

Agriculture & Extension Education/Land & Water Conservation Committee
January 10, 2011
Minutes

Committee members present: Chair Tom Rudolph, Paul Dean, Bob Evsich, Carol Pederson, Greg Berard, and Romelle Vandervest.

Others present: Dan Kuzlik, Jim Winkler, Kari Lazars, Nancy Hollands, Jean Hansen, Brian Desmond, Mike Romportl, and Kerri Ison.

Others who signed in: Ronald Ament, Shirley Ament, Nancy Smith, Kenneth Dirks, John Russo, Rick Arends, Jerry Luedke, John Bowman, Ginger Bowman, Gary Baier, and David Nycz.

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Chairman Rudolph noting the meeting has been properly posted and the facility is handicap accessible.

Approve agenda: Motion by Dean/Vandervest to approve the agenda as presented with permission to change to order of the day. All ayes; motion carried.

Approve minutes: Motion by Vandervest/Pederson to approve the minutes of December 13, 2010 as presented. All ayes; motion carried.

Approve minutes: Motion by Vandervest/Evsich to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2010 public hearing as presented. All ayes; motion carried.

Dates of future meetings:

February 14, 2011 1:30 p.m. Extension meeting room

Lake Nokomis proposed Lake District update/recommendation:

Hollands reviewed the Lake Nokomis Lake District report in detail. She noted the group did not reach the 51% required to qualify by signatures but did qualify under land area at 66.13%. She noted there are changes to Exhibit #7 and #8 which will be inserted prior to sending the report to County Board for review.

Romportl reviewed Exhibit #7 with changes. In order to qualify for a lake district 51% of eligible landowners must sign the petition. He described how the number of eligible signatures is derived noting information was taken from the tax rolls in both Oneida and Lincoln Counties, setting the framework to calculate percentages. The difference in Oneida's numbers is due to approximately 37 differences in eligibility. The same people and properties were used but the way eligibility was determined by the County and the Lake Nokomis Concerned Citizens (LNCC) differed slightly. The Lincoln County data provided to LNCC did not include all four owners listed on Lincoln County's tax roll. LNCC was aware of this issue in advance but felt they had enough signatures to move

forward. When totaled, there is not a large discrepancy for signatures, but LNCC did not meet the 51% required.

Dean wondered if Lincoln County provided any input for the project. Romportl noted they did have conversations with Lincoln County regarding certain properties but it is Oneida County's responsibility to review the petition. When a lake is in two different counties the county that has the highest equalized valuation is responsible for processing the petition. Property owners within the boundary of the proposed Lake District were notified by mail regarding the petition.

Desmond worked with Romportl regarding eligibility issues pursuant to state statutes and agrees with the calculations. Signatures were not discounted if property owners did not sign in the space allotted as the intent to sign the petition was there. Romportl noted there was a lot of time and effort by all involved to get these numbers.

Romportl reviewed Exhibit #8 in detail. The map data from both counties were combined and the results were posted on the wall for committee review. Total area of water and land is approximately 6,000 acres, with 2,331 acres being upland. Overflowed lands, due to Wisconsin Valley Improvement Co. (WVIC), combined with upland listed on the tax roll totals approximately 3,351 acres. It was noted some WVIC parcels are not listed in tax roll as they are tax exempt and only those on tax roll were included. Total property area signed on the petition equals 66.13% (which includes WVIC). Total area not signed for equals 33.87%. The LNCC received enough signatures by land area to qualify to advance petition to County Board for consideration.

Rudolph opened the meeting up for public comment:

Jerry Luedke spoke in opposition of the petition. He believes all who live on Lake Nokomis are concerned about lake but believes the situation pits neighbor against neighbor. LNCC has spent thousands of hours and money protecting the lake. It is the DNR's responsibility to protect our waters through various fees collected, however it is not in the DNR's budget to protect lakes. Groups are urged to apply for grants or set up discretionary groups to be taxed. He believes citizens are taxed enough through sales, gas, property and payroll taxes. Luedke respectfully requested the petition be denied.

David Nycz, current President of LNCC, spoke in favor of the petition. He has been involved with LNCC since 2005. Lake Nokomis is currently infested with Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) to the point that boats cannot pass through in certain areas -- it is an expensive problem to treat. Last year about 250 acres of the lake were affected by EWM costing about \$130,000 to treat. This is the largest body of water in Oneida County and largest body of taxation. The DNR has been extremely helpful but the only way to get DNR funds is to become a qualified lake organization. A DNR grant would

pay for 75% of proposed treatment, leaving approximately \$30,000 to be funded by the LNCC and he discussed fundraising efforts. Nycz believes the health of the lake is everyone's responsibility, not just those few who are active in LNCC. The group has tried to get funding from various governmental bodies with little success. He indicated the majority of property owners are in favor of the petition, with only about 10% in opposition. Most of the property owners understand the need for this district. It's those who do not attend the monthly meetings to find out what is happening that oppose it. He estimated the taxes would be about \$40 to \$50/year for a \$200,000 property if this petition goes through and doesn't believe that is too much to ask to help protect the lake. Nycz provided copy of letter from Lawrence Eslinger, former Oneida County AIS Coordinator, reading a portion of paragraph #3 and portions of paragraph #4 that urged citizens to support or join a lake organization. The requirement for the petition has been met according to state statute and he urged the Committee to recommend a district be formed.

John Bowman lives year-round on Lake Nokomis. When LNCC went door-to-door, over 85% of people who were contacted signed the petition; approximately 3% were not in favor, and less than 15% wanted to think about the issue before signing. He noted one advantage of having a lake district is all property owners can vote regardless of residency.

Another supporter reviewed the statutes noting the requirements to meet. The district is necessary and property will be benefited by the district's establishment and funding to help the lake.

Another supporter indicated there are approximately 1,000 landowners on Lake Nokomis. LNCC has about 350 members but only 25 are active. He believes the petition is an issue of fairness. If others won't or can't help physically, they can help financially. Lake District taxation is also tax deductible.

Rick Ahrens has lived on Lake Nokomis since 1996. He noted the percentage of signatures needed to qualify changed because the number of eligible signatories changed. If both counties worked under a uniform number of signatures then the numbers would have remained almost as presented. Discussion followed and Romportl and Desmond believed that to be correct.

Romportl reiterated LNCC was notified of the difference in number of signatures listed on the tax roll and that Lincoln County allows up to four signatories on their tax roll prior to petition submission. Despite this, the group decided to move forward. Those present from LNCC agreed they were notified and felt the requirement would be met by land area.

Desmond indicated LNCC petitioned for a Lake District in 2008 but did not qualify by signatures or land area. Nycz noted the boundary was larger last time as they included off-water owners who had no legal access to the lake. This time, only those with property on the lake or with legal access were included.

Public comment was closed 2:38 p.m.

Desmond noted the report must be forwarded to the County Board for consideration within three months of the public hearing. County Board must make a decision within six months of public hearing. It would be helpful if this Committee would make a recommendation to the County Board but it is not required. Discussion followed.

Motion by Vandervest/Pederson to forward corrected report to County Board for their review and consideration. Discussion followed.

It is anticipated a recommendation will be made at the February Agriculture & Extension/Land & Water Conservation Committee meeting. A resolution would then be submitted to the County Board for their March meeting. Members of the public will be allowed three minutes to speak at the County Board meeting.

Gary Baier noted the group may not have met the signature requirement but met the land area requirement. He wondered if there is a way of defining the amount of WVIC property for negotiation purposes in securing funding from them for the Lake District. Rudolph felt future negotiations would be up to LNCC. Nycz indicated LNCC has contacted WVIC but were told funds are not budgeted for this purpose. WVIC does spray for purple loosestrife and have worked with them on other issues. The relationship has improved over the past five years.

All ayes; motion carried.

North Central Association meeting: The meeting has been tentatively set for 1/28/11 but a site has not been determined. Rudolph is unable to attend. Hollands will work to reschedule for a different date and will inform Committee members as soon as possible.

Approve monthly budget reports: Motion by Vandervest/Evsich to approve the monthly budget report for UW-Extension for the period ending 12/31/10. All ayes; motion carried.

Hollands reviewed the monthly budget report for LWC in detail noting line item transfers will be necessary. Motion by Vandervest/Dean to approve the monthly budget report for LWC for the period ending 12/31/10 as presented. All ayes; motion carried.

Approve invoices: Motion by Berard/Pederson to approve the monthly invoices for UW-Extension as presented. All ayes; motion carried.

Motion by Vandervest/Dean to approve the monthly invoices for the Oneida County Fair as presented. All ayes; motion carried.

Hollands reviewed invoices for LWC in detail. Motion by Berard/Evsich to approve the invoices for LWC as presented. All ayes; motion carried.

Fair update: Kuzlik noted Fair Committee members are currently attending WI Association of Fairs Conference in Wisconsin Dells. The Fair Committee has entered into an agreement with the Rhinelander Area Chamber of Commerce to handle vendors this year. The Fair will receive a percentage of vendor fees.

AIS Coordinator Vacancy: Eslinger's last day was 12/30/10. Kuzlik is in the process of filling out a vacancy review form, with input from Hollands, and will forward to the County Coordinator for consideration. He believes it will be placed on the LRES Committee agenda in February. Rudolph felt the issue needs to be fast-tracked.

Motion by Vandervest/Evsich requesting the LRES Committee waive the six-month vacancy period for the AIS Coordinator position. Ayes: Rudolph, Vandervest, Evsich, Berard and Pederson. Abstained: Dean. Motion carried.

Line item transfers: Motion by Vandervest/Dean to approve the line item transfers for UW-Extension as presented. All ayes; motion carried.

County Cost-Share program update/approval: Hansen reported all 2010 contracts have been completed. One contract was not signed as the landowners were not able to return from out-of-state in time due to weather related travel delays. This contract was less than 5% of cost share funds allocated for the year (\$63,000) and will not affect future allocations. The landowners did sign up for 2011 funding. The carryover request was submitted by the deadline.

Each year this Committee can review the percent of cost share allocated to landowners. The State allows up to 70% cost share but Oneida County currently offers 50% cost share to help funding stretch to additional landowners. Discussion followed. Motion by Vandervest/Dean that Oneida County cost-share program remain at 50% for 2011. All ayes; motion carried.

Monthly staff reports: Hansen provided copies of a promotional brochure for WHIP. A graphic artist donated time and it was produced at local RC&D office. Hansen has a supply at her office. WHIP is currently working on a priority list of invasive plants for

the region. The 13 partners who have signed the MOU will begin receiving monthly updates and plan to apply for grants with the Forest Service.

Hollands worked with staff to get the cost-share contracts signed, extension request filed and the compilation of the Lake Nokomis report. She indicated the process will begin soon to update the Land and Water Resource Management plan.

Lazers noted WNEP has finished their first quarter and are on track with agreements. Staff continues to work weekly with the Rhinelander Area Food Pantry on the Backpack Program -- filling 36 backpacks that provide 91 children with food for the weekend. Leadership Oneida County participants chose the Backpack program as a community service project to help expand the program to include more children. It currently costs approximately \$11,000/school year. Schools identify children who receive free/reduced lunch and send a sign up sheet home to parents. School staff track children by name and number and at this time there haven't been any problems.

Kuzlik commended Brewster's efforts with the Key Ingredients exhibit noting approximately 700 visitors in the first three weeks.

Winkler noted the 4H Holiday Craft Workshop was held on 12/9/10 with 22 youth attending in spite of the adverse weather. Teen Court continues to be busy and youth are following through with their sanctions. Winkler will chaperone Winter Camp at the end of the month in Bayfield County.

Out of county travel requests:

Brewster:

1/12-14/11	Wisconsin Leadership Academy	Madison**
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Hollands:

1/27/10	Lumberjack RC&D meeting	Oconto County*
1/28/10	North Central Association meeting	TBD*

Kuzlik

2/4/11	WACEC District 4 meeting	Ashland*
2/8-11/11	WI Economic Development Assn.	Madison**

Winkler:

1/19-21/11	State Board of Education Conference	Milwaukee***
1/27/11	4-H Plus software training	Wausau*
2/4/11	KEEP Training	Stevens Point*

Ison/Jewell:

1/27/11	4-H Plus software training	Wausau*
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Committee:

1/27/10	Lumberjack RC&D meeting	Oconto County*
1/28/10	North Central Association meeting	TBD*

*county expense
**district/state/grant expense
***other/personal expense

Motion by Vandervest/Dean to approve out-of-county travel requests as presented. All ayes; motion carried.

Agency reports:

FSA: Susan Hunter reviewed written report in detail highlighting programs for limited resource producers and beginning farmers. Low interest loans are available but it is anticipated that funds will run out early and producers are urged to apply early. County Committee elections will be held in December. FSA is seeking a female or minority producer to serve as an advisor to the County FSA Committee. Hunter believes the Department of Agriculture will experience some substantial cuts due to changes in political leadership.

DNR: Hollands reported DNR Wildlife Manager Ron Eckstein retired the end of December after 36 years of service. In the interim, staff has been directed to contact a Wildlife Manager at the Antigo office. Rudolph felt the Committee should send Eckstein a letter of appreciation for his assistance during his tenure. Hollands will draft a letter.

LWCB: LWCB is planning to sponsor a forum on implementation of NR115 and the spreading of municipal septage on farm fields. Dates and sites have yet to be determined. Rudolph requested assistance from Kuzlik and Hollands with speakers, etc.

WLWCA: Rudolph reported a WLWCA teleconference is scheduled for 1/12/11 to discuss possibly merging with LWC employees to help with financial issues and lobby efforts.

RC&D: Rudolph reported the next Lumberjack Council meeting is scheduled for 1/27/11 in Oconto County. Berard will check his schedule to see if he can attend.

Items for next agenda: Lake Nokomis, line item transfers.

Adjournment: Motion by Vandervest/Pederson at 3:55 p.m. All ayes; motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerri Ison, Recording Secretary

Tom Rudolph, Chair