

Wright County NWQ Water Quality/Natural Resources Committee Meeting #4
Monday, June 2, 2008

Committee Members Present: Dave Wagner, James Olsen, Rose Thelen, Lance Lindstrom, Mike McNellis

Staff Present: Stacy Marquardt, Scott Deckert, Tom Zins

Others: Joe Jacobs (SWCD), Merle Anderson (CRWD), George Bakeberg (Planning Commission), Franklin Denn (Planning Commission), Ralph Douglas (Planning Commission), Charlotte Quiggle

Marquardt summarized proposed agenda. The map handout is a compilation of the submittals of potential resource lands. These will be discussed today to see if there's agreement on which areas should be included. Marquardt handed out the minutes of the 2007 Planning Commission workshop that discussed the NEQ plan, and the Resource Lands, in particular. She also handed out a list briefly describing each of the potential Resource Lands in accord with the map. The various, numbered areas on the map were reviewed and discussed as follows.

#1 – There was a wide ranging discussion of the merits of putting land that is designated A/R into a potential Resource Land designation. Lindstrom thought it would not be fair to go from A/R to Resource land. Marquardt explained the difference between a zoning designation and a land use designation, and there was a discussion regarding the potential for development. The group talked about having contact with landowners prior to putting these designations in place. Resource Land would still have the same building potential as land zoned AG --1 per 40. Lindstrom contended that the A/R designation should not be removed. Marquardt related the situation during the NEQ where one piece of property designated A/R was slated for Resource Land. The landowner did not want to go to Resource Land, but they did agree to be re-designated as AG instead of A/R. Discussion about market forces and economic factors and how those should enter our discussions.

Marquardt asked if A/R properties should even be considered. Wagner asked when the A/R designation was made and if the landowners even knew about the potential. The group generally agreed that area #1 should be left as is, but that further discussion should be given to A/R properties. Lindstrom opposed removing the A/R designation.

#2 There was discussion of how Resource Lands would affect potential gravel mining areas and what you can do with gravel pits when depleted. Olsen mentioned that he spoke with some landowners near this area that want to preserve their land. The group agreed to keep this area in consideration.

#3 Olsen mentioned that a landowner in this area was not in favor of the Resource Land designation. Jacobs reminded the group how important it is to try to preserve the last of the remaining "Big Woods". The group agreed that the concept of connecting the parks is good, but there may be landowner resistance.

#4 Very little discussion.

#5 There are families in this area who want to preserve their land.

#6 Wagner mentioned how much the parks are used in the County and how much unsolicited positive feedback he has received regarding the parks system. This area is mostly low and wet and makes sense as a Resource Land. It would be tough to get sewers in.

#7 Very little discussion.

#8 This site has lots of wetland and some farmland.

#10 Marquardt mentioned this is the only one that was not located in the metro conservation corridor. Lindstrom thought that a house might fit on some of these pieces. Certainly the low parts should be Resource land, but we may want to discuss the areas that have tillable land. Wagner would rather keep the proposed area as is. It's a chance to put "a stake in the ground" to make a difference. We don't want to take away landowner's livelihood, but once one house is allowed, it could cascade out of control. Thelen suggested that land values generally go up when

this type of planning occurs.

#11 Wagner thought this one was a great idea since it is relevant to the effort to clean up Cedar Lake. McNellis agreed that setting this aside would help everything down river. Thought the area could even be enlarged.

#12 Wagner thought it was a good idea to discuss these camps, because of what might happen when the camp needs money and they are forced to start selling property. It's a good thing to preserve these areas. There was discussion on Camp Friendship as well, but that is currently designated Residential Large Lot.

#13 Very little discussion.

#14 Thelen mentioned that this was her request. Clearwater Township has no parkland and she thought it would be nice to have some. Marquardt thought some of the area didn't make sense and that the edges could be changed a little to encompass more desirable areas. The group agreed that much of it made sense, however. Perhaps it would be appropriate to eliminate the A/R areas and leave the rest.

#15 An expansion of the park area is a great idea.

#16 There was discussion about reducing the size of this one by taking out the western portion. Wagner thought it was better to start big and then have a fallback position.

#17 The group discussed trimming some of the smaller lots out and narrowing it down in general.

#18 This is all NSP land.

Marquardt mentioned one area not on the proposed map was east of Sugar Lake. The reason it wasn't included is that it is Residential Large Lot in the land use plan, and the landowner has already pursued developing the property. Quiggle mentioned that the Township's land use plan was more restrictive so any development wouldn't get by the Township. There was discussion on the land use plan and how it relates to rezoning. There was more discussion on the philosophical argument of changing a land use designation from A/R or Residential Large Lot to Resource Land. Thelen and Wagner favor adding this property to the map as a possible Resource Land.

Wagner also mentioned a large area west of Cedar Lake currently designated A/R. The landowner is preservation minded but might not want it to be Resource Land. It's Big Woods and would be a nice buffer from the city. However, it is isolated. Lindstrom thought maybe the north half could be made into a park, but the southern half didn't look like anything special. The group was generally in favor of adding this piece. Lindstrom thought it shouldn't be an all or none proposition but that part of it could be considered. The group agreed that land to the north, up to Highway 24, should be added to this piece so that it would be less isolated and tie in with Clearwater Lake.

There was discussion on plan timelines and how long these lands will be preserved.

Thelen has a vision that there should be some sort of incentive for preservation so that landowners don't have such a difficult choice to make. It should not be a choice between preservation and having a future for your kids. It would make it easier for the landowners to preserve if there were more incentives.

There was further discussion on the land use plan concept, aggregate mining, resource areas and tax incentives to preserve land.

There was discussion of road trip to look at some of these areas.

Next meeting is June 30th at 1:30.