

RACINE COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION  
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**RACINE COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**  
**Also Known as a Subcommittee of**  
**THE RACINE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND LAND USE PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
Ives Grove Office Complex Auditorium – 14200 Washington Avenue  
Monday, 5:00 p.m., December 21, 2020

**SUMMARY MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING**

Committee Members Present: M. Osterman, T. Hincz, J. Eckman, R. Grove, T. Greil

Committee Members Excused: B. Nielsen, M. Dawson

Youth in Governance Absent: A. Buchaklian, R. Niemiec

Staff Present: C. Sampson

Chairman M. Osterman called the December 21, 2020 Racine County Land Conservation Committee meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Agenda Amendment: A motion by R. Grove / J. Eckman to amend the agenda to add a carryover of \$35,910.00 of SEG funds from 2020 to 2021 within Racine County's Soil and Water Resource Management Program. The motion was approved by the Committee (5-0)

1. A motion by T. Greil / T. Hincz to approve the minutes for the October 19, 2020 meeting. The motion was approved (5-0) by the Committee.
2. Greg Horeth, Waterford Waterway Management District, gave an overview of the current happenings within the district. Greg said this is not an ask, but just an overview. Greg wanted to share three things with the Committee. First, to discuss the district in general. Two, inform the committee about challenges and finally discuss the new board bringing energy to the District.

The goal of the WWMD is to improve the Fox River, Tichigan Lake and the surrounding bays. There are 1200 acres in the district. Some challenges include depth of the water, due to sediment. Invasive species in the waterway is also a challenge. Greg explained the Lake Management Plan was completed two years ago and the biggest complaint was weeds.

For several years, the district focused on a large-scale dredging project for years. A lot of money was spent, and nothing is being accomplished. So, the WWMD is taking a step back to look at this and how something can be accomplished.

Greg said the communication is improving. The website was fairly ineffective, but with new energy and new talent, the website has been redesigned and being rolled out in January. They have taken out a social media campaign that used to get 6 or 7 hits per month up to over 400 hits last month. This social media campaign creates community involvement.

Greg continued to state that the WWMD has committees and committee chairs, which have been given responsibilities and support as needed to complete their tasks.

The WWMD is looking at purchasing weed management equipment with the approval of the riparian owners.

The WWMD wants to continue to support recreational opportunities on the waterways, such as a scavenger hunt and Fourth of July fireworks. This helps the waterway become more of a residential and recreational opportunity.

Greg continued to say they work with the local police, local municipalities, the DNR and the Fox River Commission to be on the same page, instead of pointing fingers at one another.

Tom Greil asked what the WWMD has to do with algae blooms. Greg said there were some algae blooms this year, but two years ago it was terrible. The blue-green algae is more toxic and a problem for over three weeks. T. Greil stated that weeds cut are dumped into his manure pit and it creates a compost which is a wonderful product.

Jason Eckman asked about weed cutting methods. Greg said they control weeds in three ways: chemical, harvesting, and cutting with restrictions.

Monte Osterman asked how many properties are impacted by the invasive species. Greg stated that about 1/3 of the waterway or approximately 200 acres is greatly impacted, but the impact changes annually. Secondly, Monte asked how the land value and economic impact is hurt due to this. Greg stated the real estate value is 20 – 25% below nearby lakes and properties, which is partially due to the lake weed problem.

Greg thanked the group for the opportunity to speak to the Committee.

3. C. Sampson stated there are two transfers need to be approved by the Committee. The first was \$8,975 of bond funds from Jefferson County. The second was \$13,010 from Ozaukee County. In the past, M. Osterman had requested a list of recent transfers and C. Sampson provided of a list of transfer to Racine County over the past 5 years. J. Eckman asked if the transfer needed to be spent this year. C. Sampson stated they can be spent this year or used in a contract carryover, in which the landowner signs a contract this year, but the cost-share dollars carry over to next year. A motion by R. Grove / T. Hincz to approve the transfers. The motion was approved (5-0) by the Committee.
- 3a. This item was added to the agenda to allow three carryover contracts to be approved by the Committee. C. Sampson stated Schaal Farms, Whitley Farms and Funk Farms are going to carry over \$35,910 in SEG funds to 2021. A motion by R. Grove / T. Hincz to approve the carryover. The motion was approved (5-0) by the Committee.
4. Watershed Protection Committee of Racine County update was given by Tom Greil. Tom stated the Winter Workshop is going to feature farmer Rick Clark from Indiana as the keynote speaker. Rick is going to give a presentation of his journey from conventional farming to a soil health system.

Tom Greil stated the Committee is working with Racine County to secure Case Eagle Park's cropland to do public events and field days. There are over 50 acres available to do demonstration plots, signs, and walking paths.

Also, Tom said the WPCR is currently approaching sponsors to assist the group. New brochures were printed and are being utilized to help recruit sponsors.

Tom Greil was encouraging pollinator habitat for residents. The WPCR is going to hand out free pollinator seeds at the county tree distribution. M. Osterman said another opportunity is at the County Fair. R. Grove stated the best time to hand them out is at the tree program because the Fair is a little later in the summer.

5. Information only: C. Sampson reviewed the projects attached in the packets. M. Osterman said statutorily we support receiving the State funding. This includes funding for staff and cost-share. M. Osterman said the State has never met their statutory obligation. Monte continued to say the Assembly unanimously approved a package of 13 water quality bills, but the Senate did not take up the package because the State Government shut down due to Covid.

Tom Greil stated the large rain events need to be taken into consideration with these bills because the rain events destroy the land. M. Osterman stated the new direction is toward climate change mitigation, which addresses larger storm events.

6. Farm Service Agency report: T. Greil stated the Kristin Look is the new director and has stepped in and done a nice job. M. Osterman asked the Committee to review the written reports at their leisure.
7. Other business: C. Sampson stated that the Winter Workshop is going to be held at the Cotton Exchange in Waterford and the crowd size will be limited to the venues "social distancing" capacity.

M. Osterman stated that the NACD is meeting the Biden's new administration, but they seem to be embracing the conservation movement.

8. A motion by R. Grove, seconded by J. Eckman to adjourn at 5:47 p.m. Approved (5-0) by the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

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Monte Osterman, Chairman  
Land Conservation Committee

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Chad Sampson, Recorder