

DCTA Executive Board Meeting

Tuesday, October 15, 2024

Verona Town Hall, 7669 County Highway PD
Verona, WI

Present: Jerry Derr, Greg Hyer, Steve Anders, Martha Gibson, Ted Olson, Tom Mathies

Absent: Mary Manering

Also Present: Renee Lauber, Majid Allen – Dane County Planning Senior Planner

Called to order by President Derr at 6:00 PM

Approve August 20, 2024 minutes

Motion: Mathies/Hyer. Approved minutes. Carried.

Consider Financial Report

Four reports were reviewed. Lauber explained that the additional reports were because we were changing from a regular checking account that was earning no interest to an advantage checking that will earn .5% interest.

Motion: Gibson/Anders. Approve reports. Carried.

Review ACEP Funding proposal <https://danecotowns.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/ACEP-Funding-Announcement-1.pdf>

The board asked if the proposed language limits the program to active agricultural land only? They would like this program to be available to lands not actively farmed to accomplish conservation goals and support things like grasslands, prairies, etc. They also asked if an applicant would have to show farm income. They thought that might fall under the “eligible for the Farmland Preservation Program” criteria. Lauber will send questions to Laura Hicklin and report back.

Majid Allan, Dane County Senior Planner regarding next steps for Regional Housing Strategy (RHS)

Allan noted that the last time the Executive Board reviewed this issue was in June 2023. Also that many town representatives that participated in the RHS are no longer elected officials. He is looking for more participation from towns.

It was suggested that perhaps the county could put money into helping the towns that want to stay rural. The county Parks and Open Space Plan is too narrow to address the growth that the county is now facilitating/encouraging.

Appropriate county involvement was addressed. Is this the correct role for the county? The county enforces the zoning code and is now encouraging housing. How do you wear both hats? Staff might be encouraged to relax standards to get more housing.

Allan noted that some towns are updating their plans to add growth options like duplexes and accessory dwelling units. There was discussion of creating new zoning categories to help towns make some of this happen. There was interest in an educational summary of what towns in the county are doing. This would be an excellent resource.

Update on Conditional Use Permit ordinance amendment discussion

The working group including Mathies, Cynthia Richson, Lauber, Allan, Attorney Gault, Attorney Lawton and Todd Violante met on 10/8. There was agreement on the need to update the zoning code to comply with state Statutes and a detailed ordinance amendment was reviewed. This will improve things for towns as the county will now have to act on CUPs and towns will be shield towns from legal action. (Example, The benefit would be to towns like Dane that are now defending themselves in court.) A negative perception may be that towns are going back to being advisory only. However, the current ordinance already allows the ZLR Committee to overrule a town decision.

Towns that deed restrict the conditional uses they don't want when they approve new zoning was discussed. Will those deed restrictions hold up in court? Could we ask legal counsel? Is it sufficient? How to present changes to towns and whether or not to request companion actions like review of conditional uses in zoning categories, should some conditional uses be moved to their own zoning category, can the standard and criteria be improved was also discussed.

Motion: Mathies/Gibson. To have the DCTA Executive Board support the county zoning ordinance amendment to bring the CUP procedure into alignment with state law. Carried.

Motion: Gibson/Anders. Request Dane County create a working group to review conditional uses and appropriateness in the current code and review the conditional use approval standards/criteria. Carried.

Update on educational programming

Lauber will see if the highway commissioner, Clement Abongwa, can meet on December 10 or 11 at 7 pm. Oregon was suggested as a location.

Update on attorney opinion on reducing speed limits

Since we have not heard back from WTA on this, Lauber will contact Attorney Eric Larson.

Motion: Gibson/Olson. Adjourn at 8:00 pm. Carried