

WAUPACA COUNTY LAND & WATER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes – January 9th, 2017

Chair Federwitz called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and gave the open meeting statement.

Roll Call: Chair DuWayne Federwitz; Supervisors Bob Ellis, Lee Much, David Johnson, Michael Whitman, James Nygaard and FSA Rep. Walter Strebe present. Others present: Brian Haase, Lisa Neuenfeldt, Derrick Raspor, Dan Trzebiatowski, Tomas Houlihan & Dr. George Kraft. Approximately 50 members of the public were also in attendance.

Review and Approve Agenda: Motion by Johnson, seconded by Much to approve the agenda contingent upon moving item #12 (Public Comment) up to item #9. Motion carried without a negative vote.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting December 5th, 2016: Motion by Much, seconded by Nygaard to approve the December 5th, 2016 minutes. Motion carried without a negative vote.

Agency Reports:

NRCS Report – Lisa Neuenfeldt:

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is the largest NRCS conservation program in Waupaca County. All planning, contracting and payment processing is done by the two Waupaca NRCS staff members and the majority of the engineering assistance is provided by the Waupaca LWCD staff. It's the main program that NRCS uses to address resource concerns on farms and other rural land. Currently we have 32 active contracts which total over \$752,000 in funding for conservation practices. Some examples of practices that are contracted for 2017 and beyond include managed grazing, nutrient management, establishment of pollinator habitat, water and sediment control basins and several types of water quality improvements projects that involve manure or feed leachate management. Landowners and operators can sign up twice a year for the program. Funding is competitive, so to receive a higher chance of getting funded, staff must have all planning, surveying and design done ahead of time for each project. For the current signup, the Waupaca office has 25 applications that have all the planning and design complete, totaling \$456,000 in requests. Applications are currently being ranked through a scoring process, and funding decisions will be made in late January. If funded, construction of the practices must begin within 12 months. NRCS staff is currently working on getting the remaining 13 applications to high priority status, along with any new applications that come in by the second signup deadline of March 3rd. Through EQIP, there is also a separate funding opportunity for producers in the Pigeon Lake watershed. That signup deadline is also March 3rd. A mailing went out last week to all landowners in that watershed. Since our fiscal year-end report to this committee in October, which gave a summary of EQIP projects installed by Sept. 30th, 2016, there were several projects that were wrapped in late 2016, including 370 acres of cover crops, 3 manure management/storage projects, several grazing projects and a grassed waterway.

NRCS's Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is a program that rewards agricultural producers for the conservation that they've already implemented on their operations and also requires them to do additional practices to bring their farms to a higher level of conservation treatment. Currently, the Waupaca NRCS office handles 49 CSP contracts, which cover over 20,000 acres. The signup deadline for the recently-revamped Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is Feb. 3rd. Staff is still receiving training on implementing this new program.

FSA Report – Zak Werner

Haase read the e-mailed report from Zak Werner. The Waupaca County FSA office has selected it's new County Executive Director. Rhonda VandeHey, former CED from Shawano County, will start as the new CED on January 23rd. Rhonda will be a shared CED for Waupaca and Winnebago Counties. Now is good time to inquire at the FSA office regarding our Continuous CRP sign-up. This sign-up is aimed at the most highly environmentally sensitive areas like grass filter strips, riparian buffers and pollinator plantings. Timothy Schultz was elected to the FSA County Committee this past month. Tim replaces Al Tank who served the producers of Waupaca County for the past 9 years. The month ahead will see the Waupaca FSA Office reaching out to producers to complete their ARC/PLC contracts and update any changes to their farm operations.

WDACP Wildlife Damage Claim:

Haase presented a claim for Faldet Farms Deer Damage for \$444.97 for deer damage to soy beans from 2016.

Motion by Nygaard, seconded by Whitman to approve the claim. Motion carried without a negative vote.

WI Potato and Vegetable Growers Association (WPVGA) Groundwater Presentation – Dan Trzebiatowski & Tomas Houlihan:

Trzebiatowski, a local vegetable producer and business owner, presented information from the WPVGA High Capacity Well Fact Book. Trzebiatowski discussed aquifer levels, monitoring wells & vegetated cover studies related to the Plover area. Also discussed was evapo-transpiration of plants, recharge, irrigated fertilization timing, negative summer recharge rates and the income of irrigated versus non-irrigated fields. Several charts and graphs were presented. Trzebiatowski and Houlihan also mentioned some of the 2016 legislation regarding high capacity well issues that did not make it through the legislative session.

Groundwater Pumping Impacts on Central WI Lakes & Streams – Dr. George Kraft (UWEX):

Kraft, a UWEX hydro geologist, acknowledged that there were differences of opinion and viewpoint on current science. Kraft showed a box full of historical scientific studies related to central sands groundwater. Kraft discussed some of the legislative options that the state has with regard to groundwater. Kraft discussed groundwater pumping and recharge factors that pertain to water levels in the area and historical rainfall data. Kraft noted that much of the WVPGA Fact Book data had not been scientifically reviewed and that he disagreed with portions of it that pertained to evapo-transpiration, land cover and the water levels in heavily pumped areas.

Public Comment:

LWCC Chairman DuWayne Federwitz - Opened public comment with a reminder that we all need and use farm products in our daily lives. Comment will be limited to approximately 3 minutes per person.

Phil Peterson, Waupaca – Made comments regarding the Hartmans Creek & Emmons Creek watersheds with respect to recent data and water levels that have declined in Hartman's and Allen Creeks.

Carol Elvery, Waupaca – Made comments cautioning against disinformation related to groundwater and high capacity wells and gave information related to the City of Waupaca's water usage. Elvery requested that Waupaca County develop a groundwater management plan that included input from all users.

Tom Jadin, Waupaca – Made comments expressing a need for the balance of water uses between farm and riparian land owners.

Ray (Skip) Hansen, Wautoma – Made comment comparing 1.5 Billion dollar economy of both vegetable farming and riparian tourism in the Central Sands as well as comments about Nitrate levels, pesticide use and Legislative reports.

Christy Greening, WI Rapids – Made comments regarding press articles on water issues, actions by town and county governments and comments Mr. Houlihan had made regarding town and county legislation.

Dmitri Martin, Waupaca – Commented on his recent bid for the WI Legislature and how the groundwater topic was prevalent during his travels. Also commented on farm income and economy as well as questioning certain farm rotations.

Dan Trzebiatowski, Waupaca – Addressed some of the comments brought up regarding well levels, monitoring, chemicals, Nitrates and the reason for specific crop rotations.

Marty Wilke, Wautoma – Commented on Central Sands Water Action Coalition Issues and a desire to not see one-sided legislation occur with regard to groundwater issues.

Cindy Kelm, Waupaca – Read written comments from Angela Emmert, of Manawa, regarding a desire for Waupaca to not have the groundwater quality issues facing Kewaunee County residents and that local water supplies should not be considered inexhaustible.

John Wilson, Pine River – Commented that he has done citizen water monitoring and that people need to be more conservative in their water usage especially during drought conditions.

Russ Brown, Coloma, - Also ran for State Assembly recently and is a small farmer. He feels insulted by comments directed at "hobby" farms made by large "factory" farms.

LWCC Vice Chairman Bob Ellis, Waupaca - Ended public comment with a caution to the WPVGA Director that e-mail comments made regarding the suppression of local government action were not well taken by some members of local government.

Cost Share Agreements:

None presented for January.

County Conservationist Report - Brian Haase: Due to the 11:00 a.m. County Board meeting Haase reserved his report for the February LWCC meeting.

Upcoming Meetings:

The next LWCC will be Feb. 6th at 9:00 AM

Adjourn: Motion by Much, seconded by Nygaard to adjourn. Motion carried without a negative vote. Meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Submitted by,

Brian Haase
Recording Secretary

These minutes will be posted to the website prior to approval from the Committee and are considered to be in draft form until approved at the next scheduled meeting.