



**MINUTES**  
**ROCK COUNTY PDR/PACE AD HOC COMMITTEE**  
**TUESDAY, JUNE 29, 2010, 6:30 P.M.**  
**COUNTY COURTHOUSE - CONFERENCE ROOM 250**  
**JANESVILLE WI**

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Sweeney called the meeting of the PDR/PACE Ad Hoc Committee to order at 6:30 p.m.

**Committee Members Present:** Chair Alan Sweeney, John Lader, Ron Combs, Dave Rebout, Brad Cantrell, Neil Deupree, Charley Rusch, Doug Marklein, Archie Morton, Ray Henschler, Todd Schmidt, Fred Hookham, Don Jones and Julie Backenkeller

**Committee Members Absent:** Bill Barlass, Scott Farrington, Julie Christenson, Mark Gunn, Rich Bostwick, Ramona Flanigan and Neil Walter,

**Staff Present:** Tom Sweeney, LCD; Paul Benjamin, Planning; Steve Schraufnagel, Planning; Carrie Houston, Planning; and Wade Thompson, Planning.

2. **Adoption of Agenda:** Chair Sweeney entertained a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Neil Deupree motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Don Jones. **Motion Carried.**
3. **Adoption of Minutes:** Chair Sweeney entertained a motion to adopt the minutes from the May 18, 2010 meeting. John Lader motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Archie Morton. **Motion Carried.**
4. **Citizen Participation, Communications, and Announcements:** Archie Morton noted the Focus on Agriculture meeting to occur at the Roger Rebout and Sons farm on June 30, 2010.
5. **Discussion of LESA Factor Maps:** Wade Thompson, Planning stated four topics will be discussed this evening, LESA Score Map, General Target Easement Acquisition Area Map, LESA Factor Maps, and the next steps in the process. Wade continued with the LESA Score Map discussion, noting that three categories were developed from the factor scores that were weighted: Tier One Farmland - Most suitable, Tier Two - Suitable; and Tier Three - Least Suitable. Wade noted that approximately 300 parcels were rated, comprising 244,208 acres. Statistical analysis was performed on the data to develop each category. The final map resulted in approximately 25% of eligible acres in Tier One, 50% in Tier Two and 25% in Tier Three. These statistics are contained on the map. Wade continued his discussion with a quote from Professor Tom Daniels, University of Pennsylvania, stating protection of a critical mass of farmland is a vital step in effective farmland preservation. The next level of analysis of the LESA Score Map was developed with this statement in mind, protection of a critical mass of Tier One Farmland. Wade explained the next map he presented, General Target Easement Acquisition Areas, stating Tier One and higher scoring Tier Two farmlands were grouped into potential acquisition area clusters. The map identified 21 clusters.

Archie Morton asked for clarification regarding the numbering system represented on the map. Wade noted the numbering was done in a clockwise manner and only represents the total number of clusters.

Julie Backenkeller asked for clarification regarding the areas represented by the orange color. Wade noted these areas are parcels already under some formal protection from development.

John Lader asked how the clusters were formed. Wade Thompson noted that the development of the clusters was done subjectively. Clusters followed political boundaries where applicable and were kept to a certain manageable size.

Neil Deupree noted that the clusters were formed in the critical areas and used to develop critical masses of agriculture land. Once the program is developed, staff would pick a specific cluster area and encourage landowners to apply for the program, with applications for the program coming from various points throughout the county. Wade noted the clusters were formed for Information and Education purposes. The program's initial I&E efforts will be in these clusters, encouraging landowners to apply for the program. Wade noted the program application will have a subjective list of factors added as part of the post LESA process. This will refine the program's process in terms of where efforts should be focused to preserve critical masses of agricultural land. Wade noted this will be discussed in more detail at future meetings.

Neil Deupree noted that at previous meetings concerns were expressed that LESA scores may impact municipalities. Brad Cantrell stated that the map presented addresses a lot of the City of Janesville's concerns, however Brad noted he believes that with a slight adjustment, this effort could be consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan. Brad noted specifically he has concerns about the preservation of the City of Janesville's urban reserve area. Brad noted Beloit has a similar urban reserve area. Brad noted the easements are permanent and will conflict with the City's development. The City should have a role with choosing which properties would be protected with easements. Wade noted this would come up for discussion at future meetings. Julie Backenkeller noted that the urban reserve area, noted by Brad, could be removed upon recommendation by the City Council. Brad noted that the vision should be not for 10 – 25 years but for 100 years and beyond. Archie Morton noted that the map has a large amount of non-eligible land within the city urban reserve area. Archie noted that the map represents a good compromise. Todd Schmidt gave the City of Milton perspective on this issue as well. Wade noted the system was built objectively by the Committee and the results are depicted on the map. John Lader asked that the urban reserve areas be overlaid on the maps to show the conflict areas and the acres involved. Todd Schmidt asked for a caveat to his earlier discussion in that the urban reserve on a map today will expand as cities expand in the future, which he asked that the clusters would also change to reflect the cities maps. Julie Backenkeller noted that the City of Janesville has a large volume of development area within their boundaries and preservation of farmland is for future generations, and that we need to figure out a different way of development. Todd Schmidt noted that the City of Milton's Comprehensive plan has pages dedicated to Farmland Preservation. Wade noted that rank and priority of the General Target Easement Acquisition Areas will be addressed at the next meeting and the map will be refined further.

Doug Marklein asked how much weight was placed on the distance from other protected lands factor. Wade stated the weight assigned was approximately 0.06. Doug Marklein continued that as we protect land, the neighboring lands score would increase and then create more eligible clusters. Wade stated that this might not be true, it would depend if the parcel in question had a high LESA Score. Wade noted that every couple of years the LESA will be rerun and changes posted.

Ray Henschler asked about the issue of perpetuity, if it was created from the Federal Level, State Level or County Level. Wade stated it would hinge on where the money comes from to purchase the easement. Ray continued with the statement he has a problem with some landowners not having an opportunity to apply for this program based on the map presented.

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Ron Combs noted that the clusters presented on the map are not or probably would not be under development pressure for the foreseeable future. Ron stated that we need to be responsible to the taxpayers and ensure that we justify the purchase of easements. Tom Sweeney responded stating the federal and state grant systems require that a balance be struck between the interests of cities and the long-term protection of farmland. Tom noted that when we began program development, we stated that our target areas would be 1-2 miles from current city boundaries. The map Wade presented shows just that.

Wade stated he ran a comparative analysis of our LESA scores against the state and federal scoring methodology. Wade stated the higher the LESA score the higher the state and federal scores. Wade stated this proves our system is on track and is an encouraging sign.

During the discussion wrap up, Wade noted the next map will be further refined and will contain the City's of Janesville and Beloit urban reserve areas.

6. **Questions and Discussion:** Chair Sweeney called for any questions or further discussion. Brad Cantrell stated he still feels uncomfortable regarding the urban reserve area issue as discussed previously. Archie Morton would like an overlay of town's map for preserving farmland. Dave Rebout would like a report of the acres affected regarding overlaps for urban reserve areas and clusters presented on the General Target Easement Acquisition Areas Map.
7. **Future Meeting Date:** Chair Sweeney recommended July 21, 2010 with a 6:30 p.m. start time as the next meeting date.
8. **Adjournment:** Ron Combs motioned to adjourn the PDR/PACE Ad Hoc Committee at 8:00 p.m., seconded by Todd Schmidt. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Thomas Sweeney  
County Conservationist

**Minutes are not official until adopted by the PDR/PACE Ad Hoc Committee.**

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