



**ROCK COUNTY PACE COUNCIL
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2020 - 9:00 A.M.
VIA ZOOM**

MINUTES

- 1) **Call to Order:** Chair Sweeney called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

Present: Duane Cherek, Ramona Flanigan, Don Jones, John Lader, Dave Rebout, Alan Sweeney.

Excused: Fred Hookham, Supervisor Bostwick, Supervisor Mawhinney

Staff: Andrew Baker
- 2) **Adoption of Agenda:** Mr. Jones moved to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Lader. **Motion Carried.**
- 3) **Approval of Minutes from October 15, 2019 Meeting.** Ms. Flanigan moved to approve the minutes from the October 15, 2019 meeting as presented, seconded by Mr. Lader. **Motion Carried.**
- 4) **Citizen Participation, Communication, and Announcements:** None
- 5) **Summary and Overview of Rock County PACE Program Activities:**
 - a. **Status of program funding:** Andrew informed the Council of the account balances for the PACE Program.
 - b. **Status of past applications:** Andrew updated the Council regarding the status of past applications.
- 6) **Discussion and possible recommendation:** Approval or Denial of Installation of Commercial Renewable Energy Systems on PACE Easements. Andrew informed the Council that there are a number of proposed solar power facilities in the planning stage in the County. One particular project is east of Janesville and near existing and proposed easements. The federal deed template allows for renewable energy projects on a easement, but the power must be used in the operations on the property. The ambiguous language, however, is that the terms prohibit commercial energy project, but a landowner can sell surplus energy from their on-farm system. The big question is, what is considered surplus? The NRCS has chosen not to give a formal answer to that question until a specific project is proposed, rather allowing the entity to make an interpretation despite the fact the deed template was drafted by NRCS staff. The Council discussed the merits allow solar development considering doing so does protect the land from “permanent” development, solar development is relatively temporary in the big picture, other ag uses can be maintained such as grazing, solar power is a natural resource, etc. Following discussion, Mr. Lader made a motion to not make a recommendation until such time that the specifics of a project are developed. Seconded by Mr. Johnson. **Motion Carried.**

7) **Review and discuss 2020 PACE applications:**

Ref. # (not ranking)	Landowner Name	Parcel #	Primary Target Acquisition Area	LESA	ACRES	Town Section
1	Greg Vanthournout*	6-20-107.2	Yes	6.9	39.5	Union 13
2	Greg Vanthournout*	6-20-109	Yes	6.6	38	Union 13
3	Craig Myre*	6-16-8	No	5.5	79	Porter 2
4	Curt Watson	6-16-17	No	6.26	34.7	Porter 2
5	Curt Watson	6-16-17.1	Yes	8.15	38.5	Porter 2
6	Evan Sayre	6-16-110	Yes	7.3	82	Porter 13
7	Evan Sayre	6-16-114	Secondary	6.8	73	Porter 13
8	Evan Sayre	6-16-205	Secondary	6.6	80	Porter 4
9	Pat Beggs	6-4-90.01	No	6.2	68	Center 13
10	Eric Conway	6-10-117A	Yes	8	167	La Prairie 16

*Renewed Application from prior year **Staff Recommendation**

Andrew reviewed our local ranking process along with the NRCS priorities. When consider our applications it is important to consider both ranking process, which is why staff calculates an approximate score based on the federal system as well as the LESA score. Andrew presented the Power Point slides and the Council discussed the details of each application. In this application cycle, there were three parcels renewed from prior years and seven new parcels. Reviewing the scores, the County LESA ranking aligned with the federal ranking system. Based on the known budget limits of the NRCS and the County budget, staff is recommending that the Vanthournout, 38.5 acre Watson and Conway parcels to go to the LCC for final approval. Discussion followed.

- 8) **Action Item:** Make recommendation of approval or non-approval of 2020 PACE applications to Rock County Land Conservation Committee.

Mr. Jones made a motion to recommend to the Land Conservation Committee that the Vanthournout, 38.5 acre Watson and Conway parcel applications be recommended to the LCC as the local applications to the federal USDA-NRCS program, seconded by Mr. Lader. **Motion Carried.**

The Council had further discussion on whether or not prioritizing the recommendation would be helpful. Mr. Jones made a motion to prioritize the four applications as follows: The Vanthournout parcels, the 38.5 acre Watson parcel and the Conway parcel.

- 8) **Adjournment:** Mr. Cherek moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:35 am, seconded by Ms. Flanigan. **Motion Carried.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrew Baker
County Conservationist

Minutes are not official until approved by the Pace Council

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