

Thank you for participating as a member of the Observer Corps for the League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area. Our goal is to educate LWVLA members on local government activities with the potential to refer topics for further study and advocacy.

Your Name: Jan Gallagher and Jean Hammons

Name of Governmental Body (City/County/Town) Board or Committee: La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

Time and Date of Meeting: August 17, 2021

Members of the Governmental Body (If available, note attendance.): Present: Monica Kruse (Chair), Peg Isola (Co-Chair), Kim Cable, Maureen Freedland, Jose Rubio-Zepeda, Kathy Allen, Dave Hanson, Will Kratt, Mike Hesse, Pamela Viner, Tom Jacobs. Absent: Kevin Hennessy, Larry Sleznikow, Marilyn Pedretti, Matt Nikolay 11/15 members were in attendance. The meeting date was moved from August 26 to August 17. This change may account for some absences.

Link to the public posting of meeting information:

<https://www.lacrossecounty.org/Minutes%20and%20Agendas/Attachments/2021/Standing/Aug/CPAC081721A.pdf>

Meeting Purpose and Content

Please provide a brief statement of the meeting's purpose and a concise overview of its content in the form of a bulleted list:

The main purpose was two-fold: a.) for staff to update the committee on the results and take-aways of both land owner workshops as well as land owner and public surveys regarding farmland preservation, b.) guided brainstorming in small groups of strategies to improve existing farmland preservation policy (e.g., incentives, conservation techniques, zoning).

*Committee Chair, Monica Kruse, read the Land Acknowledgment statement that she reads at the start of each CPAC meeting. It mentions the forcible removal of the Ho Chunk and 11 other First Nations and respectfully recognizes their resilience and stewardship of the land.

* Monica Kruse solicited public comment. None was offered, as no members of the public were in attendance.

* Brian Fukuda, Community Development Specialist, gave a power point presentation in which he shared feedback collected from two, in-person land owner workshops and the land owner and public on-line surveys. Examples of take-aways from the land owners: Many family farms sustain their operations by having one worker outside the home. Many employ conservation techniques. Forty-two percent reported their internet service was inadequate.

*County Planner, Charlie Handy, said that a draft of the Farmland Preservation Plan will be ready for discussion at the September CPAC meeting.

* Heather Quackenboss (Human Development and Relationships Educator at UW Madison Division of Extension in La Crosse County) facilitated a brainstorming session. She challenged small groups to brainstorm solutions to difficult farmland preservation questions.

*Monica solicited items for future agendas. Three were suggested and will be added in September: a.) sustainability goals for the county, b.) the financial impact of preservation policies, c.) equity vs equality.

* The next meeting will be September 23 at 5:15 at the County Administrative Center.

Identify issues that the League may want to follow for further study or advocacy:

Note any additional comments or feedback regarding this meeting: The meeting was carefully planned and adhered to the agenda. Committee members were highly engaged. The atmosphere was pleasant and collegial.

Items in this section of the form are provided for the observers' benefit. They do not need to be a part of the report, but they provide a checklist of WI Open Meetings Law requirements and good practice for public meeting accessibility. Notable observations about these practices could be included in your feedback comments.

WI Open Meetings Law Checklist

- Public notice (time/date/location/content) was readily available no later than 2 hours prior to the meeting. The meeting was held in a location that was open to the public and readily accessible to members of the public who wished to attend.
- The agenda provided enough specific detail to inform interested members of the public about the content of the meeting.
- A quorum was present to conduct business.
- Meeting content was limited to only noticed agenda items, including business discussed in closed session.
- A record of motions, seconds, and roll-call votes from the meeting will be (was?) created and preserved.

Good Practice for Public Accessibility Checklist

- The meeting was available to view or listen to on-line.
- Copies of the agenda and handouts were available to the public. Important information was available for viewing via handouts, web links, or projector.
- Roll call was conducted, and the public could identify members who were present or absent
- Speakers were identified and could be easily heard.
- The public was given an opportunity to speak at the meeting.
- Minutes and/or a recording of the meeting will be made available to the public.

Thank you for participating in the LWVLA Observer Corps. Your responses will help us ensure transparency in local government and assess the need for future LWVLA actions!