

MANITOWOC COUNTY
LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes

January 18, 2024
County Office Complex, Rm 300

LCC Chair, Catherine Wagner called the meeting to order at 4:45 p.m.

Roll Call: Catherine Wagner, Biff Hansen, Lee Engelbrecht, Tim Jadowski and Michael Slattery were present. Ryan Phipps and Ted Hoffman were excused.

Also, in attendance: David Wetenkamp (SWCD) and Rhonda Green, Emergency Services Director of Manitowoc County.

Agenda: Motion to approve the agenda was made by Lee Engelbrecht and seconded by Tim Jadowski. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes: Motion was made by Biff Hansen and seconded by Lee Engelbrecht to approve the December 21, 2023 LCC minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment: None.

Manitowoc County SWCD Letters-of-Support (LOS) – Director explained background of past procedures and the need for policy directive. Official county letters of support need to be approved by County Board and/or LCC and not be opinions of staff. Personal and professional letters of support are to be separate and different than official county letters. Sample letters of support reviewed by Corp Counsel were shared with the LCC. Past procedures for some official letters of support on conservation activities were not reviewed and approved by the LCC. Director asked LCC to have a discussion on procedure regarding, “Conservation and Natural Resources Activities” and policy they would like to have in place for this process. This agenda item was tabled last meeting to allow for more supervisors to be engaged. Michael Slattery requested adding language to LOS addressing soil health, nutrient management and farmland preservation compliance. The LCC discussed varying options and agreed on need for policy. **Motion** by Michael Slattery that; “All requests for official county letters of support must be submitted 60 days in advance of deadlines and party requesting Letter-of-Support (LOS) shall present their request in person at a scheduled Land Conservation Committee meeting for consideration,” was seconded by Biff Hansen. Motion carried unanimously.

Presentation, The Rights of Nature: Michael Slattery supplied (2) documents, an outline of the topic and one for a reference document to be read and reviewed for background information. The LCC members thanked Mr. Slattery for sharing the topic. The main theme is that many laws and regulations are written to show adequate procedure and protections for entities, individuals and governments, but there is a need for securing that natural processes be protected to maintain proper function and beneficial purpose. The intrinsic notion is that nature has rights, and that atmospheric, geologic and water cycles along with the earth’s ecosystems are all interconnected with life and need to be protected to allow for all life to flourish. Mr. Slattery wanted to share the concepts and a few legal cases and locations where this is being carried out to preserve or restore environmental degradation. Supervisor Jadowski was glad to see the topic on the agenda and shared past experiences on this topic. Rhonda Green shared comments on past agency experiences relating to this topic and how this is tied to many cultures. Supervisor Wagner asked if a motion for a directive is needed to promote this topic. SWCD Director shared this topic can be applied in varying ways in conservation and is a main

reason for many of the department's goals in environmental protection and improvement. The upcoming 10-Year Land & Water Resource Management Plan is a good platform to incorporate projects and beneficial goals into a plan that paves a way to benefit all things in Manitowoc County.

2024 SWCD Department Projects:

- A. Land & Water Resource Management Plan (LWRMP): Director shared background on the needs and process for the plan development and approval. Many governmental aids and grant processes require counties to update a plan every 10 years and have an approved LWRMP on file with the state to be eligible for financial benefits and in meeting state mandates and regulations. Michael Slattery and Catherine Wagner both shared interest in being part of the advisory committee. After discussion, a **Motion** was made by Biff Hanson that was seconded by Tim Jadowski to; "start the process and kickoff for the LWRMP activities and have the advisory committee selected and shared at the scheduled March LCC meeting." Motion carried unanimously.
- B. Manitowoc County SWCD will host the Lake Michigan Area Land & Water Conservation Association Summer Tour in 2024. Activities and tour details TBD.
- C. Manitowoc County is currently updating its Farmland Preservation Plan. This process is being directed by the County Planning & Zoning Department with consultation with Bay Lakes Regional Planning Commission.
- D. SWCD AWO Permits: The SWCD would like to improve permit application forms and have Chapter 26 revised to reflect the fee schedule changes. Fee's are not being increased, just requesting fees be applicable in gallons versus animal units. Draft version was shared with the LCC. **Motion** by Biff Hansen was seconded by Lee Engelbrecht to; "approve AWO Permit application form updates as amended and support changes for County Board consideration." Motion carried unanimously.

Producer Led Group – Update & PLG Grant Resolution: Manitowoc County has a newly formed producer led agricultural advocacy group called the, Seven Rivers Soil Cooperative. The group will meet on January 19, 2024 to discuss the comments from the LCC on this resolution. This science and conservation minded group is seeking a resolution to allow for the SWCD to apply for and administer grant funds to help manage start-up funds and basic operations for (2) years until all functions can be managed by the group after legal formation. **Motion** by Biff Hansen was seconded by Lee Engelbrecht to; "approve draft Resolution Authorizing Producer Led Group Watershed Protection Grants, as written and approved by Corp Counsel to be shared with County Board for consideration." Motion carried unanimously.

SWCD Cost Share Contracts/Amendments/Agreements: None.

Next Meeting Date(s) & Time: March 21, 2024, 4:45 p.m.

Adjournment: **Motion** to adjourn was made by Lee Engelbrecht and seconded by Michael Slattery at 6:03 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
David Wetenkamp
Department Director

Minutes recorded: David Wetenkamp