

# MINUTES

## CARPC Farmland Loss Mitigation Workgroup of the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission

February 10, 2010

City-County Building Rm 315, 210 MLK Jr. Blvd., Madison WI

5:00 p.m.

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Members Present: Curt Brink, Martha Gibson, Ed Minihan

Staff Present: Bridgit Van Belleghem, Barbara Weber, Tim Prior

Others Present: Sally Kefer, Kris Hampton

**1. Approval of Minutes of December 3, 2009**

Motion by Gibson to approve the minutes of December 3, second by Minihan. Motion carried.

**2. Review of agenda**

No changes.

**3. Review and Approve FLM-1 for presentation to the Commission**

Van Belleghem presented the updated draft with peer and public review comments incorporated and any adjustments made to the FLM-1 issue paper. The workgroup agreed that the comments and concerns presented in the peer review process were addressed and directed Van Belleghem to present the paper for consideration to be published by the Commission at the March meeting.

**4. Review of progress on FLM-2 issue paper**

Van Belleghem summarized topics covered in FLM-2 *Farmland and Farm Operations in Dane County*. She explained the sources and weaknesses of available data.

Van Belleghem reported that FLM-2 looked only at parcels in towns, including those within USAs or LSAs. Parcels are designated as “rural” and measured by “metes and bounds” within towns. Land use information, land and improvement tax value assessment, land quality, land ownership, operation are a few of the variables analyzed in the paper. The methodology used in FLM-2 is described in Appendix A.

Van Belleghem requested input from the workgroup on incorporating the topic of planned future growth. Van Belleghem suggested that future land use maps from adopted comprehensive plans be compared across jurisdictions to identify areas planned by multiple jurisdictions. The MPO and the County have a future planned development map that is used to assess this conflict. Data from this map can be refined and incorporated into FLM-2. Van Belleghem will also identify areas where plans potentially split large agricultural tracts. The workgroup agreed with this approach for proceeding with analysis of planned future growth.

Kefer stated that FLM-2 should include criteria reflecting the value of ecological services provided by agricultural lands. The criteria for ecological service/environmental corridors currently incorporated in the analysis are wetlands, historic wetlands, steep slopes, and state conservation areas. Van Belleghem will examine the potential to include criteria for recharge areas.

Gibson noted that the criteria identified in FLM-2 help to define the problem and will guide the discussion of solutions in the next issue paper. She emphasized the importance of including criteria capturing the value of family farms. Van Belleghem noted that including factors like parcel size helps to capture family farms.

The group discussed other criteria to identify and protect smaller farms such as boutique farms and produce truck farms, and discussed whether criteria exist for protecting farms that are feeding people. Potential criteria discussed include: size of farm, type of production, level of production, farm ownership and qualification for organic status.

#### **5. Working Lands Initiative: AEAs and the FPP Grant**

Van Belleghem announced that Dane County and the RPC received a \$30,000 grant from DATCP for the 2010 land use inventory. The grant will allow a more detailed land use inventory of agricultural land uses. Interns will be hired for this work and work will begin in late May.

A few towns have applied or intend to apply for ag enterprise areas. The deadline for application is February 26.

#### **6. Brainstorm of potential programs or polices for farmland preservation**

The following ideas were raised:

- 1) Protect direct human food production
- 2) Place a protective buffer from development area around Ag Enterprise Areas. (Possibly a recommendation to the State)
- 3) Protect farmland preservation areas identified in a farmland preservation plan from USA expansion
- 4) Require comparable agricultural land to be protected when agricultural land is added to the urban service area.
- 5) Develop a process for identifying lands for protection creating standard applied countywide
- 6) Create a "Preservation Portal" that would allow a farmer to view the resources available to protect the farmland, and serve an online link for those interested in participating in TDR, for example.

Hampton asked whether there is a way to determine the impact of taking agricultural land out of production on the ability to feed the population. The group discussed conducting a food shed analysis, acknowledging the difficulties of carrying this out because the County is not a closed system. Conducting such a study could bring some light to how much land we would need to feed the population.

The group discussed the challenges to creating a successful TDR program, including creating a market for development rights. CARPC could assist with TDR by serving as a clearinghouse for information and communication for landowners interested in transferring development rights.

Gibson suggested that CARPC could play a role in facilitation of voluntary preservation of agricultural land. She would like to see boundary agreements and permanent preservation of agricultural lands be part of FUDA plans.

The group will ask Kamran Mesbah, Deputy Director, CARPC, to discuss the potential for farmland preservation in FUDA plans at the next workgroup meeting.

**7. Set next meeting of the workgroup**

The next meeting of the workgroup is tentatively set for 12:00 noon on April 21, 2010.

**8. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Recorded by Timothy Prior