

Town of Verona
Open Space and Parks Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 8, 2014

Present: Stellick, Keen, Jellings, and Miller
Absent: Mathies, Hoffman, and Siehr
Also Present: John Wright, Clerk-Treasurer (C-T)
Called to order at 7:31 PM

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Miller to approve the agenda as presented; 2nd Jellings. Motion to approve the agenda carried as presented.

Public Comments

C-T Wright reviewed the addition he made to the Town website under the *People and Places* banner heading. The dropdown menu includes *Public Works* to which a new page has been added which appears to the right when a cursor is hovered over *Public Works*. The new page is labelled *Right-of-Way Maps*. Wright shared a screen capture of how he organized links to the 35 Sections still within the Town of Verona (Section 1 is blank because that was annexed into the City of Madison). C-T also included a sample of how the map for Section 34 appears on the website when opened. Wright noted that Sections 31-36 are posted in their final version which fills the screen when opened; Sections 2-30 will need to be replaced as these maps only fill about 20% of the screen when opened.

C-T Wright reported that Administrator/Planner Arnold used a modified version of the Brushing and Trimming Notification Letter that was sent to residents along Shady Oak and Sunset. The reference to the Right-of-Way maps was removed because the maps had not been posted to the website by the date it was sent.

Member Stellick reported that he met with Karen Godshall to discuss the Ice Age Trail and her legal experience dealing with easements. According to Stellick, Godshall stated that a corridor for the Ice Age Trail does not cut across her property; it runs adjacent to it. Stellick further reported that Godshall does not have experience dealing with conservation easements in her role as an attorney.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Miller to approve the March minutes as presented; 2nd Jellings. Motion to accept the minutes from the March 5, 2014 meeting carried.

Report on Dane County Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting

Chair Keen reported that he and member Hoffman were in attendance at the Steering Committee Meeting that was held on March 18, 2014. C-T Wright shared printed comments from the Steering Committee meeting sent to the Town by Senior Planner Brian Standing of Dane County Planning and Development. According to Keen, there were many complaints made by attendees regarding the proposed changes to existing Resource Protection Area boundaries. Keen noted that only 87 notices were sent by the Steering Committee rather than to the owners of all the properties that were affected. Keen stated that Brian Standing created changes to the existing map based in part upon remote sensing data to derive the location of steep slopes. Hydric soils (soils seasonally or permanently saturated with water) and areas within a 500-year floodplain were also areas where Standing extended resource protection boundaries. To remove the proposed boundaries, a land owner must prove that the soils are not hydric, that slopes do not exceed 20%, and/or that the property does not reside within a 500-year floodplain. It was noted that these boundaries have no effect on land in agricultural use unless it is rezoned to another classification (e.g. residential). It was

further noted that a Natural Resource Protection Area is outside an urban service area whereas an Environmental Protection Area is within an urban service area.

Member Miller shared his opinion that property owners are losing rights inherent to land ownership and feels a fairer balance should be achieved between those rights and protecting natural resources. According to Chair Keen, Steering Committee member Pat Downing summarized all the items that needed to be addressed by the Steering Committee before they moved forward with any proposed changes to the existing map and Plan. Chair Keen stated that he did not know the next Public Hearing date for the Steering Committee, but did note that their next regular meeting will be April 10, 2014 at 7 PM.

Chair Report Regarding Meeting/Corresponding with Jim Welsh

Chair Keen stated that he and Natural Heritage Land Trust Executive Director Jim Welsh corresponded by email in an attempt to set up a date to meet with the Dane County Parks and Open Space Park Planner Chris James. According to Keen, Welsh recommended that before any land owner is approached about a potential easement agreement, funding sources should be identified, and the role this or other similar easements would play in the fulfillment of future goals should be included in the local Parks Plan as well as the County Plan. Member Stellick noted that his copy of the Dane County Parks Plan dated 2001-2005 included a proposed trail between the Prairie Moraine County Park and the School Forest (a.k.a. Olson Oak Woods State Natural Area).

Clerk-Treasurer Report on Recorded Conservation Easements within the Town of Verona

C-T Wright presented the group with a copy of the Conservation Easement for the property acquired by the Natural Heritage Land Trust from the Bruce Company provided to him by DNR Real Estate & Acquisition Director Laura Guyer. Chair Keen noted that on page 8, item 6 *Public Access* reads as follows: "No right of access by the general public to any portion of the Property is conveyed by this Easement." There was brief discussion that this Conservation Easement (page 4) allows for the continuation of the existing residence as well as the potential two new single-family residences and four non-habitable ancillary structures. Chair Keen noted that the Easement could be amended if both parties agreed.

Continue Discussion of Future Conservation Efforts within the Town of Verona and Report on Responses from Resources Contacted Since March Meeting

There was brief discussion regarding a possible trail easement/pavement widening along Sunset Drive between the Range Trail and State Highway 69. It was noted that the Bruce Company did not own property to the centerline of Sunset; instead, the road was centered within the 66 foot wide right-of-way that was dedicated to the public. Chair Keen stated he will report back to the group next month regarding any conversations he has with Jim Welsh and Chris James as well as with Laura Guyer. There was a brief discussion regarding restrictions on horseback riding on local trails/parks/easements.

Establish an Agenda for the May 7, 2014 Meeting

Call to Order; Approval of the Agenda; Public Comments; Approval of meeting minutes for April 8, 2014; Updates on Dane County Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Activities; Chair Report on Annual Town Meeting; Chair Report on Correspondence with Jim Welsh, Chris James, and Laura Guyer; Clerk-Treasurer Report on Recorded Conservation Easements within the Town of Verona; Continue Discussion of Future Conservation Efforts within the Town of Verona; Establish June Agenda; and Adjourn.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by Miller; 2nd by Stellick. Motion carried at 8:51 PM.

John Wright
Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: May 7, 2014