

FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN COMMITTEE
JUNE 7, 2016 – 12:30 P.M.
AMNICON TOWN HALL
8985 US-2, SOUTH RANGE, WISCONSIN

Meeting called to order by Vice-chair Jim Streveler at 12:35pm.

Present – Jane Anklam, Amy Eliot, Debbi King, Mark Liebaert, Larry Luostari, Sue O’Halloran, Christine Ostern, Jim Streveler, Jon TePoel and Terry White. Absent – Dave Dumke, Charlie Glazman, Gary Haughn, Nathan Johnstad, Gary Kane, Steve Rannenberg and Robert Wicklund.

Motion by Terry White, second by Jon TePoel, to approve the minutes from the April 12, 2016 meeting. Motion passed.

An overview of the Watershed-approach to Wetland Management Plan was given by Sue O’Halloran. Comments about how climate change is expected to impact agriculture in the county will be offered by Jane Anklam in discussion throughout the meeting by Jane Anklam.

The committee discussed the following elements for the plan that had not been covered to date:

Current Trends: There are no known non-traditional farm “trends” in Douglas County associated with cranberries and aquaculture. However the plan should include:

- Support for cranberry bogs with the proper permits.
- There is anecdotal evidence that small businesses with short-term seasons, such as maple syrup or Christmas tree production are becoming more popular. Decisions to include/reclassify future non-traditional farming activities will be made when the FPP is reviewed and updated.

Key Agricultural Resources (including available land, soil, and water resources).

- Include the Wisconsin Land Legacy Report Highway 2 Grasslands on the Farmland Preservation Map.
- Do not allow CAFOs in areas with high susceptibility to groundwater contamination in order to protect wells as well as spring water/artesian resources in Douglas County.

The following were identified as needs to adequately support existing/future agriculture activity:

- Full time county ag agent
- USDA meat inspector
- Meat processors
- Cheese processors
- Veterinarians that can handle unique farm animals
- Research farm
- Transportation specialist to address logistics and capitalize on shipping ports.
- Support (trucking/marketing) for diversified markets, such as apples, onions, organic, berries, nuts, bison, and elk (see examples from Bayfield County).

Key Land Use Issues Related to Preserving Agriculture:

- Fallow lands that are reverting back to wetland because they are no longer in production. It is not sure how many acres fall in this category. It is also not certain that they should be preserved for farming, since wetland laws may be involved if farming activity is resumed.

Recommend that farmlands reverting back to wetland be captured in the watershed based management strategy adopted by the county and that these areas remain on the preserved farmland map.

Key issues for Douglas County farming:

- Wildlife damages cause by wolves are a problem in Douglas County. The real cost of losing animals to wolves is much higher than estimated when time, effort and stress are included in the calculation. Douglas County FPP recommends that the Farmers Union and Cattlemen's Association continue to be involved in state management planning for wolves and that the wolf be delisted by the federal government so that the state can manage wolf populations.

Production Issues from Disease and Illness:

- Although liver flukes and avian influenza are concerns in Douglas County, the threat is not unique and no specific trends are being reported. Farmers are able to keep Black's disease under control with vaccinations.

Phosphorus Challenges:

- The problem is less of a problem in DC, due to fewer crops, however, more farms (in all categories of farming) should be nutrient management planning.

The following "Vision" was accepted by the committee for the FPP. It is essentially the comp plan vision for Ag, with a few additions*:

*"By 2030, agriculture in Douglas County is thriving and is a well-balanced part of the overall economy in partnership with sustainable forest management and strong protection policies for water, air and soil.
Existing agricultural lands and prime farmlands are maintained and preserved to meet the present and future needs of agriculture in the community.

Douglas County promotes:

A diverse array of agricultural products;

Zoning and other policies that protects productive agricultural land;

Forests managed according to best management practices;

Maintaining the current balance of forest, agricultural and recreational land;

**The preservation of historically farmed and prime farmlands designated on the Douglas County Prime Farmland Map approved in 2016."*

The ag associated goals, objectives and policies from existing county plans were reviewed and edited. Amy was directed to reorganize, eliminate redundant statements and combine related issues. The FPP Committee will review these along with the plan narrative via email and hard copy. Amy will send a 2nd draft of the narrative and the revised goals, etc. ASAP. The FPP will return any comments to Amy by July 15th.

The committee agreed to extend the meeting until 3:00pm.

The committee discussed the method for rolling the plan out to the towns for review. Amy will attend the Town of Cloverland meeting on June 22nd as a test run, even though the documents will not be finalized. She will use the town's feedback to help present to the DC Town's Association meeting on July 19th.

Farmland Preservation Plan Next Steps and Tentative Schedule:

- FPP Send Comments to Amy by July 15th
- Attend Cloverland meeting on June 22nd as a test run and feedback about presenting to the town.
- Update to LCC – July 19th (10 am)
- Presentation at DC Town's Association July 19th (eve)
- Notify DATCP of progress
- Information meeting only to DC Board – August 18th
- 2nd Draft to FPP by September 1th for approval (Meet Sept 8th if needed??)
- Approved draft to LCC and notice of public hearing to DATCP - September 20th
- FPP Resolution to DC Board for approval – October 20th.

Motion by Terry White, second by Debbi King to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:10pm.

Submitted by,
Christine Ostern, County Conservationist