

WASHINGTON COUNTY
PLANNING, CONSERVATION AND PARKS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2011

The meeting was called to order by John Stern at 7:00 p.m. at the Washington County Fair Park, 3000 County Highway PV, West Bend, WI. Those present included:

PCPC Members Present:

John Stern.....PCPC Chairperson
Mike MillerPCPC Vice Chairperson
Ray HeidtkeSecretary
Gerald Schulz.....County Board Supervisor
Mel Ewert.....County Board Supervisor
Mike BassillCounty Board Supervisor
Peter SorceCounty Board Supervisor

Staff:

Debora Sielski.....Deputy Administrator – Planning and Parks Dept.
Joshua Glass.....Planner – Planning and Parks Department
Paul SeboCounty Conservationist
Lynda ChristlProgram Assistant, Planning and Parks Dept
Joanne Wagner.....Office Manager- Planning and Parks Dept.

Present:

County Attorney Kimberly Nass
Kevin Struck, UWEX
Keith Foye, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS: Call Meeting to Order/Review Agenda

John Stern Called the meeting to order. Quorum present.

SECOND ORDER OF BUSINESS: Presentation of Appendix T – A Farmland Preservation Plan for Washington County as Amendment No. 2 of A *Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Washington County: 2035* – Debora Sielski

Ms. Sielski provided a review of this material via PowerPoint presentation.

THIRD ORDER OF BUSINESS:

PUBLIC HEARING: An opportunity for public comment on the final draft Appendix T – A Farmland Preservation Plan for Washington County as Amendment No. 2 to A *Multi-jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Washington County: 2035*.

Chairman Stern opened the Public Hearing and asked if there was anyone present who wished to speak for or against the final draft Appendix T – A Farmland Preservation Plan for Washington County as Amendment No. 2 to A *Multi-jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Washington County: 2035* as presented.

Present: Vern Eliason

Address: Camp Awana Road – (on Washington/Ozaukee County Line)
N6420 Camp Awana Rd. Fredonia, WI 53021

Comment: A little over a year ago, we had this initiative of PDR's on the ballot. It was soundly defeated. I want to know what the engine that keeps driving this thing is. Most of the people made their opinion known when they voted on this. Next concern is regarding these tax credits that you are giving to some farmers. Who is making up for the difference in the tax credit you are giving one person – who is paying the difference? Obviously you need so many dollars to run the County, but if you are going to give tax credits to one person, that has to be made up some place, and who is making that up? Those are the two things I had.

Present: Thomas Lepien

Address: 7273 W. Waterford Road, Hartford

Comment: In 1981, the old plan was adopted. Now we are moving into a new plan. Are people who don't want to move into the new plan going to have to pay a penalty? And how much? Judging from the numbers that I see in the back of the room here, you've got \$5.00 an acre which is the minimum 80 acres - \$400.00. Thirty years - \$12,000.00 plus interest. My next question is: with the new plan, have you got any penalties in that? Or are we just doling out money? I've got a real problem with that. So, I don't know where you plan on going, but if I were a farmer and had paid full load for 30 years, I might be going walking down Main Street to see somebody that's got a license. Thank you for your time.

Present: Jeff Gonyo

Address: 2668 Highway 164, Slinger, WI 53086

Comment: I am speaking here both on my behalf and on our Citizens Organization's behalf - Highway J Citizens Group, UA. I think we need to put a top priority on preserving our open spaces and our farm land because once it's gone, you won't get it back. The way I think it should be done is through a voluntary process similar to the voluntary check-off that you have on your State and Federal income taxes for election campaigning, where you check the box and it does not increase or decrease or effect the tax that you pay. It's just an allocation of funds to something that you want designated. I could see something like that on our County property tax bills, where when you pay your property tax you could check the box and allocate \$25.00 or \$50.00 of your property taxes into a special fund that could be used to purchase development

rights on at-risk farmland that's in especially the southern half of the county, which is at risk to development of prime farmland.

This would be purely voluntary, as citizens could decide whether it's good or bad and whether it should be allocated or not allocated. It would create a fund to purchase this property and it wouldn't affect the individual's taxes at the time they pay their taxes, it's just an allocation. I think the County should really look into that and have a County check-off on the property taxes much like the State and Federal tax forms have for elections. Thank you.

Present: Vern Eliason (*speaking second time*)

Address: N6420 Camp Awana Rd. Fredonia, WI 53021

Comment: Obviously, you can see that I am not for this. With property right now, most people's homes are currently underwater. A lot of people owe more than their places are worth. Now, you are asking us basically to reduce our farm values which is a double hit. You can't do a thing with these. If you go into this farmland preservation, your property is worthless at that point unless another farmer buys it. But, now you've got properties that are worth less than what people owe on them and you're asking us to actually reduce our property values even more. That's the problem with the Government. You guys just keep growing and you live off the backs of working people. I'm really sick of it.

Present: Al Wilhem

Address: 2718 Slinger Road, Richfield WI 53071

Comment: The County extended the sales tax with the stipulation that part of it was to buy farmland property rights. But then, when the new board members got in, that got voted down. Only the part that was supposed to buy farmland development rights, but not the sales tax. That kept on going. So, they should rescind the whole thing or give the money to help the farmers keep it as a farm.

Chairman Stern asked three times if anyone else wished to speak for or against the final draft Appendix T – A Farmland Preservation Plan for Washington County as Amendment No. 2 to A *Multi-jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Washington County: 2035* as presented.

No further comments.

Agenda completed at 7:30 p.m.

FOURTH ORDER OF BUSINESS: Adjournment

Motion by Supervisor Schulz seconded by Supervisor Heidtke to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

John W. Stern, Chairperson