

DCTA Executive Board Meeting

Wednesday, August 18, 2021

Via Zoom

Present: Jerry Derr, Tom Wilson, Tom Mathies, Jim Pulvermacher, Steve Anders, Martha Gibson

Absent: Ted Olson

Also Present: Laura Hicklin, Sun Prairie Town Chair Lyle Updike, Rutland Town Chair Deana Zentner, Dane County Supervisor Kate McGinnity, Renee Lauber.

Meeting called to order at 7:03 pm by President Derr.

Discussion with Laura Hicklin, Director of the Dane County Land & Water Resources Department, regarding funding for implementation of programs like the Continuous Cover Program and other phosphorus focused initiatives.

Q: Will phosphorus reductions initiatives like vegetative buffer strips expand out of the Yahara watershed?

A: Whatever we are doing in one watershed should be applicable county wide. We want them to be available to all producers and all landowners. We think this is going to advance county wide. We do have some work to do in educating some of the public. Continuous cover programs are county wide. The bigger issue is that all of the projects are getting more technical and now we need an engineer to review and approve. That is the bottle neck right now. Staffing is an issue.

Q: How long does it take from initial contact with a land owner to a project?

A: 6 to 12 months is common, 3 months would be on the short end.

Q: Maintenance – farmers plow through waterways that were previously constructed. Is there a life span in their contract?

A: Providing service to the Yahara Wins project has got us to build a better system to document and track projects.

Q: Some rural townships would welcome county funds for land conservation programs or streambank habit. The perception is that most of money is being focused on the Yahara watershed. We have no idea if the county wants stream banks in our town or if the county doesn't have the money. Could people on your staff help us id what would be of interest to you.

A: We can send staff out to go through that assessment.

Q: Dane County owns a lot of land that isn't being farmed in an ecological way. Ex Donald Park. The way it is being farmed is traditional with no cover crops and pesticide spraying. Why does the county rent farmland like that? If the county did more innovative farming it would be an example for other farmers.

A: We have moved away from renting that way. A very small percentage is in production in the way you outlined. Anderson Farm County Park, Silverwood County Park are examples of innovative farming. You are right Donald is the poster child of what we want to change.

New zoning rules, too many animals on a property and compliance with p standards was discussed. Issues with cattle packed into 10-20 acres producing huge manure messes and the county not seeming to be active on this. Laura will check in with zoning and get back to DCTA on this issue.

The possibility of using ARPA funds for improving water quality was discussed.

Laura Hicklin and Lyle Updike were thanked for attending and left the meeting.

Consider July 21, 2021 meeting minutes

Motion: Wilson/Pulvermacher. Approve minutes as written. Motion carried. Gibson abstained.

Consider August 2021 Financial Report

Motion: Gilson/Pulvermacher. Approve financial report. Carried unanimously.

Update on meeting with Dane County staff regarding OA-002 Amending Chapter 10 of the Dane County Code of Ordinances, Revising Sign Regulation Provisions

Lauber reported on the August 12 zoom meeting with several towns and Dane County staff. All issues, except for the temporary sign issue in the DCTA 7/26/2021 memo, were discussed in detail and resolved.

Staff proposed the shortened time period for temporary signs (proposed reduction from 60 to 30 days) to address problems with mini market banners. DCTA is concerned this would put farm stands out of compliance. County staff did not see this causing an issue because they don't start counting the days for a temporary sign until they get a complaint.

The Executive Board discuss how reducing the number of days permitted could create one standard for conscientious businesses and another for businesses that are aware of the County enforcement policy. It would also give a good amount of power to people that file complaints.

The definition of temporary signs was also discussed. County staff will be proposing new language.

Consensus that the 60 day period should not be reduced. Lauber will contact Dane County staff and let them know.

Update on conversation with Dane County Treasurer re delinquent tax parcels of minimal value

Lauber had a phone conversation with Mr. Gallagher regarding this issue. They discussed how the County pays the town the unpaid taxes, the cost of going through the process, and that the specifics each parcel are going to be unique. Mr. Gallagher has worked with several municipalities (recently Blooming Grove and Shorewood) when a specific parcel and issue have come up that need to be addressed. Mr. Gallagher did not know what additional work these parcels might cause for towns. Many Executive Board members felt this issue was best addressed by towns that have specific issues.

Abandoned parcels may lead to difficulties in enforcing ordinances such as weed or zoning. Lauber will check if Mr. Gallagher can provide a list of tax-deed eligible parcels in all towns. Towns can follow up if there is potential benefit to pursuing the tax deed process.

Set September membership meeting date

The meeting will be held via zoom on 9/22.

Update on Broadband Task Force

Lauber is the DCTA representative on the Task Force. She gave an update on the last meeting. The County has set aside \$5 million for broadband work. The money will hopefully be used along with town ARPA funding for broadband improvement. The Executive Board discussed this expectation.

Consensus that Lauber should work with the Task Force on a joint letter to towns asking them to set aside some ARPA funding for broadband improvements. Suggesting that towns set aside a specific percentage of funding was discussed and the idea was rejected.

Update on Yahara Clean Compact

Lauber and Wilson are DCTA representatives. They reported some concerns with the process that seemed to coincide with the hiring of a new consultant. They voiced their concerns with Compact leadership and things seem to be back on track. At the last meeting the group reviewed recommended actions for Park Managers and Residential/Commercial. Lauber will send these 2 documents to the Executive Board so they have an idea of what the group is working on. The September meeting will review recommended actions for rural and other areas.

Update on Redistricting Commission

Lauber sent out information regarding mapping communities to all towns. Wilson noted that Sept. is a big month for the Commission. It is going to come up with 3 plans to present to the County Board. There will be a zoom public hearing at 7 pm on Sept 23rd. The following week the commission will make a recommendation to the County Board.

Discuss MPO and letter sent to towns requesting funding

The funding request sent to towns and comments at their Policy Board meeting regarding staff obligations to contributing versus non-contributing municipalities was discussed.

The MPO will be invited to the 9/22 Membership Meeting to provide information on what the MPO does, discuss their funding request, and addressing the comments made at their recent Policy Board meetings. Who (towns or cities) benefits from the MPO was discussed. A request for a letter to the towns asking them not to support the MPO was briefly discussed.

Motion: Wilson/Gibson. Adjourn at 9:24 PM. Carried unanimously.