

Ashland County Land Conservation Committee
April 28, 2017
Ashland County LWCD Office

Approved
Minutes
6/16/17

Present:

George Mika	Tom Fratt
Gerry Richardson	Mike Pero
Ken Lindquist	Jeannine Welty
Caryl Peck	Pete Russo
Charlie Ortman	
Tom Waby	
Joe Rose	
Frank Kempf	

Excused: Dave Schultz

Call to order: by George Mika @ 9:30 AM. The meeting had been properly noticed and a quorum was present.

Minutes: **Motion to approve minutes of 3/10/17 by Lindquist/Richardson. MC.**

At Chairman Mika's request, the committee made a motion to amend the agenda to allow Kathy Schutte to present prior to public comment. **Motion to amend the agenda made by Richardson/Rose. MC.**

Agenda Item #1: Marengo Agricultural Mural Presentation

- County Board Supervisor Kathy Schutte spoke on upcoming Dedication of Mural representing Farmers and Tractors is Saturday May 27 at 1pm. This event will take place at the Mural Park in Marengo, WI and all are welcome. Kathy passed around some photographs that will be used to develop the mural paintings.

Public Comments: Seven people attended the meeting and seven people provided comment during this period. Fratt read an email from one person who had requested that their comments be presented to the committee. Another person provided personal comment, but also relayed comments from several "Resist" postcards given to her. Six of the seven had concerns with manure entering water, manure causing health problems, and concerns with aerial spraying of manure. One commenter did not want to reiterate the other comments, but said that they were very happy that the LCC was working to establish the advisory group.

Agenda Item #2: Recommendation to County Board to Approve Resolution to Apply for a WDNR River Protection Grant.

- Fratt clarified that although the LCC previously created a resolution to support the grant application, the DNR requires that the resolution come from the full county board with some specific language added. Our understanding is that this is a formality, and that we will receive the grant when this step is completed. **Motion made by Rose/Ortman to send the revised resolution to the full County Board for consideration on May 18.**

Agenda Item #3: Ashland County Agricultural Ordinance Development

- The committee had previously made the decision to create an advisory group and to empower Fratt to determine how to populate the group. Although Fratt had made some name suggestions at the last LCC meeting, he wanted feedback from the "core group" members of Jason Fischbach, Charles Ortman, and Caryl Peck. Jeff Beirl was asked to participate to provide the larger county perspective. The core group agreed that the advisory group would consist of nine representatives: two LCC members (Ortman and Peck), one from the City of Ashland, one Tribal representative, two Dairy farmers, and three "at large". It was further decided that the at-large representatives would submit a short application, and Jeff would select 3 applicants to provide a diverse and balanced group. Applications were available at the LCC meeting, were posted on the County website, and

have been distributed via email to those expressing interest. Applications for the at-large positions would be due to Beirl by the COB on Monday May 15, 2017. Selection will be made soon after that with the hope of having the first advisory group meeting in late May or early June.

- Research by Beirl about the Wisconsin open meetings law confirmed that the advisory group will be a “governmental body” requiring agendas, public notice, and minutes. The core group felt that it would be best to receive just written public comments at the advisory group meetings to make the most efficient use of time. Other venues to hear oral comments are available at LCC meetings, County Board meetings and any public hearings related to the ordinance(s).
- The advisory group should largely be self-directed to make decisions on “when, where, and how often” to meet; how public input will be solicited and documented, how far and how fast to go; and how “education and information” will be provided to the advisory group, special interests, the general public, LCC, and the county board.
- Beirl had previously commented that his desires for the advisory group are 1) The Conservationist is the author who provides draft documents for comment. 2) The advisory group has “equal representation” or as close to it as we can get. 3) The advisory group works toward a point of consensus, then provides recommendations to the LCC to act upon.
- Fischbach and Ortman both commented that establishing the advisory group and following the open meetings law provides a level of transparency, legitimacy, and balance needed for these controversial issues. Fratt urged the LCC to resist rehashing previous decisions and getting too caught up in the details of the process, but rather to keep moving forward doing the best we can.
- Mika ended the discussion by saying that the advisory group and LCC should be able to keep making progress.

2. Conservation and Staff Reports :

- Fratt provided his written report and mentioned an addition to the calendar of the NRCS local work group for June 28th in Spooner. He reported that presumably there will be two grants/agreements in effect in 2017 – a NRCS contribution agreement, and an agreement with the USFWS for the Partners in Fish and Wildlife Program, although neither of these have completed contracts yet. Fratt also asked for volunteers to help with 2017 Tree & Shrub sale stating we pre-sold lots of trees providing record scholarship funds this year.
- Pero provided his written report and fielded questions.
- Schultz was excused from meeting, but provided his report as a hand-out.
- Welty’s provided a written report as a hand-out.

3. Agency and Partner Reports

- None provided

Other Business:

- No other business, but casual conversation about the selection and make-up of the agricultural ordinance advisory group ensued

Approval of Bills: Richardson/Ortman. MC

Next meeting date: Friday June 16, 2017 @9:30am

Adjourn: 11:15 am by Chairman Mika