March 29, 2010, public hearing portion of the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

NR 151 standards

RECESS

MOTION by Mach/Pedretti to recess until the public hearing. **Motion carried unanimously.** Keil, Manthei, Wehrs excused. The meeting recessed at 5:13 p.m.

Approved, March 29, 2010, Margaret Norden, Recorder