

**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**CARPC Farmland Loss Mitigation Workgroup**  
**of the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission**

**Aug. 10, 2011**

**City-County Building Rm 321, 210 MLK Jr. Blvd., Madison WI**

**3:30 p.m.**

---

Commissioners Present: Caryl Terrell, Ed Minihan, Sue Studz

Other Members Present: Sally Kefer

Staff Present: Bridgit Van Belleghem, Rachel Jacques

Meeting called to order at 3:40 p.m.

**1. Review of agenda**

Ms. Van Belleghem said the agenda has been changed slightly to remove items that were discussed last week.

**2. Approval of minutes of June 28, 2011**

Moved by Ms. Studz, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Minihan, June minutes approved with corrections.

**3. Outreach and involvement plan development**

**a. Review discussion of outreach and involvement plan strategy and process from the previous meeting**

Ms. Van Belleghem reviewed the timeline for public outreach and the contacts that were recommended at the last meeting. She asked what questions we want to ask the focus groups, and said we need to assign responsibility for specific tasks. Any ideas on how to approach focus groups?

**b. Develop focus group strategy**

**i. What questions do we have for focus group participants?**

Ms. Kefer said it was decided at the last meeting to work with already-established meetings of groups. She suggested the following questions:

- Can they support the policies that are recommended? Which ones, or all of them?
- Help us identify issues with implementation of the policies at the local level
- At which level of government should various policies be implemented? For example, would TDR be implemented at the Town or County level?
- Is there a need for a presentation, or more information, on what the policies are?

Ms. Studz commented on three desired outcomes of the focus groups: 1) that the County, CARPC and Towns Association work together on the same page, since these three are primarily concerned with available farm land; 2) that we tie our implementation tools to the structure and content of the Dane County Farmland Preservation Plan; and 3) that we have options for cities and villages and developers for specific things to do.

There was discussion of changes that have occurred to the draft Farmland Preservation Plan, and how this group's effort is distinct from the County plan.

Ms. Van Belleghem said we need recommendations to the RPC as to what it can do to incorporate farmland into its work, and that we should be clear about how farmland

preservation could be accomplished through the urban service area amendment review process.

Ms. Studz said the RPC doesn't have much it can say to municipalities about farmland, but the County, Towns Association, and CARPC are the bodies associated with farmland. She said the question seems to be, what criteria and questions should the RPC be using in their review? Also, what mitigation would be appropriate?

Ms. Terrell said that the subcommittee was formed because farmland loss and mitigation *was* one of the criteria for USA amendment review, and that this would come up anytime an amendment involves farmland. She said this group's work would provide a framework or structure for the applicant to comment on if they are following the RPC's recommendations. She said the subcommittee formed to see how farmland loss would be addressed, to "flesh out" the existing criteria for USA amendments to be reviewed.

Ms. Kefer added that an applicant could then say "here's how we're meeting the mitigation criteria", and especially before the application is put in there would be time for RPC staff to say that there needs to be an element that addresses the issue.

Ms. Terrell gave some history, saying that the draft set of criteria that went out in December 2007/January 2008 included the need to address farmland loss/mitigation. In the February 2008 adopting motion, this criterion was pulled out and referred to a committee (the FLM subcommittee) to see what it means.

Ms. Kefer said the Commission shouldn't be in position of having to establish a condition in order to approve an urban service area amendment, that it should have been clarified before the application process. She said this would also address the issue of having incomplete applications that commissioners feel pressured to approve.

Ms. Terrell said because of the lack of clarity for how the RPC deals with this issue, there should be overlap between what we require and what is in county and municipal plans.

Ms. Van Belleghem said it seems a criteria that could be used is consistency with existing plans. In the recommendations, address the state requirement for comprehensive plan consistency. She reviewed the roles in agricultural land preservation at different levels:

Regional

- USA
- Intergovernmental cooperation venue
- Venue as a resource

County

Towns

City/Village

Ms. Van Belleghem said in terms of ideas for CARPC-based efforts, she has been recommending a "preservation portal" that would serve as a one-stop-shop for agricultural and environmental resources, and this portal could also serve as a market place for people wishing to participate in a PDR/TDR program. She gave the example of a product in Spain which helps identify absentee landowners and helps them rent their land to local farmers. She said it would be something to help *facilitate* farmland preservation in the area, not really doing anything beyond that.

Ms. Van Belleghem offered another recommendation that the RPC directly begins a conversation among cities, villages, towns, and the county about a county-wide system for conservation, mitigation and easements. She gave the example of UC Davis, where there is an agreement between governments to direct growth to the city while the city

helps mitigate the loss agricultural land to development. She said that also the county could have a dual strategy for farmland, since half the county has prime farmland and the other half is livestock-based.

Ms. Studz asked wasn't the county going to look at what is a "suitable use" in different areas?

Ms. Van Belleghem said that could be beneficial to us, especially for things like buffer areas. Also, it would be good for the RPC itself to do a paper on the ecological functions of ag land, perhaps as an extension of the "FLM 2" paper.

Ms. Kefer agreed, since a primary goal of ours is to save farmland in order to save water quality and improve infiltration.

Ms. Terrell said she would like to quantify the value of the resource to current users, and the loss of these resources. She cited a recent New York Times article (["An Economist for Nature Calculates the Need for More Protection,"](#) 8/8/11)

Ms. Van Belleghem said that idea would also be good to use for the FUDA process.

Ms. Terrell added that a County-specific responsibility could be facilitating the connection to the Sewerage District's/MMSD's phosphorus trading program. She said MMSD has need for lands that could be enhanced, invested in, to withdraw phosphorus from the environment, and that the County could be a broker between MMSD and property owners. She said this could also include urban lands that have potential to release phosphorus into the environment.

Ms. Studz said as a mitigation technique, developers might buy buffer lands along streams. Ms. Terrell added maybe also a buffer between residential and agricultural land.

Ms. Kefer said this does address farmland loss, ...if there's not any farmland to mitigate, there may be large dairy operations that need water quality issues addressed, and if the community wants water quality issues addressed.

Ms. Holloway said that there is a clear link between farmland preservation and water quality in the emergence of "water quality trading markets", which allow land owners seeking to discharge more pollutants into water to buy credits from farmers who then use that money to do mitigation on their land downstream. She said this could make it more financially feasible for farms to do mitigation, helping them and helping water quality.

Ms. Van Belleghem offered a recommendation that CARPC provides assistance with grants, best management practices, and the like, to help with mitigation.

Ms. Terrell said we should put this in terms of water quality and ecological services. There was brief discussion of the negative impacts of agriculture on water quality, which could be reduced by organic practices.

Ms. Van Belleghem restated Ms. Studz's question about what CARPC can do for water quality issues.

Ms. Terrell suggested framing our farmland preservation concerns in terms what the county is doing for shoreland zoning and mitigation, using their terms about "what we're afraid of losing", maybe saying "farmland losses that we care about are: stream buffers, ecological services, disruption of open land corridors..."

Ms. Studz said it could be narrowed down to a few areas to keep it simple.

Ms. Van Belleghem said the “FLM 2” paper provides some information on that, such as the loss of productive lands, diminishing ecological functions, and diminished support services for the agricultural sector.

Ms. Terrell suggested using the same language as FLM 2, and use that as a source to tie them together.

Ms. Studz said to tie this to the county farmland preservation goals, because we don’t want to be seen as yet another layer of regulation, but rather an integrated part of this.

Ms. Van Belleghem said it would be good to get local municipalities to adopt FUDA recommendations, e.g. in their plans, same here. I’d frame recommendations in this way.

Ms. Studz said we should find ways to help achieve the goals already stated in the county farmland plan.

Ms. Van Belleghem said she will put together a draft meeting script, send out to the work group for comment, and a little draft advertisement to send out to focus group organizers, and we can make a full write-out of the script a little later. She noted it may be too late to wait for another meeting before starting focus groups.

Mr. Minihan said to keep in mind harvest time for farm folks.

Ms. Van Belleghem described the opportunities coming up for this group at the fall Regional Planning Conference. In addition to the general session on FLM findings that she will present, there will be an extra room for an all-day public participation/comment venue on agricultural land issues. There will also be time each day for “open source” sessions in which anyone who wishes to can propose a discussion topic without having to fit it into the conference as a full session. She said the FLM group could use that as a venue to get some things off the ground, even for future development.

There was discussion of other materials that could be used in conference sessions for farmland. Ms. Studz suggested visuals or pictures to display, as well as examples from other areas, models to share of what really works. Mr. Minihan suggested a resource such as a video he has by DPD from Minnesota. Ms. Terrell suggested a poster board with criteria, with pages for people to leave comments.

Ms. Holloway said she will start contacting people for the focus groups.

**4. FLM 3 Issue Paper**  
**a. Review progress made on FLM 3 paper**

Ms. Holloway checked in on the direction of farm futures research, group says that’s all relevant.

Ms. Terrell asked what is left of the state’s Workings Lands Initiative? Others answered that everything but the conservation program is intact at this point.

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

The group agreed to focus on the week of Sept. 12 and pick a date using a Doodle poll.

**6. Adjournment**

Moved by Ms. Studz, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Minihan, meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.