



## CITY OF FITCHBURG

Planning Department

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### MINUTES

Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee  
Tuesday, April 21, 2015

Members Present: Roger Cohee, Ed Kinney, Bill Horns, Marc Jones, and George Vroman (Excused absences: Tom O'Brien) (New Committee member, Alder Tony Hartmann, was in attendance and was formally appointed to the Committee after the meeting.)

Other City Officials Present: Mayor Steve Arnold

Staff Present: Wade Thompson – Resource/Project Planner

#### 1. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

Chair Ed Kinney called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Motion by Bill Horns, second by Marc Jones, to approve the minutes of March 24, 2015, carried unanimously.

#### 2. Public Appearances – Non-agenda items

Mayor Steve Arnold thanked the Committee for all their work over the past few years and stated he supports the various projects the Committee is working on, including the Agriculture Plan. Arnold stated Tony Hartmann would be formally appointed to the Committee at the City Council meeting later that evening, subject to Council approval.

#### 3. Planning for Fitchburg Agriculture Past and Present Bike Tour

Wade Thompson stated he has been planning for the tour and that tour planning is in good order. Mayor Arnold stated he supports the tour and that the tour will be included in the City's application for gold designation in the Bicycle Friendly Communities program. The Committee discussed potential future expansion of the tour event, including bringing in Verona Area FFA personnel and the Verona Area Stoner Prairie Elementary School. Thompson stated he would keep the Committee updated as tour planning progresses.

#### 4. City of Fitchburg Comprehensive Agriculture Plan Work Session

Thompson presented a general timeline and process for development of the Agriculture Plan, including Committee work sessions, a Plan Commission "charge" to the Committee to develop the Plan, public meetings/workshops, and presentation of the draft Plan.

Chair Kinney brought up the point of whether or not the Plan would be included in the City's Comprehensive Plan. Bill Horns stated the Plan should be subject to a "charge" request from the Plan Commission, providing the Committee with direction as to how to develop the Plan. The Committee agreed.

Chair Kinney stated the Committee should identify issues and ask the Plan Commission whether they should be addressed in the Plan. Jones asked about turnover of the Plan Commission and whether or not development of the Plan should be put on hold. Chair Kinney stated he thought the new Commission should be adequately prepared to address Plan development.

Horns identified some issues he thought should be addressed in the Plan and/or Plan development process, including ensuring that all thoughts/comments are recorded and inventoried, the state/regional context of agriculture, identifying the long-term urban growth boundary, wetland development buffers, and the potential of wetland "parks".

The Committee reinforced the idea that the Plan should be consistent and integrated with various other City plans, including the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.

The Committee identified Plan issues that should be identified in the "charge" request to the Plan Commission, including whether or not the Plan should be included in the Comprehensive Plan, ensuring consistency with the long-term growth boundary, and wetland/natural resource, parks/open space, and agricultural support/infrastructure issues. Jones stated that Dane County does currently have regulations related to wetlands and agricultural use, while Horns stated that it was his understanding that wetland regulations, as they relate to agricultural use, are minimal.

The Committee further discussed the content of the "charge" request to the Plan Commission and agreed that issues will come up over the course of the Plan development process that may not specifically be identified in the charge. The Committee agreed that the Plan Commission's representative on the Committee will keep the Commission abreast of Plan development. The Committee further agreed that said charge should identify broad statements and themes, similar to those identified in the meeting packet as follows: market demands, costs (land and operational), support services and infrastructure, urban/suburban/ rural development, generational, environmental, and other.

Cohee proposed that the Committee target one or two themes a meeting, and stated he thought it would be a good idea to bring in local and regional "experts" on the themes as the Committee continues work on development of the Plan. The Committee agreed.

Thompson asked for further direction from the Committee on the general timeline and process for development of the Plan. The Committee agreed the timeline/process is adequate, subject to Plan Commission approval.

Chair Kinney asked if the plan could be reorganized to make sure the goals, objectives, and policies are more easily distinguishable. Thompson stated various plan organization structures could be utilized to reach this goal.

The Committee discussed the purpose and intent of the first public workshop/meeting, and agreed that it should be to provide an opportunity for the public to identify agricultural themes and issues to be incorporated in to the Plan, and identify future opportunities for agricultural landowners.

The Committee agreed to continue the Plan work session at the next Committee meeting, and directed Thompson to prepare a draft "charge" request to develop the Plan, for Plan Commission's review and approval. The Committee agreed the Plan "charge" request would be reviewed at the next Committee meeting in May.

## **5. Staff Report**

Thompson reported the DNR had partially approved the City's request to include the Northeast Neighborhood in the City's urban service area (approximately 375 acres).

## **6. Announcements.**

Chair Kinney stated a Committee chair will need to be elected by the Committee at the May meeting.

Cohee gave an update on the Fitchburg Farms business and stated there would be an upcoming meeting between City staff, City officials, and the landowner to discuss the business's land use in further detail.

### **a. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting was scheduled for May 12, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

## **7. Adjournment**

Motion by Horns, second by Jones, to adjourn at 5:42 p.m., carried unanimously.

Submitted by: Wade Thompson, Resource/Project Planner

Approved: May 19, 2015