

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:** July 22, 2021

**Members of the Governmental Body (If available, note attendance.):** Monica Kruse (Chair), Peg Isola (Co-Chair), Kim Cable, Maureen Freedland, Jose Rubio-Zepeda, Kathy Allen, Kevin Hennessy, Larry Slezniow, Marilyn Pedretti, Dave Hanson, Will Kratt (absent), Matt Nikolay, Mike Hesse, Pamela Viner, Tom Jacobs. 14/15 members were in attendance.

**Link to the public posting of meeting information:**

<https://www.lacrossecounty.org/Minutes%20and%20Agendas/Attachments/2021/Standing/July/CPAC072221A.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 a staff update on current public surveys regarding farmland preservation and guided discussion for committee members to give input regarding farmland preservation.

\*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.

\* La Crosse County Planner, Charlie Handy, shared information about the number of farmers (35 acres or more) who have responded to the Farmland Preservation Survey launched last month. He solicited help from all committee members to get out the word to farmers about the survey and to encourage them to respond. There is a second Farmland Preservation survey geared for the general public.

\*County Planner, Charlie Handy, requested feedback on a draft of a 3-page Executive Summary of Existing Conditions that committee members had received prior to the meeting. He wanted to know, a.) Was it "polished enough" to send to the County Board, and b.) Did it include enough detail? There was a lively discussion, with about 10 people contributing. Members agreed that the document was polished but thought it would benefit from a bit more detail. Charlie agreed and will add more detail.

\*Karl Green gave a power point presentation about agriculture in La Crosse County and Wisconsin. In general, over time the number of WI farms has decreased while the average size has increased. The greatest pressure for development is the second tier around the urban area.

\* Heather Quackenboss (Human Development and Relationships Educator at UW Madison Division of Extension in La Crosse County) facilitated a brainstorming session. Attendees

divided into three groups based on where they live: 4 rural; 7 urban; 6 urban-rural and responded to prompts given by Heather (e.g., “What is important about preserving farmland?” “What is one unique preservation strategy your group came up with?” “What does equitable policy look like?”)

\*Monica asked if anyone wished to suggest future agenda items. None were added.

\* The next meeting will be on August 26 at the County Administrative Center.

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

\*To encourage participation in surveys, the League can put out notices through our social media.

**Note any additional comments or feedback regarding this meeting:** We received a warm welcome. The meeting was carefully planned and it adhered to the agenda. Committee members were highly engaged. The atmosphere was pleasant and collegial. In the Greenfield Town Hall venue, it was a bit hard to hear some speakers.

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!