

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., February 15, 2021

SUMMARY MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

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

Committee Members Excused: B. Nielsen

Youth in Governance Present: R. Niemiec

Youth in Governance Absent: A. Buchaklian

Staff Present: C. Sampson

Vice Chairman R. Grove took roll call and called the February 16, 2021 Racine County Land Conservation Committee meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

1. A motion by T. Hincz / M. Dawson to approve the minutes for the December 21, 2020 meeting. The motion was approved (1-0) by Youth in Governance and (7-0) by the Committee.
2. C. Sampson explained the Multi-Discharge Variance is a program developed by the WI DNR to allow municipalities that have wastewater treatment systems to meet their phosphorus loading limits. Treatment plant upgrades to reduce phosphorus are expensive and the MDV is used to extend time for treatment plants to upgrade and use funds to offset phosphorus release and meet their permit requirements. We received MDV funding from Eagle Lake Sewer Utility District, the Village of Twin Lakes, Paddock Lake and the Village of Bristol among a few others. The County Land Conservation offices work with rural landowners to install conservation practices with funding from the municipalities to reduce phosphorus runoff within the watersheds. Modeling is used to determine how much phosphorus is reduced with the installation of the best management practices.

T. Hincz asked if this information was required to become before the County Board. C. Sampson stated the only requirement is to be presented before the Land Conservation Committee. J. Eckman asked if the Committee action is required. C. Sampson said it is required on the Annual Report and on the MDV Grant Application. C. Sampson continued to say a copy of the agenda and minutes are submitted as part of the reports.

T. Greil asked how many municipalities are working with the Watershed Protection Committee of Racine County. C. Sampson said Muskego / Wind Lake Sewer Utility is currently phosphorus

trading with a private consultant instead of paying the County. They are working with farmers within the same watershed.

T. Greil asked if the treatment facilities are being mandated. C. Sampson said each facility has a permit. Each permit has an allowed phosphorus limit. As the permits are renewed, the phosphorus limit is lowered to meet the new standard. Facilities not meeting the permit requirements are participating in Adaptive Management which is part of the MDV to offset the extra phosphorus being released. The permitted facilities pay County to establish projects that reduce phosphorus.

A motion by T. Hincz / J. Eckman to have Racine County participate in the WI DNR Multi-Discharge Variance program. The motion was approved (1-0) by the Youth in Governance and (7-0) by the Committee.

3. C. Sampson asked the Committee to view the Soil and Water Resource Management sheet with dollar figures that Racine County has received over the last 5 years. C. Sampson continued to explain how the State is not meeting its Statutory Requirement for staffing. Although, the State does provide staffing dollars and cost share funds for practices.

M. Osterman said this is related to the 13 water quality bills that fell two days short of passing at the State prior to the Covid shutdown. M. Osterman said proposals are coming from the Governor's office that could possibly meet the minimum statutory funding level. He continued to tell the Committee this makes it easier on the County budget for staff for Land Conservation.

4. Watershed Protection Committee of Racine County update was given by Tom Greil. Tom stated the Winter Workshop was on Friday with approximately 53 people in attendance. R. Grove said Rick Clark was a dynamic speaker. T. Greil said it should make the farmers think about the way we farm and what is the untapped potential of farming. Tom G. said Rick accomplished regenerative farming by using his own thought process, which makes his success story even more amazing.

Tom G. said we should start booking another great speaker for next winter right now. The WPCR will continue to work with other Producer Led groups to coordinate next year's event.

C. Sampson said the recorded video from the workshop will be on the website within two weeks.

Tom G. said the next goal is to secure Case Eagle's farmland for the WPCR to hold field days, demonstration plots and other educational events. Tom G. handed out small bags of cover crop seed to the Committee. The WPCR is encouraging farmers, lake associations, and private individuals to plant cover crop seeds for not only runoff purposes, but to promote pollinators.

5. C. Sampson stated the tree program has been very popular with the availability of online ordering and advertising on social media. There are over 270 orders thus far and many species have sold out. The third week of April is the pick-up date at the County Fairgrounds. It will be curbside pick-up with assigned times. The ordering deadline is Friday, February 26th.

J. Eckman asked about the variety of trees sold. C. Sampson stated we sell pine, spruces, oak, maple, black walnut and a few others. K. Kruse commented on a great tree program that seems to be gaining momentum. J. Eckman asked if customers can still order online. C. Sampson stated that you can still order online. The sold-out species are listed as "sold out". M. Osterman

commented on a great job with the program. M. Osterman will be there to assist with tree distribution and encouraged other Land Conservation Committee members to come and assist and check out the program. It is an opportunity to promote ourselves and the work we do.

6. T. Greil gave a Farm Service Agency update. He stated the Kristin Loock is doing a wonderful job and has been very thorough with her work. She has been resolving some ongoing issues.

C. Sampson said the Conservation Reserve Program had a sign-up end last Friday. It sounds like there was a lot of interest. It was the 56th general sign-up for the CRP program. The program was meant to take steep hills and flooded acres out of crop production and put the acres in set-aside land. This land was usually put into a 10-year contract and often planted to native grasses.

T. Greil said in 1988 it was important that we had the set-aside CRP acres. That year, there was a major drought and the U.S. Government decided to let farmers harvest the CRP acres to feed livestock.

7. M. Osterman gave an NACD update. The annual meeting had just ended last week. It was held virtually. The invasive species committee passed a resolution to go after invasive muscles. The NACD has a report on the underserved communities. Monte said everyone that puts food in their mouth is impacted by the work we do. Monte said the NRCS is coming up with an agreement to cover non-NRCS employees for liability on NRCS projects. M. Osterman said Iowa introduced a resolution to have NRCS employees working with SWCD employees from the same location to have better customer service and cut down on costs.

M. Osterman gave an update on Wisconsin Land and Water's Annual Conference. The Conference is being held from March 2nd through March 5th virtually.

8. Other business: T. Hincz said the WWMD is purchasing a weed harvester, truck, and trailer. M. Dawson asked the cost. T. Hincz wasn't exactly sure, but said it seemed reasonable.
9. A motion by M. Dawson / J. Eckman to adjourn. The motion was approved (1-0) by Youth in Governance and (7-0) by the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Monte Osterman, Chairman
Land Conservation Committee

Chad Sampson, Recorder