March 4, 2008-TARGETING WORKING LANDS COMMITTEE

Meeting called to order at 4:00 PM

Meeting Attendees: Bud Deflorian, Roger King, Mike Dummer, Sam Skemp Sr., Delores Rhymes, Ervin Nuttleman, Leon Pfaff, Abbey Meyer, Karl Green, Doug Miskowiak, Charlie Handy, Robert Nelson (5:00 PM)

Introductions

Presentation by Doug Miskowiak, UW-Extension Center for Land Use Education on what a LESA Model is, as well as GIS.
Summary:
GIS Review
- A GIS is a tool for making and using spatial information.
- A GIS can review
- Location   Patterns
- Measurement   Trends
- Proximity   Routing
- Condition   Modeling

LESA
- Measures soil characteristics
- Productivity, limitations and important soils

SA
- Measures other site characteristics
- Agricultural productivity (farm incomes)
- Development pressure
- Other public values

LESA is decision support systems that will help this committee prepare policy choices that are:
- Measurable
- More Equitable
- Transparent
- More defensible   Rate Farm Land

Tonight we will try to establish a purpose for LESA.
Example: Define AG preservation areas, zones, districts
Prioritize operations eligible for conservation funding
Identify areas for development
Identify areas where "right to farm" ordinance is reasonable
Inform site plan assessments/impact assessments
Evaluate rezoning/variance requests
The purpose should be specific

Task: define key priorities for targeting working lands

Factor Duplication:
Example: Distance to Water and sewer services.
Distance from urbanized areas.
These areas could be duplicated.

Questions
Roger King asked:
- Can LESA tool be used to evaluate past mistakes?
- Leon Pfaff thinks this committee will provide guidance to county & local town officials if farm land is to be divided.
- Bud Deflorian suggested $ source is the key factor.
- Decision making procedure.
- Leon Pfaff thinks more than just majority decision making is necessary.

Discussion:
What are the priorities that the LESA Model should be built upon?
Roger King has concerns of what a "farm" is by definition. LaCrosse County is transitioning and can't forget "buy local" farmers. That's where a lot of money is going towards today.

How Does FSA define a farm—Sam Skemp

Bud Deflorian: The different categories in zoning are what define AG. therefore maybe LESA should be used to define deferred zoning and if rezoning should occur.

Mike Dummer: Use it to define preservable land.

Bud Deflorian: We need to come up with a program that isn't expensive. (PDR) because this won't save much land, therefore-zoning is a less expensive means of preserving farm land.

Roger King: Carbon Credits may help play a role in consideration.

Mike Dummer: Through use of a scoring data set through LESA of land that should be preserved, it will help give backbone to hard decisions about rezoning.

Sam Skemp: Prime AG land is important, but so is pasture land and woodland.

Delores Rhymes: Definitely thinks prime ag land needs to be identified. Hwy. 16 took their prime farmland.

Erv Nuttleman: Thinks top priority needs to define Prime Ag Land-thinks development is currently hodge-podge.

Sam Shepard: Do we want to identify Prime Ag Lands?

Mike Dummer: Does establishing a rating system based on various criteria create a prioritizing system?

Sam: Two ways to classify Ag Land, NRCS-Sam thinks this is more accurate Tax Assessing.

Roger King: Thinks LaCrosse County has unique lands (slope/bluffs), thus preserving land as part of the LESA. So we need a mission statement.

Question: Do we want to do this LESA for a PDR?

Bud: We need to know where money for PDR is coming from.

Abby: For PDR funding services, a LESA model would increase these possibilities.

<u>Doug:</u> Identifying more specific of a program gives us better understanding of criteria for Potential Preservation using:
1. Zoning
2. PDR
3. TDR-agreement to eliminate
4. Education

Are there ways to classify certain farmlands?

<u>Mike D/Bud D</u>: thinks there are multiple tools for environmentally sensitive farmland.

Tentative decision: regarding this committee's use of the LESA model: Use LESA to identify prime farmland for potential preservation of core/threatened working lands.

<u>Homework:</u> Is there a specific tool or a classification of land type this LESA model should be developed to address/protect.

Meeting dates for future – First Wednesday of each month at 4PM

Respectfully submitted: Karl Green, La Crosse County UWEX Community Resource Development Educator