

## **FOREST COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION-LAND INFORMATION-GIS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

COMMITTEE: FOREST COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION-LAND INFORMATION-GIS-COMMITTEE  
DATE: WEDNESDAY, March 22, 2023  
TIME: 4:30 PM  
PLACE: COUNTY BOARD ROOM, ROOM 107

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### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Ron Karl called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

### **ROLL CALL:**

Land Conservation-Land Information-GIS Committee: Ron Karl, William Chaney, Tom Tallier, Brian Piasini,

Absent: Cindy Gretzinger, LCC Chair

Land Information Council: None in attendance

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Sam Wessel from NCWRPC, Greg Hilbert, Silver Lake Association, Mike Hess, Silver Lake Association, Michelle Gobert, UW Extension

### **APPROVE AGENDA:**

Motion by Chaney to approve agenda, seconded by Tallier. All present voting AYE. Motion carried.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No Public Comment; None in attendance

### **APPROVAL OF LAST MINUTES**

Minutes from December 28, 2022 Meeting were corrected by Tom Tallier. Tom Tallier amended minutes to add Treasurer's Report Table with increase of taxable land to Chapter 8 of Comprehensive Plan. Sam Wessel, NCWRPC, responded that correction had been made. Motion to approve by Tallier, seconded by Brian Piassini. All present voting AYE. Motion carried.

### **LAND CONSERVATION**

Appearance by Greg Hilbert and Mike Hess, Silver Lake Association regarding formation of Lake District. Kircher referenced handout from Healthy Lakes Association regarding formation of Lake Districts in Wisconsin. Kircher explained that for an association to form a district they needed to petition property owners and approach County Committee with proposal.

Per State Statutes, 51% of property owners have to support formation of a lake district. Greg Hilbert explained that 60% of property owners had signed petition already.

Kircher explained the process of forming a district from obtaining signatures, to filing with County Clerk and the timeline that needs to be followed. After Clerk receives petitions, a Public Hearing has to be scheduled within 30 days. Results of Public Hearing are presented to full County Board, whereupon they make a ruling. If approved, the newly formed Lake District must establish a Board of Commissioners with three representatives from the Lake District, one from the County Committee and one from the Town of Laona.

Tom Tallier asked the question about the Town of Laona Board's involvement in forming a Lake District. Greg Hilbert explained that he did approach the Town at first, but realized the procedure is more streamlined by approaching the County.

Bill Chaney asked a question regarding how taxes are collected and who is able to use the tax money raised. Hilbert responded that he believes the town collects the taxes and distributes them to the Lake District Board. The Lake District then spends those dollars according to their bylaws and plan.

Ron Karl asked a question about the extent of the Lake District. Hilbert responded that only property owners actually on Silver Lake were petitioned. He provided a copy of a map and parcel numbers of the Silver Lake property owners. Hilbert explained that the property owners actually on the lake are the most to lose and concerned about treating the Eurasian milfoil present in the lake.

Tallier asked who is responsible for voting for the public land, the beach and the boat landing. Hilbert responded that the Town of Laona owns the beach and boat landing. The Town of Laona did not sign the petition to remain neutral. Hilbert again explained that the Town is responsible for appointing a Town Council member or representative to the Board of Commissioners.

Hilbert went on to explain that there is an Annual Meeting where Board of Commission officers are elected and property owners on the Lake have one vote.

Hilbert also explained that the intent of the District Formation is raise funds for control of Eurasian Milfoil and not to enforce rules regarding use of the beach or boat landing. DNR Grant funding isn't guaranteed and is a 75/25% match. In order to control milfoil in the lake, additional funds need to be collected to effectively treat the milfoil.

Tallier commented that the new DNR Secretary is pushing protection of Wisconsin Waters and plans to put more funds into protecting our water. Tallier hopes that the Lake Association would take advantage of increased grant dollars. Hilbert explained that Dan Verbanac, president of the Lake Association has been very good at receiving and applying for grant funds and will continue to do so.

Mike Hess explained that the new grants are competitive and currently Silver Lake isn't competitive because they have been receiving grant money and the DNR looks to new lakes with invasive problems.

Ron Karl asked what the timeline for establishment of a lake district. Hilbert explained that they weren't in a hurry, although they'd like to get it completed in 2023. Karl also asked for a list of Pros and Cons regarding formation of a District and that they wouldn't be able to rule until they received that information. Tallier asked for a Mission Statement regarding the Association's intent. Hilbert provided handouts regarding the By Laws and intent of forming the district. Hilbert explained that he would like to wait until the end of May/early June so more residents are present on Silver Lake.

Hilbert said he plans on submitting Petition to County Clerk in late May or early June.

Chaney asked if forming a District makes the process of obtaining grants easier. Hilbert explained that it does. A consultant that lives on Silver Lake had explained that a district receives more points in the DNR grant process.

Hilbert went over the By laws and mission statement for the formation of the Silver Lake District. Hilbert also explained that if funds aren't needed every year for treating milfoil, then taxes won't be collected. 192 parcels are present on the lake representing 142 property owners.

Hilbert explained that the Petition must reflect a benefit to the County and showed the Committee where that was on the Petition. Hilbert explained that 60% of property owners have signed the petition. Ron Karl asked about the other 40%; Hilbert explained that per the petition and the by laws, the District is being formed only to provide funding for milfoil control and not control of the boat landing, boating ordinances or beach. The Attorney for the lake district has a statement in the bylaws reflecting this policy.

Ron Karl asked for a list of Pros and Cons from the Lake Association. Hilbert responded that he will provide that information and present it at a future Committee Meeting.

Mike Hess explained that if a lake district isn't needed anymore that it can be dissolved.

A discussion was held regarding how taxes would be collected and who would collect taxes and how they would be distributed. Karl explained that taxes would be collected by the town and distributed to the lake district.

Kircher explained that the lake association will be back for a May or June meeting.

Karl asked for an explanation regarding the 40% of property owners that did not sign the petition or haven't responded.

## **LAND INFORMATION PROGRAM**

Sam Wessel from North Central Regional Planning Commission presented the edits/corrections that were made since the last meeting. Each question that was presented by Tallier were addressed and discussed.

Tallier stated his concerns about providing a County representative to the US Forest Service team that makes decisions regarding timber sales or lack thereof. Wessel will add a statement regarding that participation in the Comprehensive Plan.

Michelle Gobert, UW Extension stated that the Comprehensive Plan needs to be complete for each chapter/area so that future grant funding can be applied for and is reflected in the plan.

Karl explained that the plan is updated every fifteen years and some of the updates may be missed. There was some discussion regarding how the plan can be amended if changes need to be made. There isn't a scheduled review process for the plan, but it can be changed/edited as needed.

Gobert expressed the need for the plan to be reviewed and changes made before it goes to final draft and released to the public so that grant opportunities aren't missed.

Kircher stated that organizations/departments will be contacted regarding specific chapters and their inputs will be added to the overall Comprehensive Plan.

Some discussion was held regarding the 18,000 acres in the Headwaters Wilderness Area. Tallier stated his findings that the Forest Service provided information regarding use of the area and the report stated that only 35 people reported using the area. He felt that area would be much better served if the County was allowed to buy the area and return it to the tax rolls.

Wessel stated that the plan would be updated to reflect Forest County's need to stay current with Broadband coverage and grants available.

## **OTHER UPDATES**

Kircher explained the County's participation in raising Purple Loosetrife beetles this spring to help control loosetrife in the county.

Kircher presented the 2024 SWRM Grant application that requires the Committee Chair's signature. Tallier moved to forward the application to the Chair for signature. Seconded by Piasinni. All present voted AYE. Motion carried.

Kayla Littleton updated the Committee regarding the PLSS updates with Florence County. We are still waiting for Florence County to get back before Requests for Proposals are sent out.

Kircher explained that WG Extreme will be bought by Schneider Geospatial and a new contract will need to be signed. Schneider's new contract is compatible with what we're currently spending for GIS services.

Karl pointed out that the current contract is dated. Kircher will get a new contract for Committee Chair to sign. Motion was made by Piassini to have the Committee Chair sign the updated contract. Seconded by Chaney. All present voted Aye. Motion carried.

Kircher explained the NCRPC contract for parcel updates, building corner corrections, and water boundary updates. Motion was made by Karl to have the Committee Chair sign the contract. Seconded by Chaney. All present voted Aye. Motion carried.

#### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Silver Lake District  
Comprehensive Plan

#### **SET APRIL MEETING DATE, TIME AND LOCATION**

Monday, April 17<sup>th</sup> @ 4:30pm was selected for the next Committee Meeting.

#### **ADJOURN**

Motion by Chaney to adjourn. Second by Tallier. All present voted Aye. Motion carried.

These minutes are not official and are subject to change. They will be officially approved at the next scheduled Land Conservation – Land Information – GIS Committee meeting.