

ADAMS COUNTY
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING December 1, 2009
FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND THE WORKING LANDS INITIATIVE

Chairman Glenn Licitar called the meeting to order at 7:04 P.M. with the following members present: Terry James, Secretary; Sylvia Breene, Joe Stuchlak and Mike Keckeisen. Joanne Sumpter and Richard Colby were excused. Others present were: Phil McLaughlin, Zoning Administrator; Cathy Allen, Recording Secretary and Lisa Schultz, representative from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). Was this meeting properly announced? Phil McLaughlin stated that it was. Roll call.

Phil McLaughlin introduced Lisa Schultz from DATCP to the attending public and informed everyone present that she would go through her presentation and explain the new law. Questions would be taken after the presentation.

Kay Olson questioned whether her farm would be eligible for tax credits since her property is located in the Town of Strongs Prairie, which has their own zoning and is not a County Zoned Town. She was informed that she would need to check with her Town Board to find out whether they had their zoning maps and text certified by DATCP. Another question that was asked was what this program would do to property already entered into a DNR Managed Forest Program. Ms. Schultz stated that MFL does not play any part in this program and any questions regarding MFL should be directed to the Department of Natural Resources.

Ms. Schultz prefaced the presentation by explaining that the Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative was passed as part of the State 2009-2011 biennial budget process and can be found primarily in Chapter 91 of the Wisconsin State Statutes. Under the new law there would be three ways to claim farmland preservation tax credits through participation in the program: (1) Farmers with an existing farmland preservation agreement signed after July 1, 2009 and located in an agricultural enterprise area (AEA); (2) Farmers in an area zoned for farmland preservation (Exclusive Ag Zoning) and (3) Farmers in an area zoned for farmland preservation in an agricultural enterprise area with a farmland preservation agreement signed after July 1, 2009.

Upon meeting one of those requirements, claimants must have at least \$6,000 in gross farm revenue in one year or \$18,000 in three years; property taxes must be paid by claimant and they must be in compliance with state soil and water conservation standards.

The state will collect a per acre Conversion Fee when land Exclusive Ag Zoning is re-zoned for other uses. These "Conversion fees" would go into effect January 1, 2010 if Adams County has text and maps recertified.

Phil McLaughlin explained that the Planning & Development Committee directed him, as Zoning Administrator to hold a Public Hearing for input into making the decision whether or not to have the County Exclusive Agricultural zoning maps and text recertified by DATCP. Over 1300 letters were sent to property owners in County zoned townships that have A1 Exclusive Agriculture zoned property. Forty people signed in. When Terry James called for a show of hands of those present as to how many were "for the County getting recertified" and how many were "against the County getting recertified", the answer was approximately 7 "for recertification" and the rest were against recertification.

Chairman Licitar called for a recess at 9:21 P.M.

Reconvene: 9:32 P.M.

Chairman Licitar called the meeting to order.

Joe Stuchlak read from three letters that he received that were against recertification.

Phil McLaughlin stated that there was a list of twenty four (24) people that called the Planning & Zoning Office and five (5) that sent letters in favor of allowing the certification to lapse on December 31, 2009 and two (2) who called the office and one (1) that wanted the County to recertify the Exclusive Agricultural Zoning maps and text.

Scott Parr asked the Committee to consider the economic benefit to landowners by recertifying. Lynda Bula agrees with Mr. Parr.

Kay Olson Martz stated that she was attending the meeting representing both herself and the Farm Bureau.

Linda Renner felt that the County should possibly create another district not to be used as agriculture, possibly a forestry district.

The Committee thanked the public for attending.

Terry James made a motion to adjourn. Sylvia Breene seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

ADJOURNED: 10: 17 P.M.

Glenn Licitar, Chair

Joanne Sumpter, Vice-Chair

Terry James, Secretary

Joe Stuchlak

Sylvia Breene

Mike Keckeisen

Richard Colby

Cathy Allen, Recording Secretary

THESE MINUTES HAVE NOT BEEN APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE.