

APPROVED MINUTES
FARMLAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Monday, February 28, 2011
Kenosha County Center
Conference Room A
19600 - 75th Street
Bristol, Wisconsin 53104

Members Present: Ron Johnson, Dave Daniels, Vigil Gentz, Dave DeVito, Jerry Helmert, Randy Kerkman, John Holloway, Andrew Lois, Rose Skora, Tim Popanda, George Stoner, Bill Morris, Jean Werbie-Harris
Brandi Richter - NRCS
Kim Iczkowski - FSA

Staff Present: John Roth, Director of the Division of Long Range Countywide Planning
Dan Treloar, Land and Water Conservation Planner
Andy Buehler, Director of the Division of County Development
Todd Roehl, Long Range Countywide Planner

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 p.m. by Chairman Johnson.

Welcome and Introductions

Members of the committee introduced themselves.

Working Lands Program/Farmland Preservation Program overview

Dan Treloar gave the committee an overview presentation on the Working Lands Program and the new Farmland Preservation Program.

Review Agricultural Preservation Goals and Objectives

Dan Treloar asked the committee to review the agricultural preservation goals and objectives in the adopted 2010 comprehensive plan. Mr. Treloar reminded the committee that the comp plan was adopted less than a year ago so most of the priority issues should have changed very little. He noted that SEWRPC had done a great job with public participation, analyzing feedback from multiple public meetings, tours, cafes, and surveys.

Mr. Treloar asked the committee to read through the agricultural preservation goals and objectives and offer any changes, additions, deletions at the next meeting.

Randy Kerkman mentioned that the WDNR is requiring all WWTP to reduce their phosphorus loads. Tim Popanda agreed that the Paddock Lake WWTP is under the same requirement. The committee discussed water quality pollutant trading, how NMP or acquiring stream buffers from farmers might help meet those requirements. Mr. Treloar explained the Phosphorus Index (P-Index) requirements of a NMP, and available USDA programs. Mr. Kerkman said they needed to collect baseline data and then they have 16-

years to show water quality improvements. He also mentioned that they could spend a lot of money to retrofit their WWTP with redundant filtration device to meet WDNR requirements, so they were interested in alternative solutions like pollutant trading. Mr. Treloar explained about the buffer initiative, the tillage setback requirements and the P-Index = 6 added to the NR151 Agricultural Performance Standards.

Discussion of Agricultural Infrastructure and Production Trends

John Holloway talked about the importance of Ag infrastructure. Loss of infrastructure will doom future farming in Kenosha County. He thought that the Farmland Preservation Plan should recommend potential sites for new fertilizer/grain storage facilities. Mr. Holloway noted that each facility should cover approximately a 50 mile radius. He said that an ideal site would need a 50 car RR siding and be able to store large amounts of nitrogen. He also said that he heard Monsanto may create a hybrid corn that would double current corn yields (up to 300 bu/ac). This would put an even larger strain on our storage and transport system. Mr. Holloway thought that bringing together business partners and government decision makers to identify potential sites and examine present and future agricultural demand. Agri-business is hesitant to make long-term investment to support farming that might not exist.

Mr. Treloar said that infrastructure was a specific agenda item that needed the committee's attention. He said the existing list is out-of-date and asked the committee to review the list and make appropriate changes. Mr. Holloway talked about new satellite hub fertilizer distributors that might open in central locations. Dave Daniels and Andy Lois described the limited rail that FS conserve is using with its 5 mph RR siding. Andy Lois mentioned CPI's existing hubs in Genoa City and Burlington, covering each side of the river. Mr. Treloar said he would add siting recommendation to the new FPP.

Pros and Cons of Certified and Non-Certified A-1 Agricultural Preservation District Areas

Mr. Treloar then asked the committee to consider the pros and cons of establishing certified and non-certified A-1 Agricultural Preservation District areas. Mr. Treloar explained the concept and how it would bring the Farmland Preservation Plan (FPP) in-line with the comp plan. He explained the FPP has to identify areas of non-development for the next 15-years. If we take the area targeted for non-development in the comp plan and make them our certified farmland preservation districts, we can protect 40,000 acres of farmland and be perfectly consistent with our comprehensive plan, which was adopted last May. The certified district map in the hand-outs contains the farmland recommended for protection in the comp land use plan and any town or village land use plan with phase years thru 2025. Mr. Treloar reminded the committee that the revised FPP looks at land use for the next 15 years.

The general consensus of the committee was that most farmers want to farm until someone comes along and makes them an offer they can't refuse. Kenosha County has a lot of older or absentee farmers. Landowners, who no longer work their own land, but rent it out. Mr. Treloar explained that landowners with renter/operators are still eligible for the tax credits if they meet the other requirements.

It was decided that the town and village stakeholders would need to take the certified agricultural preservation districts concept back to their citizen/boards for further discussion. Everyone agreed that it would solve the problem of labeling areas farmland preservation, when the comp land use map recommends something other than Ag related uses. Bill Morris said that when Somers developed its neighborhood plans they held several public meetings to discuss future land use, with very poor turn out from their rural landowners. There was more discussion about how many farmers would actually be interested in the tax credits. Jean Werbie of Pleasant Prairie wanted the Village to be included because their APO district does identify areas for farmland preservation. Mr. Treloar said that defined farmland preservation areas could be included in the certified Agricultural Preservation District. He also reminded the committee that there is always the option of amending the comp plan or local land use plan to meet future trends.

FPP Application Certification and Timelines

Mr. Treloar explained the timelines for plan adoption. He said the scope and timelines are in the handouts, that the plan has to be completed before December 31, 2011. He also told the committee that the DATCP application for certification was in the handouts which detailed plan requirements. He said that he had begun drafting the inventory chapters which he hoped to offer for committee approval by the next meeting.

Other Business

None

Determination of Time, Date, and Place Of Next Meeting

The next meeting then will tentatively be on March 28, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. Notification and agendas will be sent out prior to that date.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Meeting minutes prepared by
April A. Webb, Administrative Secretary