

MINUTES OF THE AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL RESOURCES AND CULTURAL RESOURCES AD HOC COMMITTEE, July 25, 2017, Barneveld Legion Hall, Barneveld, WI

Committee Members Present (all): Mary Davis, Duane Elfering, David Hageman, Nancy Meyers, Doug Reeson and Jerry Zander.

Attendees Present: Jerry Davis, Jason Carden, Kevin Carden, Wendy Bollinger, Kevin Bollinger, Jeff Zander, Bill Lorenz, Greg Hilden, Dwight Nelson, Otis Nelson, Ryan Murphy, Nicole Murphy, Tami Bowser, John Neis, Stephen Thoni, Allen Pincus, Elizabeth Ravindran, Rod Mueller, Reid Formo, Tony Kirch, Heidi Grudzinski, Scott Gaffney, Sandy Mueller, Jim Massey, Michael Straubhaar, and Don Gaines.

Ad hoc committee chair, Elfering called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., and read the meeting notice. The notice was accepted by unanimous vote, moved by Reeson, seconded by M. Davis

M. Davis agreed to serve as secretary for this meeting and Elfering noted that position will be rotated during the course of monthly meetings.

Elfering asked for comments on ground rules for the meetings, suggesting meetings will be on time. A resident expressed desire to allow public comment. Future agenda will allow for public comments and suggested comments may come at the beginning followed by the committee continuing their work.

Elfering explained the purpose of the group, reminding the committee and residents that from the two public meetings conducted by Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission there were two main concerns with the Town's current comprehensive plan, one being Element 5, Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources (The assignment for this ad hoc committee). The other being Element 8, Land Use (The assignment for another ad hoc committee). The majority of the plan, most agreed during previous sessions, could be left alone, except possibly for some minor updating.

The subcommittees have a four month time frame, with monthly updates. The ad hoc committee's task now is to gather public input, identify key points in Element 5. All committee members were sent a copy of Element 5 by mail. Element 5 and 8 were available to the attendees.

Other items that could be addressed by the committee: ask for more information from SWRPC; bring in experts if needed; recommend any changes, if any, and any additions or deletions to Element 5; and recommend the next steps to the town board.

Hageman suggested balancing the Element's remarks to the needs and rights of a landowner with the needs of the general public and the Town. The current plan does not allow for enough instances where variances are appropriate, or doesn't take into account common sense situations, soil maps are more than a half century old.

Jeff Zander, board member, asked about looking at other Towns in the county.

Elfering commented that every town does things a little differently. How many towns rely so much on soil types?

M. Davis reported she found soils information dated 1999 for numerous Iowa County towns listing 72 percent of the soils being classified as prime, state and local, with prime 25 percent, state 20 percent and local 27 for importance.

Hageman commented about the process to contest soil types and the cost to the applicant.

Elfering said some counties have their own soils maps but unsure how those were drawn.

Jason Carden, Town Board chair, commented about towns in Iowa County, and how they use soils to locate building sites and other uses.

Hageman asked about density and other building restrictions.

Bill Lorenz, resident, asked what the objective of using soil types is.

Tami Bowser requested a survey would be important.

John Nice, resident, suggested rural character could be better preserved in some cases by siting a house at lower elevations but soils types may prevent that.

Al Pincus asked about the overlap with the two subcommittees.

J. Cardin discussed finding soils testing scientists and using the soils maps.

J. Davis commented that of the six soils challenges he could recall, five of the six were not overturned by the soils scientists.

Hageman asked what the plan was attempting to protect, farmland? Rural atmosphere?

Tami Bowser, plan commission member, land with mature trees (not planted by landowner) would not be considered farmland as far as prime soil is concerned.

M. Davis reminded the committee that according to Element 9, that the same process needs to be followed to amend the comprehensive plan regardless of how minor the amendment or change is.

Hilden recalled the fact that Town of Brigham is impacted more than towns in western Iowa County because of our proximity to Dane County and Madison. Town farther west have little development pressure and may not need many or any buffers such as density and building restrictions to keep development reasonable. Our current comprehensive plan was written by a different firm from the one now being used by Brigham.

A Pincus pointed out our stated goals are in our present plan and that our stated goals are to maintain and preserve rural character, protect environment, preserve agriculture, protect natural beauty, enhance cultural resources, so we do have a set of goals and no one has suggested changing those. We need to ask how to balance rights with preserving those goals.

J Davis reminded the committee that if some of the main preservation points are eliminated, changed considerably, that they need to be replaced by something else that helps to preserve these points or we will have a very different town.

Elfering summarized two main points, those being the object of soils classification and going step by step in the current element. Everyone agrees that we want to keep the rural character. Everybody wants to keep that. And we need some type of rule to restrict development or where we build.

The next meeting ideas: a soil engineer? What other towns do? M. Davis, M. Davis believes that the current plan represents Brigham and any minor changes need to come from a survey according to 9.5.3. Also, a post card should precede the survey to alert landowners to watch for and the survey and return it. The survey and post card should be done by SWRPC and when completed the results should be added as an addendum to the original comprehensive plan. Reeson said if you are going to change only those two minor things, why do we need a survey? Meyers, open to ideas and changes, but comparing to other towns is the way to go if we pick town like us, not necessarily like Iowa County. I believe in surveys, too, and everyone should have a right to input. Formo, we need to look at where our data is coming from rather than throwing out a regulation. Best to error on the side of preserving high quality land. Jerry Zander, I think that minor changes need to be made and don't think a survey needs to be made to do that, we have elected officials to do that. N Meyers added that the officials were elected to represent the people and how can they represent us without a survey to base their decisions on.

Next meeting date: August 21, 2017, location TBA

Meeting adjourned 7:30 p.m. by motion from J. Zander and seconded M. Davis

Respectfully submitted, M Davis, Secretary