

**Walworth County Board of Supervisors
Land Conservation Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 15, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.
Walworth County Government Center, County Board Room 114
100 W. Walworth Street, Elkhorn, Wisconsin**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Brian Holt at 1:00 p.m.

Roll call was conducted and the following members were present, either in person or by remote attendance: Chair Brian Holt; Vice Chair Daniel Kilkenny; Supervisor Nancy Russell; FSA Representative Sharon Travis; and Citizen Member Rosemary Badame. A quorum was declared.

Others in Attendance either in person or by remotely:

County Staff: Corporation Counsel/Director of Land Use and Resource Management (LURM) Michael Cotter; Acting Deputy Director of LURM/Sr. Urban Conservation Specialist Fay Amerson; and Conservation Technician Josie Hanrahan.

Members of the Public: Agricultural Land Use Specialist, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Timothy Jackson and Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEA) Program Specialist, Wisconsin DATCP Wednesday Jordan.

On motion by FSA Representative Travis, second by Citizen Member Badame, the agenda was approved with no withdrawals.

On motion by Supervisor Russell, second by FSA Representative Travis, the minutes of the January 18, 2021 Land Conservation Committee Meeting were approved.

Public Comment – There was none.

New Business

6. Farmland Preservation Plan Update – Collaboration with Units of Government
Agricultural Land Use Specialist, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Timothy Jackson has contacted the Town of Bloomfield, who currently is not under county zoning, attempting to get them involved in the plan update and to consider future participation in farmland preservation. A meeting has been scheduled for Monday with the Town Chair Dan Schoonover, Acting Deputy Director of LURM/Sr. Urban Conservation Specialist Fay Amerson along with other employees of Walworth County, and Jackson to discuss the matter. Jackson proceeded to give a brief presentation that was distributed to committee members prior to the meeting, relative to the Exterritorial Zone (ETZ) districts for the City of Elkhorn and Villages of Fontana and Williams Bay. Corporation Counsel/Director of Land Use and Resource Management (LURM) Michael Cotter noted an error in the contact information for the Village of Williams Bay and stated David Bretl is acting as the Interim Administrator. Discussion ensued.

Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEA) Program Specialist, Wisconsin DATCP Wednesday Jordan stated Walworth County may include an agricultural enterprise area as one of the goals within the plan and that planning grant funding may be used to help implement this in the future. Jordan referred to and briefly explained the last page of the presentation entitled Petitioning for an Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA).

7. Farmland Preservation Plan Update – Approval of Farmland Preservation Planning Grant Application Resolution

Amerson gave a brief overview of a proposed resolution authorizing LURM to sign and submit a Farmland Preservation Planning Grant Application to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and to enter into a grant agreement with DATCP for the preparation of the Walworth

County Farmland Preservation Plan Update. **Supervisor Russell offered a motion, second by Citizen Member Badame, to approve the proposed resolution and for the resolution to move forward to the County Board. Motion carried 5-0.**

8. Farmland Preservation Plan Update – Plan advisory Committee Recruitment

Amerson requested direction of the Land Conservation Committee (LCC), as to whether or not they would like to devise a Citizens Advisory Committee to collect information relative to the Farmland Preservation Plan. Amerson noted she has been in contact with several Town Chairmen who are interested, as they have quite a bit of farmland within their townships. Cotter stated the townships and farmers will be relying on this plan and expressed the need for caution, when choosing individuals to sit on the committee and to make certain the members are aware of the duties required of them. Amerson mentioned the possibility of reaching out to the Villages of Fontana and Williams Bay, City of Elkhorn, and Town of Bloomfield independently of the Citizens Advisory Committee. Discussion then focused on creating a Citizens Advisory Committee consisting of eleven members:

- Seven seats for farmers (preferably one farmer from Bloomfield, Sharon Travis if she chooses to do so, and Richard Kuhnke who also sits on the County Zoning Agency)
- One seat for a Township Representative
- One seat for a Nature Conservancy Representative
- One seat for a Michael Fields Agricultural Institute Representative
- One seat for Land Conservation Committee Chair Brian Holt

There was further discussion as to whether or not one seat should be for a gravel pit operator, since there is policy consideration for a non-metallic mining or gravel pit in prime farmland. The final decision was to handle the gravel pits separately. The advisory committee will begin meeting in March 2021 and continue through March 2022. Interviews will not be required of the members. The Land Conservation Committee will ultimately make the decisions. **Supervisor Russell offered a motion, second by Citizen Representative Badame, directing the Land Use and Resource Management (LURM) Department to compile a list for the March LCC meeting consisting of eleven individuals to serve on a Citizens Advisory Committee, as discussed. Motion carried 5-0.** Chair Holt concluded by thanking Mr. Jackson and Ms. Jordan for their update and for attending the meeting.

9. Approval of Walworth County LURM Plan through 12/31/30

Cotter referred to the memorandum and signed copy of the Walworth County Land and Water Resource Management (LWRM) Plan through December 31, 2030 (Pages 9-12) and requested a motion to accept the plan. **FSA Representative Travis offered a motion, second by Supervisor Russell, to accept the Walworth County LURM Plan through 12/31/30. Motion carried 5-0.**

10. Invasive Species Public Education & Outreach

Amerson gave a brief overview of her memorandum (Page 13) relative to Lesser Celandine, Phragmites, and Japanese Knotweed. There are two virtual training sessions planned to help educate the public and municipal public works staff on three invasive species and their impact on Walworth County. Discussion then focused on posting information and materials relative to the virtual training on the County website in both English and Spanish for the public to access and for Amerson to reach out to local landscaping firms to help promote awareness and attendance. Cotter announced that Amerson is the Acting Deputy Director of LURM until a replacement can be found.

11. 2021 Landscape Contractors Virtual Workshop / March 24, 2021

Amerson announced LURM would be sponsoring a virtual workshop intended for landscape contractors, waterfront property owners, and other interested persons focusing on shoreland zoning and environmental regulations, and highlighting best management practices to improve shoreland habitat and water quality within Walworth County. The virtual workshop will take place on March 24, 2021.

12. Wisconsin Water Week – March 8-12

Amerson stated the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) would be sponsoring a virtual interactive experience the week of March 8-12. She briefly reviewed the details found on Page 23. LCC members are welcome to attend and LURM offered to cover the cost.

13. Lake Monitoring and Protection Network Project - Update

Amerson and Cotter collaboratively gave a brief update relative to the Lake Monitoring and Protection Network Project. The State of Wisconsin allocated for every county to receive \$16,100 to perform studies for aquatic invasive species (AIS) and lake monitoring. Until written communication has been received confirming the award of grant money, LURM does not anticipate hiring an intern and/or contracting with the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) to perform the tasks required under the grant. Amerson noted SEWRPC is fully capable of performing the DNR meander studies for AIS, water quality monitoring, and ice thickness and extent on lakes. Data collection needs to be consistent and must follow protocol. Educating the public and placing information on the County website can be performed in house.

14. 2021 Conservation Poster Contest

Conservation Technician Josie Hanrahan provided a brief overview of the 2021 Conservation Poster Contest results and stated the winning posters are available for viewing outside the County Board Room. Certificates will be distributed to those who participated.

Chair Holt announced he would be attending the Wisconsin Land and Water Conference on March 2nd. He will be providing technical support and taking questions. There will be a number of LURM staff attending virtually.

Confirmation of next meeting – The next meeting was confirmed for Monday, March 15, 2021, at 1:00 p.m.

Adjournment

On motion by FSA Representative Travis, second by Supervisor Russell, the meeting adjourned at 1:47 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.