



CITY OF FITCHBURG

Planning Department

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MINUTES

Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee
Monday, October 5, 2015

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

Staff Present: Wade Thompson – Resource/Project Planner

1. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

Chair Ed Kinney called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Motion by Roger Cohee, second by George Vroman, to approve the minutes of August 25, 2015, carried unanimously.

2. Public Appearances – Non-agenda items

None.

3. City of Fitchburg Agriculture Plan Work Session

Wade Thompson announced that a time and date for the Agriculture Plan public open house and workshop has been set for 6:30 p.m., Thursday, October 22. Thompson introduced a draft open house/workshop notice and a letter to be sent out to the City's rural landowners announcing the open house and workshop. Thompson also stated that a open house/workshop notice had been put in the October edition of the Fitchburg Star and that FACTv is also advertising the open house/workshop.

The Committee reviewed the draft notice and letter. Tony Hartmann asked about the public opinion survey identified in the draft letter. Thompson stated that an additional opportunity for public input on the Agriculture Plan would be to create a public opinion survey. The Committee agreed that a survey would a good avenue for additional public input and directed Thompson to create a survey. The Committee agreed that the survey should be announced at the open house/workshop and also be available in hard copy at said open house/workshop.

The Committee also discussed how the UW-Madison Urban and Regional Planning (URPL) student group would present their findings to the Committee and the Plan Commission (see agenda item #5 below for further detail).

Thompson also introduced the proposed content and structure of the open house/workshop, to consist of an open house for attendees to ask questions in an informal setting, with the workshop consisting of an introduction by the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, a formal presentation/overview of Plan development timeline/process, and major issues to be identified in the Plan. Thompson also stated that after these activities, he was proposing splitting open house/workshop attendees in to two separate breakout groups, a "General Agriculture" group and a "FAR" group, to discuss questions as identified in the draft landowner letter. The Committee agreed that the proposed content and structure of the open house/workshop is sufficient and meets the goals of the open house/workshop.

Thompson and the Committee also discussed the various materials that would be available at the open house/workshop, including maps, posters, and a powerpoint presentation. Thompson stated he would send draft open house/workshop materials to the Committee for their review early in the week of Oct. 19.

The Committee discussed various edits to the landowner letter, including making it more succinct and re-organizing content to draw interest at the beginning of the letter. Thompson stated he would address these edits in the final version of the letter.

Roger Cohee stated he thought it would be valuable if the open house/workshop had a guest speaker, perhaps a professor from the University of Wisconsin that could speak to agricultural opportunities and potential economic return on these opportunities. Thompson stated he would contact some professors in the University's Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee to see if any would be interested in speaking at the open house/workshop.

4. Staff Report

Thompson stated that the UW-Madison Urban and Regional Planning group was doing good work on the Fitchburg Agriculture Route (FAR) study/report, and that he looked forward to the final product. Thompson also reported that the Fitchburg Agriculture Route (FAR) trails signs will be installed next week. Thompson also stated that this October Committee meeting was the eighth meeting of the Committee this year, the maximum number allotted for Committee member per-diem in the City budget.

5. Announcements.

None.

a. Next Meeting Date

The Committee agreed that the UW-Madison Urban and Regional Planning (URPL) student group would present their findings on the Fitchburg Agriculture Route (FAR) study/report at the next Committee meeting in December. The Committee also agreed they would invite Plan Commission members to the meeting and the student presentation.

The next Committee meeting was scheduled for December 15, 2015 at a time and location to be determined.

6. Adjournment

Motion by Hartmann, second by George Vroman, to adjourn at 5:25 p.m., carried unanimously.

Submitted by: Wade Thompson, Resource/Project Planner

Approved: December 15, 2015