

CAC MEETING NOTES
March 13, 2006
Farmington Town Hall

Meeting called to order at 7:31 p.m.

Attendees:

Mike Becker	Jim Dieringer	Shawn Graff (OWLT)
Brian Huiras	Doug Kohlwey	Rose Hass Leider
Bill Miller	Richard Mueller	Eric Rathke (Town of Fredonia)

(Jill Hewitt and Mike DeMaster were excused from attending)

DNR Attendees:

Tom Isaac	Dale Katsma	Bobbi Winebar
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UW-Extension Attendee:

Dan Wilson

No changes were made to the meeting notes for September 12, 2005.

UPDATES AND REVIEWS OF PARCELS RECENTLY PURCHASED

Dale Katsma presented an updated map of the North Branch of the Milwaukee River and Farming Heritage Area and indicated that the Stemper property is the newest property that is currently at the “Option to Purchase” stage. He also showed a transparency displaying the wetland and cropland locations of this property. Have applied for Federal Cost Sharing for this property.

There are two “offers to purchase” and one “offer for easement” currently being considered.

There are two “Fee” appraisals (40 acre parcels each) and 1 “Fee/Easement” appraisal done. Currently waiting for permission to make offers on these.

There is a lot of interest in the program right now—6 Easements need to have appraisals done and 6-7 others have been informed that they will have to wait another year due to lack of funding.

In response to a question, Dale said that the fee purchase offers would meet CAC criteria for fee purchase – both are riparian and/or wetland w/ ~ 30% agriculture.

Easements are being used for working farms. Bigger farms can use their federal easement statements for cost sharing.

Property owners can replace or add on to homes and add farm buildings in the farmstead area. If they are going to build outside of the farmstead, need to get approval.

Have to keep farming according to the NRCS farm plan and manage forests according to an approved forest plan.

Property is kept as a whole for easement purposes. It can be appraised separately if property is divided by a road.

Dan Wilson asked about the status of the Rex farm. Dale said that it is still for sale and that they want to develop it into bigger size lots.

Land values have been very high so it has been difficult to acquire properties.

PRESENT AND FUTURE FUNDING AVAILABILITY

The state gets about 37 million in Stewardship Funds per year to purchase land for the whole state. This is divided up between five DNR regions and five programs. In recent years there have been some large parcels available that used a significant portion of the funds. We are planning on applying for a 2 year NAWCA Grant to be able to purchase land on the NBMR and to restore wetlands. We will be able to use this for matching funds.

Federal Farmer-Ranch Land Protection Funding was reduced this year compared to last.

Shawn Graff indicated that the Ozaukee-Washington Land Trust is working with numerous organizations and have formed a task force that completed a report last month (website is www.lcpwc.org) on their program. This program would pay farmers to preserve large blocks of privately-owned land (similar to the NBMR project). They will be presenting this to the Washington County Board on March 14, 2006. If this project gets the board's approval, it will mean that the county is committed to spending at least \$800,000 a year on the program, but the board will still need to decide on the sources for funding. There is the potential that this could be a 3-way partnership and that the transfer development rights program could become a possibility. This project will score higher if properties are next to already protected properties. The Land Trust has focused mainly on the Milwaukee River Watershed and since its inception in 1992 has acquired 2092 acres in the watershed with 663 of those acres acquired this past two years. Shawn also mentioned that there are a lot of other counties getting interested in the PDR programs.

**The Washington County Board adopted this land program proposal by a 17-11 vote on March 14th!

EPA GRANT

This grant is being used to develop wetland assessment tools to identify and evaluate wetland management opportunities in the Milwaukee River Basin. Had to get 3 bids on the project and Earth Tech, an environmental company with an office in Sheboygan, won the bid. They will be working on 1) determining how reliable GIS information is by conducting field visits and comparing that to the GIS data, and 2) providing results to landowners to let them know whether they have a potentially restorable wetland (PRW) or not.

NBMR PROJECT NEWSLETTER

We will be working on getting another newsletter out to landowners before Earth Tech sends out the site visit permission cards. It was suggested that it would be helpful to mention the other funding sources that are involved in the NBMR project. The newsletter should also include that status of the project and possibly some maps.

GRAVEL PITS

Dale Katsma has received several calls about the Ozaukee County gravel pit from neighbors that have some concerns about a zoning change. Dale wanted to make the CAC members aware of this issue. Responding to a question related to mining (mineral rights) on easement acquisitions, Dale said that the federal easement doesn't allow mining on their properties (except for on farm use) but the State could consider allowing it on state held easements if the area was reclaimed in some beneficial way and there was a definitive time limit.

NEXT MEETING:

Tentatively scheduled for September 11, 2006 at 7:30 p.m. at the Farmington Town Hall

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.