



## MINUTES

### ROCK COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MONDAY NOVEMBER 2, 2020, 7:15 P.M. Virtual Meeting - Zoom

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Bostwick called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm.  
  
**Committee Members Present:** Stephanie Aegerter, Rich Bostwick, Wes Davis, Kaelyb Lokrantz, Mike Mulligan, James Quade and Alan Sweeney  
  
**Committee Members Excused:** None  
  
**Others Present:** Andrew Baker and Duane Collins, Staff
2. **Approval of Agenda:** Andrew noted that Action would not be taken on Item 9 (proposed Illicit Discharge Ordinance) since the Resolution was not completed with proper notes, but we could still discuss it since it is on the agenda. Supervisor Mulligan moved to approve the agenda as written, seconded by Supervisor Lokrantz. **Motion carried unanimously.**
3. **Approval of Minutes –October 7, 2020 LCC meeting.** Supervisor Davis moved the approval of the minutes with the addition of the work “extension” in the motion for Item 9, so it reads...”Motion to approve six month extension...,” seconded by Supervisor Mulligan. **Motion carried unanimously.**
4. **Citizen Participation, Communications, and Announcements:** None
5. **Review Bills Paid:** The Committee reviewed the bills to be paid. Supervisor Davis asked about the fees paid to the DNR. Andrew explained that when annual fees are collected from Reclamation Permit holders, a portion thereof is collected on behalf of the DNR for their role in program overview. This portion of the fee is set by Administrative Code. The County’s portion of the fee is based on annual budget, but Statutes specifically state that fees collected cannot exceed expenditures. Therefore, little change to the fee structure has been made over the years. Fees are based on the number of active mine acres.
6. **Approval of Farmland Preservation Notice of Noncompliance Documents.** Roy and Mary Williams Rev. Trust. Andrew explained that this is a voluntary request to be excluded from the program because the owners sold most of their land and no longer meet the eligibility requirements. Motion to approve by Supervisor Aegerter, seconded by Supervisor Lotrantz. **Motion carried unanimously.**
7. **Land and Water Resource Management Program - Approval of Cost Share Agreements:** Andrew reviewed the Cost Share agreement to be considered for approval;
  - A. Bryce O’Leary (various land owners)- Nutrient Management (approximately 917 acres)
  - B. Thostenson (various land owners) – Nutrient Management (approximately 421 acres)
  - C. John Pounder (Pulera-Lux farm) – Nutrient Management (approximately 80 acres)Generally discussion followed regarding the fact that both the operator and landowner (if different) must agree to the contract terms. Supervisor Davis made a motion to approve the cost share agreements presented for approval, seconded by Mr. Quade. **Motion carried unanimously.**
8. **Discuss and possibly provide direction to staff regarding training and assistance for land owners and operators to complete their own Nutrient Management Planning.** Andrew explained that the DATCP staff person that conducted farmer training for Nutrient Management Planning has resigned/retired. Overall, we have consistently had around forty-six plans completed through this training program, totaling over 26,000 acres. This is roughly one quarter

of the totals acres enrolled in the Farmland Preservation Program. This year, there are twenty plans that require updated soils test and therefore an updated plan. This includes around 5,300 acres. Staff is looking for some direction from the Committee considering we have Duane on staff, who has the ability to help landowners, but not entirely the way DATCP staff could, nor be able to help all the landowners. Plus, Duane has to review all plans that come in, so his time is limited. Andrew informed the Committee that he polled other Counties to see how they handled farmer training and answers really varied from technical college partners, partnering with other Counties, entirely DATCP assistance, internal staff assistance and even no assistance to farmers. Clearly the COVID pandemic has made training much more difficult this year. Supervisor Mulligan asked about possibly working with Tech Colleges. Staff can look into that locally. Supervisor Bostwick suggested the idea of technical bulletins or other training materials. Staff will look into that as well to see if DATCP already has something like that available. Supervisor Sweeney offered that he view this short term problem and a long term problem to address. The short term problem is address the landowners that need to do sampling and updates for 2021. Those soils test should be done now before freeze up. In the long term, it is unlikely that DATCP will provide the same level of assistance as was offered in the past. The outgoing staff person was an expert with snap plus and could work with landowners very quickly to get a plan done. The Committee directed staff to send letters to the owners that need soils test done for 2021 a reminder to do so and inform them that training and plan assistance will not be as substantial as in previous years. Staff will also suggest that they should possibly consider a private sector consultant and the LCD may provide some cost-share assistance if they have not received it in the past on the same farm.

9. **Creation of the Rock County Illicit Discharge Ordinance.** Andrew explained that this item would be moved to the December meeting for action because the resolution with final notes is not yet available. Andrew briefly explained the purpose of the proposed Ordinance and the fact that it is required as part of the County WPDES MS4 Storm Water Permit. Andrew will send the Ordinance to the Committee when available. No action taken.
10. **Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements - Update.** Andrew informed the Committee that staff is continuing to work on the Barlass Easement acquisitions. One easement is along Hwy A, therefore we are waiting for the new right-of-way to be acquired prior to closing. The other easement is on MM. The Barlass family has been approached by a solar energy developer regarding the possibility of install a solar array on the property and remove the structures after the useful life has been exhausted, approximately 25 years. This is just a portion of a larger proposed development in the area. Renewable energy development is a priority in the State of Wisconsin, therefore the approval process for these types of projects is very limited, even in Farmland Preservation Districts. It is considered a utility and therefore a permitted use. Andrew informed the Committee that the NRCS template deed is somewhat ambiguous on whether or not this would be a permitted use on an Easement and NRCS will not provide a definite answer to the question. The Committee agree that this type of development is most suitable on marginal lands, not prime farmland. Supervisor Sweeney suggested that this topic be address by PACE Council before a final decision is made by the LCC. In the meantime, Andrew will move forward with the interpretation that solar development on an entire parcel is not a suitable permitted use on PACE easements.
11. **Adjourn:** Mr. Quade made motion to adjourn at 8:20 pm, seconded by Supervisor Davis. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrew Baker  
County Conservationist

**Minutes are not official until adopted by the Land Conservation Committee.**

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