

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., June 15, 2020

SUMMARY MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

Committee Members Present: M. Osterman, T. Hincz, R. Grove, M. Dawson, J. Eckman,
E. Lawrence (at 5:02), T. Greil (at 5:13).

Committee Members Excused: B. Nielsen

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

Staff Present: C. Sampson

Supervisor T. Hincz called the June 15, 2020 Racine County Land Conservation Committee meeting to order after a teleconference roll call at 5:01 p.m.

1. A motion by R. Grove / M. Osterman to approve the minutes for the January 20, 2020 meeting. The motion was approved (7-0) by the Committee and (2-0) by the Youth in Governance.
2. Information only: M. Osterman gave a short presentation on the history of Land Conservation in Wisconsin. M. Osterman stated soil erosion control began with the dust bowl in the 1930's. A Congressional Act dedicated Federal money to develop Conservation Districts. The first Conservation District Watershed Project took place in Coon Valley, Wisconsin. In 1953, Wisconsin put one Conservation District in each county. In 1983, Wisconsin disbanded the Districts and created Land Conservation Committees and Departments for each County, partially funded by the State. This was created through Chapter 92 in the State Statutes.

Currently, Chapter 92 funds are administered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WI DATCP). These funds are part of the Soil and Water Resource Management Program (SWRM), which is money distributed to the Counties to help pay for staff and conservation projects. The Land Conservation Committee powers include executing contracts, provide technical planning, distributing funds, and utilizing the Land Conservation Department to provide technical, planning, or other assistance. M. Osterman listed the make-up of the LCC which includes county board supervisors, a USDA Farm Service Agency member, and appointed citizen members. The LCC approves policy, the budget, provides leadership and advises the County Board. The LCD delivers the program, enforces ordinances, prepares the budget, provides technical assistance, and advises / informs the LCC of its activities.

M. Osterman continued to explain the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association is made up of 16 board members with two members (1 LCC, 1 LCD) from each region. This Association represents the LCC and LCD's from across the State.

M. Osterman explained there is also a Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Board. This Board consists of 11 members and advises WI DATCP on the approval of Land and Water Management Plans and other policy regarding conservation around the State. This Board includes three elected members from the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association.

J. Eckman asked how many County LCD staff there were in Racine County. M. Osterman stated that we currently have three staff that manage as many acres per person as possibly any LCD staff in any other County. The staff are Chad Sampson, County Conservationist and Jonathan Grove, Conservation Specialist, and Allison Hamm, Conservation Planner.

R. Grove asked about shoreland zoning and how it is handled. C. Sampson stated two ways to look at shoreland zoning. One way to look at this is reviewing permit applications on buildable properties. The Development Services staff takes in a permit application and forwards it to Land Conservation staff for site review and assessment. The staff looks for erosion control measures needed, stormwater management, and any other environmental concerns such as floodplain, wetlands, or other issues. The Land Conservation staff provides an erosion control plan and technical summary for the Development Services staff to include in the applicants shoreland contract. The second way Land Conservation staff reviews shoreland zoning is on actively eroding sites. This could be lakeshores, rivers, streams, or drainage canals. Farmers or landowners contact our staff, and then we conduct a site assessment to offer solutions.

3. Information only: The Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association handbook has been distributed. M. Osterman stated that it is a more detailed look at the history of conservation. C. Sampson stated that he will email a link with some virtual trainings and webinars.
4. Information only: An update on the Watershed Protection Committee of Racine County (WPCR). T. Greil stated the Summer Field day is scheduled for September 10th at Beck Grain Farms west of Waterford. T. Greil said the field day will be promoting no-till farming, cover crops, and a soil pit. There will be about 50 people attending. T. Greil, the chairman of the WPCR, said we'll education about soil health and regenerative farming.

M. Osterman stated that the WPCR is a boots-on-the-ground committee educating farmers. M. Osterman said the soil pit was very educational at the field day. C. Sampson said brochures will be available for the field day. C. Sampson recommended going to wpcracinecounty.org to learn more about the Watershed Protection Committee of Racine County.

5. Information only: C. Sampson reviewed the projects installed in spring 2020. C. Sampson explained that the berms shown are water and sediment control basins to hold back water and erosion. C. Sampson detailed projects constructed in the Village of Yorkville, Town of Dover and a Fox River Commission in the Town of Waterford.
6. J. Eckman asked if the county equipment was used or if contractors were hired to do the work. C. Sampson stated that generally the owner hires the contractor with the assistance of staff to ensure the price is reasonable. J. Eckman stated that he is a pilot and often flies over Lake Michigan and saw the plume of mud and soil flowing out into the lake after each storm event. E. Lawrence asked if the LCC or staff assisted with preserving the shorelines. C. Sampson said staff will look at properties and give people guidance. M. Osterman asked how much sediment was being held back with the use of the water and sediment control basins. C. Sampson stated the soil erosion is measured in tons. A thickness of a dime across one acre of land is one ton of soil. One cubic foot

of soil can way 80 to 100 pounds. So, after a couple rain events, the sediment control basins can hold back tons of soil to keep it on the land instead of running off into the Root River and eventually into Lake Michigan. T. Greil stated that recent heavy rains eroded a lot of freshly planted fields. He continued to say that these rain events are more common and serious problem for farmers. This is why the WPCR recommends getting away from tillage and switching to no-till and cover crops to armor the soil.

7. USDA Reports: T. Greil said the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is attempting to assist with funding conservation projects. C. Sampson stated that NRCS is a sister agency at the Federal level doing some of the same work.
8. Other Business: T. Hincz asked about a Stormwater School in August. The form says you will be a Certified Stormwater inspector. C. Sampson said that if you take the course and pass it, that you will be able to review stormwater plans identified with that certification. C. Sampson said that himself and his staff are certified in many erosion control, engineering and stormwater practices and they receive those certifications along with continuing education credits.

J. Eckman ask about the frequency of LCC meetings. M. Osterman stated we will meet every other month. J. Eckman asked to make sure the agendas and scheduled meetings are posted on the website. C. Sampson will make sure they are posted.

M. Osterman asked the Supervisors on this committee to bring goals, ideas and what they would like the Racine County LCC to be known for to the next meeting in August.

T. Greil asked about prioritizing recommendations. M. Osterman stated we will use this information to prioritize the work planning within the LWRM plan.

C. Sampson stated if Supervisors ever want to come out and see projects or anything the Land Conservation staff is working on, to please feel free to call or email Chad and we can do that.

9. A motion by R. Grove, seconded by J. Eckman to adjourn at 5:50 p.m. Approved (2-0) by Youth in Governance and (8-0) by the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Grove, Vice Chairman
Land Conservation Committee

Chad Sampson, Recorder