

MINUTES
JACKSON COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION & AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
JACKSON COUNTY ZONING & LAND INFORMATION COMMITTEE
November 10, 2016

November 10, 2016: **Joint Committee Public Hearing**

Meeting called to order at 1:00 p.m., by the Vice Chairman of the Land Conservation and Agriculture Committee, Hoyt Strandberg. Land Conservation and Agriculture Committee members in attendance are Larry Blaken, Hoyt Strandberg, Jerry Schmidt, and Tom Reid. Zoning and Land Information Committee members in attendance are John Chrest, Hoyt Strandberg, Norm Stoker, Michelle Greendeer-Rave, and Alton Staff. Others present were Gaylord Olson II, County Conservationist; Terry Schmidt, Zoning Administrator; and Beth Storlie, Administrative Assistant.

PRESENTATION OF THE JACKSON COUNTY FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN:

Gaylord Olson II did a brief presentation on the Farmland Preservation Plan. It was started in the 1977 by state statute, and has been available for Jackson County landowners since 1986. The original plan required the creation of exclusive ag zoning districts or Farmland Preservation Program enrollment for individuals that wanted to receive a property tax credit on their income taxes. At that time, property taxes were considerably higher because use assessment had not come into play. Contracts were from 10 to 25 years in length, and currently there are six FPP agreements existing in 2016 with five of them due to expire by March 2019.

In 2009, the State wanted a different approach to preserve farmland and to have a viable foundation for a strong agricultural economy. With the update to Chapter 91 of the State Statutes, changes were implemented and require either exclusive agriculture zoning districts or the creation of ag enterprise areas (AEA). The AEA contract is for fifteen (15) years and the tax credit is a flat standard rate per acre. The Jackson County Farmland Preservation Plan will be referenced, coordinated and an addendum to the Jackson County Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Gaylord worked with DATCP on the text language, which meets the minimum standards. The Land Conservation and Agriculture Committee authorized hiring Al Hoff of Monroe County to prepare the mapping of the potential ag enterprise areas. The text and maps were submitted to and approved by DATCP prior to this public hearing. Jackson County has six months from the approval of the plan by DATCP to adopt the ordinance. The annual enrollment for ag enterprise areas application deadline is June 2017. The minimum standards for creating an ag enterprise area is 5 to 6 individuals/farm operations with contiguous acreage greater than 800 acres.

Terry Schmidt added that exclusive ag zoning districts do not exist in Jackson County. It has been discussed a number of times throughout the years but it has never been approved by the participating zoned township because it is too restrictive on how the land can be used. In exclusive ag districts, agriculture is the only activity allowed. A landowner could not sell five acres off from the parcel unless the individual was part of the agriculture operation.

Al Hoff shared how the mapping process was done. He reviewed all parcels to determine what parcels were agricultural use, what the existing zoning classification is. Non-metallic mining or governmentally owned parcels are not eligible for consideration. These maps represent where the lands are eligible for Farmland Preservation Plan enrollment. He explained that all the neighbors or property owners within an area such as a township could petition for the creation of an ag enterprise area but only the one or two farmers interested in participating could apply and enroll in the FPP. Only those enrolled are subject to the standards. Those that do not enroll could sell their property as usual and operate as they have in the past without being subject to the FPP restrictions. They are not under any obligation unless they apply and enroll in the FPP.

Gaylord Olson II concluded the discussion by stating that DATCP drafted the ag enterprise agreements and enrollment forms. The main purpose of the plan is to make those who would like to participate eligible to enroll. The State is targeting the areas that are focused on farmland preservation and conservation for funding. There are three levels of tax credit funding, \$5.00 for ag enterprise areas, \$7.50 for exclusive ag zoning districts, or \$10.00 for both per acre. In Jackson County, you would be eligible for \$5.00 per acre only as we do not have exclusive ag zoning districts.

Public comment received with questions regarding the plan.

A Motion by Tom Reid, to approve the Farmland Preservation Plan as presented and forward to Executive/Finance Committee for approval, seconded by Larry Blaken. Motion carried unanimously.

A Motion by Alton Staff, to place the approved Farmland Preservation Plan as an addendum to the Jackson County Comprehensive Plan, seconded by Hoyt Strandberg. Motion carried unanimously.

The resolution to recommend adoption was read into the minute. The Jackson County Land Conservation and Agriculture Committee and the Jackson County Zoning Committee signed the resolution and forwarded to Executive/Finance Committee for further action.

A Motion by Larry Blaken, to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Tom Reid. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.