

MINUTES
SAUK COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

April 15, 2010

UW-Extension ETN
West Square Building

Meeting called to order by Chair Wiese at 8:30 a.m. It was certified that the requirements of the open meeting law have been met. Present were Borleske, Kriegl, Puttkamer, Wiese and Zowin from the Committee; Van Berkel and Pohle-LCD. Simmert-P&Z attended for a portion of the discussion regarding the Farmland Preservation Program. Posewitz was absent.

Adopt agenda: Motion by Borleske/Puttkamer to adopt the agenda. Motion carried, all in favor.

Adopt minutes of previous meeting: Motion by Borleske/Puttkamer to adopt the minutes of the regular LCC meeting on March 23. Motion carried, all in favor.

Public comment: None.

Compile scoresheets and discuss 2011 department programs and priorities: Committee discussed the department's programs and priorities and the level of staffing needed to meet these program demands. To address the program priorities would require 8.5 full-time staff but at present we have 7.5 full-time staff due to the loss of two positions through attrition.

Discussion regarding implementation of a 2011 Farmland Preservation Program user fee: Existing participants have three years to get into compliance to be eligible for the new Working Lands Initiative credits. The changes will result in significant increases in credit levels, but it also generates a huge increase in the Department workload to bring people into compliance in the three-year term. Because of the staff loss through attrition, the Department is not meeting present obligations and will be even further behind because of the new rule requirements. Van Berkel proposed the initiation of a \$.50 per acre participation fee to use toward a staff person to assist with the conservation planning workload. The fee would generate between \$36,000 to \$50,000 per year depending on participation levels. This would provide at least 50 percent of the cost of a position. The fee would cause some administration and enforcement challenges, but the timing is right because of the increasing credit benefits and workload obligations. The fee would be a user fee for farms that are receiving program benefits and would amount to 7 percent of the credit provided to participants by the state. Committee members voiced concerns regarding the farm economy and the impact on participation if they initiated a fee. There were also concerns about some of the rules proposed as a part of the Working Lands Initiative regarding limits on the number of lots created based upon a farm parcel. Brian Simmert of Planning and Zoning was brought in to explain some of the new program rules. The majority of the Committee members were opposed to initiation of a user fee at this time.

Consider submission of 2011 position request form: Committee agreed there is a need for restoring one of the Conservation Technician positions out of the two lost over the last two years through attrition. The need will become even more critical as we implement the Working Lands Initiative requirements. Position requests need to be submitted by May 15. The Personnel Committee and Finance Committee review position requests at a joint meeting in June. Borleske, Zowin and Wiese offered to appear at the meeting to support the restoration of the position. Motion by Zowin/Borleske to submit a position request to restore one of the vacant Conservation Technician positions for 2011. Motion carried, all in favor.

Consider approval of contract with Veolia Environmental Services for disposal at Clean Sweep event: The contract is an extension of the state contract to serve grant funded Clean Sweeps and provides disposal at the bid prices provided to the state. Motion by Zowin/Borleske to approve the contract. Motion carried, all in favor.

Communications:

- A. Thursday Note(s)-Van Berkel reviewed the April 15 Thursday Note. Pohle encouraged to LCC members to participate in planning the WLWCA Conference.
- B. DNR land purchase notification-DNR announced the purchase of a 155.8 acre parcel in the Pine Island Wildlife Area.
- C. Jolene York's application for a teacher scholarship. Her application was approved at the March LCC meeting pending application submission and meeting the requirements.

Review and approval of vouchers: Voucher summaries were distributed to the Committee members. Motion by Zowin/Borleske to approve bills in the amount of \$10,225.39. Motion carried, all in favor.

Legislative updates: The end of session is very near. Legislature is still considering the groundwater bill, a bill to reintroduce the Wisconsin Conservation Corps, Karst legislation, the Clean Energy Act and others.

Reports:

- A. Land Conservation Department (LCD) report-Van Berkel reviewed the monthly report and highlighted some of March's activities.
- B. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) report-None.
- C. Farm Service Agency (FSA) report-SURE payments are going out as fast as possible.
- D. Foresters' report-None.
- E. Economic Development Committee report-Did a tour of the Health Care Center property. Auction of all the excess furnishings will be held on May 13. Also county departments can put items on the auction.
- F. Mirror Lake District report-Meeting on April 22.
- G. Lake Virginia Management District report-Held their quarterly meeting. There was a problem with the gate leaking, they lost almost all of their water. Talking about dredging.

H. Lake Redstone Management District report-Meeting April 14, newsletter getting ready to go out, changing website provider, prioritized four projects and getting costs to present at annual meeting, have a lot of pesticide Cutrine to give away, considering a request from Jon Field, Juneau County NRCS, for assistance with some farm projects.

Motion to adjourn until May 6 at 9:00 a.m. by Borleske/Zowin at 10:55 a.m. Motion carried, all in favor.

Linda Borleske, Secretary