



CITY OF FITCHBURG

Planning Department

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MINUTES

Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee
Tuesday, August 25, 2015

Members Present: Ed Kinney, Roger Cohee, Tony Hartmann, Tom O'Brien, Tom Thrall, and George Vroman

Staff Present: Wade Thompson – Resource/Project Planner

Others Present: Olivia Parry, Dane County Planning and Development Department and Lloyd Vroman, City of Fitchburg landowner

1. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

Chair Ed Kinney called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

Motion by Tom O'Brien, second by Tony Hartmann, to approve the minutes of July 14, 2015, carried unanimously.

Chair Kinney proposed moving agenda item 6. **Yahara WINS Semi-Annual Report** to agenda item 3. Motion by O'Brien, second by George Vroman, to move agenda item 6 to agenda item 3, carried unanimously.

2. Public Appearances – Non-agenda items

None.

3. Yahara WINS Semi-Annual Report

Wade Thompson, at the request of Rick Eilertson, City Environmental Engineer, provided an overview of the Yahara WINS pilot project, stating it consisted of a partnership of various interests designed to reduce phosphorus run-off in to the region's water bodies. Thompson also stated that Eilertson had informed him that an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) is being prepared that would expand the scope of the project to cover the extent of the Yahara River watershed, and that said IGA would be presented to the Common Council and potentially be referred out to the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee.

The Committee discussed the Yahara WINS project and requested that Eilertson provide a brief overview of the project and the IGA, prior to the IGA being referred out to the Committee.

Thompson stated he would invite Eilertson to a future Committee meeting to provide an overview.

4. Fitchburg Agriculture Route (FAR) – Olivia Parry, Dane County Planning and Development Department

Olivia Parry, Senior Planner with the Dane County Planning and Development Department, spoke to the Committee regarding County support of the Fitchburg Agriculture Route (FAR) project. Parry spoke to her previous agriculture enterprise experience, including her involvement in formation and development of the Southern Wisconsin Food Hub, Institutional Food Market Coalition, and Program for Entrepreneurial Agricultural Training (PEAT).

Parry stated that the Dane County Planning and Development Department supports the City's FAR project, as it aligns with County goals of farmland preservation and enhancement of the County's agricultural/local food identity. Parry stated she thought the FAR project is unique in that it partners agriculture with recreation. Parry also stated she has been assisting Thompson in brainstorming on very early stages of the FAR project and will continue to provide expertise and assistance, as needed, throughout development of the FAR project.

The Committee and Parry discussed various ideas related to the FAR project, including designation of agriculture enterprise areas (AEA), food hubs and "feed" kitchens (local food processing, preparation, and distribution centers), potential "earmarking" of lands in the City for said centers, and landscaping/maintenance along the FAR corridor.

5. City of Fitchburg Agriculture Plan Work Session

Thompson provided an overview of the timeline for development of the City's Agriculture Plan and stated that a public information workshop/meeting was the next step. Thompson provided a summary of a draft notice to be sent to the City's rural/agricultural landowners, informing them of Plan development, the public information meeting/workshop date, and major issues/questions to be discussed at the meeting/workshop.

The Committee requested minor edits to the notice, including more specific wording regarding allowable potential future agriculture uses, examples of said uses, identification of the FAR study/report that the City will be undertaking in partnership with UW-Madison in the fall of 2015, and potential economic return on production of "local food" commodities versus "traditional" (corn/soy bean) commodities.

Thompson stated he would incorporate the edits in to the notice. Thompson also stated he would include a copy of the final notice, as well as public meeting/workshop presentation materials, etc., in the packet for the Committee's October meeting. Subject to Committee approval at its October meeting, Thompson stated he would then send out the notices to the City's rural/agricultural landowners.

The Committee agreed that October 21 or 22 would be suitable dates for the public meeting/workshop, and will confirm the meeting/workshop date/time at the October Committee meeting.

6. Appointment of Committee Chair and Vice-Chair

Motion by O'Brien, second by Hartmann, to designate Ed Kinney as Committee Chair and Roger Cohee as Vice-Chair, carried unanimously.

7. Staff Report

Thompson reported that the Fitchburg Agriculture Route (FAR) trails signs should be completed in the next few weeks.

8. Announcements.

None.

a. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting was scheduled for October 6, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

8. Adjournment

Motion by O'Brien, second by Vroman, to adjourn at 5:35 p.m., carried unanimously.

Submitted by: Wade Thompson, Resource/Project Planner

Approved: October 5, 2015