

Working Land Committee  
Meeting Notes  
April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008

- Meeting called to order at 4:00 PM
- Discussion on carbon credits:
  - Members present: Mike Hesse, Leon Pfaff, Bud DeFlorian, Robert Nelson, Sam Skemp, Roger King, Abbey Meyer (left at 5:45), Charlie Handy, Doug Miskowiak, Karl Green
- Purpose: Use LESA to identify prime farmland for potential preservation of core/threatened working lands.
  - Doug handed out a 2-page handout discussing some of the goals/objectives in La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan
  - Doug noted that “Purchase of development rights program” is often mentioned within the Comprehensive plan.
  - Can any of the bullets on pg. 2 be used for the purpose of this Working Lands Committee?
  - Bud DeFlorian is more focused on existing programs like zoning, rather than a non-funded program like PDR.
  - Doug-You want to create a model based on the goals we have hoping to achieve.
    - Lets figure out what we want to do and refine the purpose of LESA TOOL
  - Sam- Isn't the goal of this committee to preserve Ag. Land?
  - Doug- What is the policy driver that will implement the farmland preservation goal from the comprehensive goal?
  - Discussion on “value” of farmland depends on how heavily farmed.
  - Roger King- thinks the comprehensive plans farmland preservation goal
  - Leon- County just passed the Comprehensive Plan; why not just use the same language of farmland preservation goals.
  - Doug illustrated a map of La Crosse County of prime farmland based on national criteria.
  - Roger King- he's concerned that little pieces of land may not show up on Doug's map. (Doug's map is based on soil survey.)
  - Leon- Why couldn't LEZA be set up for both PDR and Zoning, not one or the other?
  - Leon- For example, PDR will also be based on location.

- Don't want to eliminate the possibility for PDR
  - Sam- What percent of La Crosse Agricultural Land is zoned exclusive Ag.
    - 20,000 acres developed; 300,000 Ag. Land, most of this is exclusive land.)
- Task 2: Define the Characteristics of Priority Working Lands. What are the major indicator crops- corns, soybeans, alfalfa?
  - Sam Skemp- What about in 10 years?
  - Bud- But we are working on this today.
  - Other indicator crops- Christmas trees, vegetable farms
  - Capability class—1-8 NURLS Classification Rating that looks at soil characteristics
  - Does corn and soybean both need to be indicator crops? Other indicator options?
    - Oats?
  - Roger King- OK with indicator options being corn & alfalfa.
  - Indicator crops can be furthered refined
  - Doug handed out a handout regarding defining the characteristic of priority working lands.
  - Do other characteristics on Ag. Farms help define priority working lands.
  - Do other characteristics on Ag. Farms help define priorities other than just soil.
  - Other characteristics- development pressure.
    - What are important public value characteristics?
    - In most communities, site characteristics are:
      - Soils
      - Ag. productivity
      - Development pressure
  - Question? Is the intent to protect Ag. Resources in La Crosse County?
  - Sam- Environmentally friendly and sustainable. That is what is important
  - Bud's Goal- Protect good farmland that is productive.
  - Abbey Meyer thinks the PDR & Zoning use of working lands is similar, or would have similar characteristics
- Task: Take Task 2 sheet home. Define what characteristics does a working farm have?
- Consider pages 2-4 and identify the characteristics top 10.
- Next meeting May 7<sup>th</sup>, 4-6:30 p.m.
- Meeting adjourned 6:30 p.m.