

**Walworth County Board of Supervisors
Land Conservation Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 18, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.
Walworth County Government Center
County Board Room 114
100 W. Walworth Street, Elkhorn, Wisconsin**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Charlene Staples at 2:00 p.m.

Roll call was conducted. Members present included Vice Chair Daniel Kilkenny, Supervisor Nancy Russell, Chair Charlene Staples, Citizen Member Rosemary Badame, and FSA Representative Sharon Travis. A quorum was declared.

Others in Attendance:

County Staff: Michael Cotter, Director of Land Use and Resource Management (LURM)/Deputy Corporation Counsel; and Shannon Haydin, Deputy Director/County Conservationist.

FSA Representative Travis offered a motion, second by Supervisor Kilkenny, to approve the agenda with one Amendment: Item #10 - Confirmation of next meeting - to reflect the year as 2019. The agenda as amended was approved.

On motion by FSA Representative Travis, second by Supervisor Kilkenny, the January 14, 2019 Land Conservation Committee meeting minutes were approved.

Public Comment – There was none.

New Business

- Citizen Farmland Preservation Letter related to the solar panel project in the Town of Darien Director of Land Use and Resource Management (LURM)/Deputy Corporation Counsel Michael Cotter stated there are no pending applications on file relating to solar panel projects and briefly summarized the process a property owner is required to follow, should they choose to commence with such a project. Cotter said a solar panel project with a 100 megawatt (MW) requirement or greater would not be regulated by County zoning, but would be regulated by the Wisconsin Public Service Commission (WPSC). The Land Conservation Committee (LCC) has very little influence and no veto power over the WPSC. Cotter said Iowa County formed a group to discuss a development agreement relative to important issues within the local community and stated Walworth County may wish to do the same. Discussion then focused on zoning requirements, potential effects on the Farmland Preservation Program, and Department of Agricultural Trade and Consumer Protection's (DATCP) position relative to the Farmland Preservation Program.

Public Comment:

Judy Gause of Darien, WI, and author of correspondence found on Page 5 of the packet regarding enforcement of the Farmland Preservation Program, spoke in opposition of the development of solar collector farms.

Neil Palmer, a representative of Invenergy, distributed a document entitled: Darien Solar Farm: February 2019 Status and spoke in favor of the proposed photovoltaic electric generating facility site of up to 250MW to be located in the Town of Darien, Walworth County and the Town of Bradford, Rock County.

Palmer also gave a brief overview of the Invenergy and Iowa County Badger Hollow Solar Farm project. Palmer stated there will be opportunities for the public to attend an informational open house, should the Darien Solar project move forward.

Peter Ligman of Bradford, WI, expressed concerns regarding public hunting grounds surrounding a proposed solar collection farm. He inquired as to the channeling of wildlife, fences, and whether or not public hunting will be allowed around the location. He also expressed concern relative to the devaluation of property.

Roger Millard of Darien, WI, spoke in opposition of the Darien Solar project and inquired as to the setback regulations and the decrease of property values. Millard requested that any public meetings be held during evening hours for attendance purposes.

Pam Collins of Clinton, WI, spoke in opposition of the Darien Solar project and inquired as to the potential health risks associated with solar collection farms and the decrease in property value.

Russ Paschke of Bradford, WI, spoke in opposition of the Darien Solar project and expressed concern with losing the privilege to discharge a firearm in the vicinity of the proposed solar farm. He stated Ag1 zoning does not refer to commercial development of electricity and he is concerned with the decrease in property values.

Cotter briefly explained the options available to the Committee.

Supervisor Kilkenny offered a motion, second by Citizen Member Badame, to lay this item on the table and to have Land Use and Resource Management (LURM) staff bring any proposed items forward to the Committee as necessary. Cotter announced that all agendas are posted to the County website and advised all interested parties to check it periodically. Haydin reiterated that WPSC ultimately makes the decision on solar projects 100MW or greater and advised those interested in reviewing the submitted documentation relating to the Iowa County project to go to the Wisconsin Public Service Commission website and look up Badger Hollow. **Motion carried 5-0.** Discussion ensued.

- 2019 Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association Annual Conference – Lake Geneva, WI
March 13-15, 2019

Haydin stated any LCC member who would like to attend the annual conference or make a contribution to a basket for the silent auction, that has not already done so, should contact her as soon as possible.

- Wis. Land & Water: Three resolutions to be considered at the 2019 annual business meeting on March 15th in Lake Geneva:
 - To Restore 3.6 Million in Funding to UW Extension – *North Central Area Association*
 - Recommend Changes to the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program – *Southern Area Association*
 - In Support of Reforming Wisconsin's Eminent Domain Laws – *Southern Area Association*

Haydin stated each year the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association puts forth advisory resolutions signifying to state policy makers that these issues are important to the association. Each county is allowed one vote on each resolution at the annual conference. If a resolution is passed, the association will then go on record letting the State Representatives know they are in support of that

particular issue. Discussion then focused on strengthening the language for resolution #3 to include additional limits on declaring property blighted, as a means to proceed with eminent domain.

Supervisor Russell stated that she supports all three resolutions.

Committee members requested Haydin to voice their opinion and to state that they would propose stronger language.

FSA Representative Travis offered a motion, second by Citizen Member Badame, to support all three resolutions. Motion carried 5-0.

▪ Walworth County 2019 Poster Contest

Haydin stated both 1st place winners for Grades 4-6: Hailey Wojciuch and Grades 7-9: Michaela Grace were awarded 2nd place at the Southeast Area Contest and will receive trophies. Haydin said she will be doing a press release.

Supervisor Kilkenny offered a motion, second by Supervisor Russell, to present the winners before the County Board of Supervisors or another Committee for recognition. Motion carried 5-0.

Confirmation of next meeting – The next meeting was confirmed for Monday, March 18, 2019, at 2:00 p.m.

Adjournment

On motion by FSA Representative Travis, second by Supervisor Kilkenny, the meeting adjourned at 2:54 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.

Submitted by Trisha Sommers, Administrative Assistant. Meeting minutes are not considered final until approved by the committee at the next regularly scheduled meeting.