

Winnebago County Municipalities, Towns & County Comprehensive Planning Committee

Minutes of Meeting: Wednesday, January 30, 2002
Winneconne Town Hall – 7:00 P.M.

Chairman Ray Batley called the meeting to order at 7:04 P.M.

Chairman Batley presented the agenda for the evening; discussion of the “Agricultural Element of the Comprehensive Plan”. Mike Koles then proceeded to introduce this segment using visual aids. Mike presented a comprehensive overview of the history of land conversion from agricultural to development giving national and Wisconsin statistics about past land conversion. Some of the highlights of this portion of the presentation were:

Nationally: 1982-92 13.8 million acres diverted to development
1992-97 11.2 million acres diverted to development

Wisconsin: 1982-92 241,000 thousand acres diverted to development
1992-97 188,000 thousand acres diverted to development

Winnebago County: Land diverted to development:

1990-97	6,756 acres
1998	605 acres
1999	550 acres
2000	353 acres

During the decade of the 1990's 2.2 to 3.9 acres were diverted per day to development.

Mike went on to discuss the general decline in farm income since 1940 to an all time low in currently adjusted dollars. One of the problems Mike stipulated was the milk pricing policies that impacted dairy farmers significantly. Mike also discussed the mounting pressure on the farm community to divert land to development. Simply, land is more valuable for development than it is for farm use. Sales of land in Winnebago County average out to \$2,161/acre when selling from agricultural use to agricultural use and \$4,123/acre when going from agricultural use to developmental use. Mike also stipulated that the aging farm ownership population contributed to the mounting pressure on conversion. The question for the committee was stated as, “Can farmland be saved?”

This introduction led to a far ranging discussion and general participation from nearly everyone on the committee. Many issues were touched but few conclusions were reached.

Mike then quickly led the committee in a brief overview of the need for a public participation plan. Discussed the formation of a sub-committee to work through a “Request for Proposal” from a consultant to lead the committee through the land use element.

The next meeting was set for Thursday, February 21, 2002 at 7:00 P.M. at the Neenah town hall.

Meeting adjourned by Chairman Batley at 9:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, John Schaidler, Secretary Pro-Temp