



PLANNING & PARKS DEPARTMENT

Andrew T. Struck, Director

<https://ozaukeecounty.gov/540/Planning-Parks>

**MEETING MINUTES
COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING BOARD
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2025, AT 9:00 A.M.
OZAUKEE COUNTY ADMINISTRATON CENTER, ROOM A-200
(121 West Main Street, Port Washington, WI 53074)**

Agenda Packet: <https://ozaukeecounty.gov/2107/Comprehensive-Plan-Board>

Bruce Ross, Chairperson

Thomas Richart, Vice-Chairperson

Rob Holyoke, Scott Rishel, and Timothy Maguire

Dan Vogel (Alternate)

1. Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Comprehensive Planning Board (CPB) was held at the Ozaukee County Administration Center in Room A-200. Chairperson Ross called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
B. Ross	Chairperson, Supervisor, District 19	Present	8:50 AM
T. Maguire	Supervisor, District 15	Present	8:50 AM
R. Holyoke	Supervisor, District 22	Present	9:00 AM
S. Rishel	Supervisor, District 14	Present	8:50 AM
T. Richart	Vice-Chairperson, Supervisor, District 12	Present	8:53 AM
D. Vogel	Alternate – Supervisor, District 10	Present	8:53 AM

Staff present: Andrew Struck, Director – Planning and Parks Department; Brittany Whyte, Conservation Biologist (Planning) – Planning and Parks Department; Katie Vogeler, Director – Land and Water Management Department

Others present: Robbie Robinson, Senior Planner – Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) and Supervisor Kurt Schoessow, District 23

2. Assurance that the Meeting has been Properly Noticed / Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Struck provided assurance that the meeting was properly noticed.

3. Public Comments, Correspondence and Written Communications

Chairperson Ross asked if there were any public comments.

Mr. Struck stated that no written communication or correspondence was received.

There were no additional public comments at the meeting.

4. Approval of Minutes (March 19, 2025)

Motion made by Supervisor Richart, seconded by Supervisor Maquire, that the March 19, 2025, minutes be approved. A voice vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.

5. REVIEW, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION – A Farmland Preservation Plan for Ozaukee County: 2050 (3rd Edition)

Chairperson Ross introduced agenda item 5.

a. Review, Discussion and POSSIBLE ACTION – CHAPTER 4, Public Involvement for A Farmland Preservation Plan for Ozaukee County: 2050

Mr. Struck stated that a draft of Chapter 4 of the Farmland Preservation Plan (FPP) is included in the agenda packet starting on PDF page 13. Chapter 4 still needs some information to be filled in over the next few months and the course of the planning process; any text highlighted in yellow still needs to be updated.

i. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis and Prioritization

Mr. Struck noted that in section 4.4, starting on PDF page 17, for the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, the items highlighted in the lists are from the existing 2nd Edition FPP. These items were left in the lists for the time being so that CPB members can consider/review and continue to talk about them; some items may warrant more discussion. The highlighted items contain a combination of ideas from multiple SWOTs done for the 2nd Edition FPP (CPB, Citizen Advisory Committee, etc.). This can be discussed again at a future CPB meeting this year. In section 4.12, Conclusions, starting on PDF page 23, the three summary bullet points highlighted at the end are the text from the 2nd Edition FPP and do not reflect current public input yet.

ii. Target Audience Opinion Surveys – Focus Groups – Agriculture Owners/Farmers/Users, County Board, Municipalities, Residents/Public

Chairperson Ross thanked Supervisor Schoessow for attending the meeting to provide his input again and asked if he had any thoughts about the public opinion survey.

Supervisor Schoessow stated that he thought the survey questions were more oriented towards non-farmers. He noted that people working in agriculture may have more opinions and stated that he felt like the survey was written by someone who is non-farm oriented.

Chairperson Ross mentioned that this makes him question whether farmers are being adequately surveyed.

Mr. Struck stated that the survey questions were compiled by looking at examples of other nearby counties' FPP surveys, as well as previous Ozaukee County surveys. Some of the questions try to address some of the State (DATCP) program requirements and concepts. There are general questions for everybody to answer starting on PDF page 30 of the agenda packet. There are two municipal questions, numbers 29 and 30 (on PDF page 35 of the agenda packet). The agricultural operator/owner questions, starting on PDF page 35, were written largely based on other counties' surveys and input from the Ozaukee County agricultural community involved in the last plan. These questions were provided at the last CPB meeting. The survey was expanded from CPB's initial plan to have just a few questions. The survey is being advertised and has been posted to the Ozaukee County Planning and Parks Department (Department) website already. The Department also has sent the survey link to all Ozaukee County municipalities and shared it with the agricultural focus group at their meeting in March. The group members didn't take the survey that evening, but it's expected that many will take it on their own time. The Department has been trying to reach out to and focus on agricultural owners and operators, but the survey is open to everybody. The Department is hoping to get CPB members' help getting the survey out

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to the right audience. Mr. Roback had informed the Department that around 105 surveys have been completed at this time, which seems to be a good turnout, considering the survey hasn't been available very long.

Supervisor Vogel asked how many of the survey takers have been farmers.

Mr. Struck stated that the survey responses have not been reviewed yet. He also noted that there are agricultural owners who own land, but don't actually operate the farms.

Supervisor Holyoke mentioned that he found the survey information on the Village of Thiensville's website. He noticed that there were a couple of questions that don't differentiate between if the respondent lives in a town or city.

Mr. Struck stated that the survey will collect demographic data, so responses can be cross-referenced to say whether respondents live in a city, town or village.

Supervisor Schoessow stated that a problem with questions 31 - 44 is that when answering those questions, respondents probably have a different opinion depending on where they live. Not everything is going to work everywhere in Ozaukee County. He said that his mind was playing on two different fronts when taking the survey. The county is very different from the north end to the south end.

Chairperson Ross stated that he was interested in that perspective and asked if there are questions that Supervisor Schoessow thinks should be asked in the survey or that are missing from the survey.

Supervisor Schoessow noted that when talking to the agricultural community, he was told that there's a difference between property rights and farmland preservation, and the two concepts need to be separated. The agricultural community was generally okay with the tax credit but wasn't ok with development groups buying up land. They felt they were losing property rights.

Chairperson Ross stated that he was confused by that idea; if an individual decides to sell their property rights, they have that ability.

Supervisor Schoessow stated that he and other agricultural community members talked about the area north of Port Washington, where there are development groups buying up property (rights) everywhere. The agricultural community he talked to doesn't think it's a part of farmland preservation.

Mr. Struck noted that the Town of Port Washington and that specific area is not in the current Farmland Preservation Plan.

Supervisor Vogel asked why the agricultural community members don't see that as allowing for personal property rights.

Supervisor Schoessow stated that the agricultural community feels that if they have the opportunity, they want to have the ability to sell their land. If someone wants to buy land within a natural corridor, they want to have the option to do so; they want their rights. In the end, they didn't want to be told that they wouldn't have property rights.

Supervisor Vogel asked to summarize if farmers just want to have the ability to sell their land.

Supervisor Schoessow stated that he would like to be able to farm his land forever, but it's a significant area for new development and there's no stopping it.

Supervisor Vogel noted that there's a sense of inevitability.

Supervisor Schoessow agreed and noted that he was looking at a state of Wisconsin map; there's a lot condensed in the SE Wisconsin area. He asked how it is possible to stop it.

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Supervisor Rishel answered that it can't be stopped.

Supervisor Schoessow stated that it might be possible to preserve farmland farther away, but not here in Ozaukee County. He doesn't see it happening in the City of Mequon or Cedarburg.

Mr. Struck noted that neither the City of Mequon nor the Town of Cedarburg are in the current Farmland Preservation Plan with Farmland Preservation Areas (FPAs).

Supervisor Rishel stated that it could be possible to slow the spread.

Supervisor Schoessow noted that he thinks a bad economy slows the spread.

Chairperson Ross stated that the CPB is challenged with having a state farmland preservation program that's required. The other part to consider is the role of Ozaukee County, beyond that state program. The CPB talked previously about looking at other options, like buying easements or protecting wildlife corridors, in a way that respects property rights. One example he mentioned was that Restoring Lands: A Wisconsin Land Trust (formerly Ozaukee Washington Land Trust) has bought property and allows farmers to farm it for a low cost. He asked if that is something that CPB should think about.

Supervisor Schoessow asked how this would be financed.

Chairperson Ross noted that if it can't be funded, then it can't happen; but CPB should consider how to fund it.

Supervisor Schoessow mentioned conservation easements and agricultural conservation easements.

Supervisor Vogel noted that people say that they want open land, but it's just an idea. Ozaukee County is desirable as a living space; living spaces used to be farmland previously.

Chairperson Ross noted that the County's actions may just slow down the transition out of agriculture and asked the group if that idea was okay.

Supervisor Rishel asked if Ozaukee County could buy farmland and rent it out.

Supervisor Schoessow stated that farmland is overpriced in Ozaukee County due to development pressure. He has been in a circumstance where values went up by around \$7,000 in approximately six years, so when the bank went back to it, they said it wouldn't have been a good financial move.

Mr. Struck stated that this is the idea behind the purchase of agricultural conservation easements, if you purchase the development rights through an easement then the development pressure is reduced, at least for that particular parcel. Scattered parcels are not desirable, so the location of investments is important. It's like the Farmland Preservation Areas and tax credit in the way DATCP reviews contiguous parcels and areas.

Mr. Struck stated that, as an example, farmland preservation and particularly the purchase of agricultural conservation easements in the City of Mequon may not be feasible, but maybe it could be feasible in the Town of Belgium over a larger, contiguous area. The Town of Dunn has been successful in farmland preservation through the purchase of agricultural conservation easements, for example, so it can be done, but it requires a constant, strategic, guided effort and dedicated funding.

Chairperson Ross noted that he doesn't think he made the point well enough to the County Board. The board didn't even consider the idea of putting money aside for that. He thinks that it is incumbent on the CPB to bring the possibility to the County Board.

Mr. Struck noted that similar efforts were made during the last FPP process. Supervisor Tim Kaul and Supervisor Jennifere Rothstein championed a number of initiatives such as Land Preservation Board and Land Preservation Fund and Supervisor Kaul even worked to donate an agricultural conservation easement to the County. There was a strong effort throughout the planning process with the County Board. A lot of the systems and processes that were needed were created, but dedicated financing wasn't available.

Supervisor Maguire asked if Ozaukee County were to buy it, what that would do to taxes.

Mr. Struck noted that if the development rights were bought via an agricultural conservation easement, then the landowner would retain ownership and pay taxes (although the taxes might be reduced because of the agricultural conservation easement on the land. If Ozaukee County were to buy the land fee-simple and rent the land to agricultural operators, that would be a different mechanism, and the property would likely be tax exempt. The current discussion has focused on buying agricultural conservation easements, so the landowner would retain ownership and rights of ownership. Ozaukee County could buy the development rights for the property and be the owner of the agricultural conservation easement. The agricultural conservation easement then would prohibit development of the land in the future. The parcels around that given parcel aren't protected unless additional agricultural conservation easements are purchased, consolidating a contiguous area for farming and farmland preservation. For example, the North Branch Milwaukee River Wildlife and Farming Heritage Area in Fredonia is within several townships. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources initiated it and had a program to buy conservation easements and agricultural conservation easements. There are several hundred acres of land that are preserved through the purchase of development rights in the project area, so there is less development pressure. Something similar could be done in the Town of Belgium or other areas within Ozaukee County. Similarly, the County could focus more efforts on the existing project area of the North Branch Milwaukee River Wildlife and Farming Heritage Area to preserve more farming and farmland.

Supervisor Vogel asked if farmers are giving up their development rights in an easement, and whether farmers can do anything else on their land besides farm.

Mr. Struck said yes, the easement buys the development rights, but every easement is crafted individually; it's a custom negotiation. Depending on funding, the agency holding the easement and other factors usually only development is restricted. So, the property may be used for something other than farming, but not anything involving development.

Supervisor Schoessow noted that farmland values are already very high. There have been other offers made beyond the data center in Port Washington. He has heard that offers are already doubling. This makes preservation very difficult.

Mr. Struck agreed that land values play a significant role in being able to preserve land for farming and agricultural use.

Supervisor Schoessow noted that developers are looking just beyond urban areas; there's a fight against real-estate investments and there is going to be sprawl.

Mr. Struck noted that one of the goals of the FPP is to also identify how housing develops in the County and to look at consolidated development, particularly for residential uses.

Chairperson Ross noted that the current discussion is useful and helpful to think through ideas to propose to the County Board; however, he is going to return us to the agenda.

Vice-Chairperson Richart brought up question number 25 from the survey, on page 34 of the agenda packet PDF, which asks if survey takers would be willing to spend \$0.10 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation to create a dedicated land preservation fund.

Chairperson Ross noted that it's a way to fund potential agricultural preservation.

Vice-Chairperson Richart stated that for him personally, it's worth it to spend that money.

Chairperson Ross stated that the CPB could say that it's too late for farmland preservation in Ozaukee County and just do the State program requirements for the FPP, and that's it. Or the CPB could decide to act where there might be influence, particularly with the County Board.

Supervisor Schoessow asked if the current credit is \$15 per acre.

Mr. Struck said yes, though it depends on the specific area and criteria such as whether the parcel has agricultural zoning vs agricultural enterprise area, etc.

Supervisor Schoessow asked if participants sign up for a given number of years.

Mr. Struck stated that the municipality needs to have zoning to support it, but it's implied that participants sign up for the duration of the 10-year FPP.

Supervisor Schoessow noted that at the recent Clean Farm Families meeting, most people were comfortable with that.

Chairperson Ross noted that that's the state program, but the CPB can decide to go beyond just the tax credit.

Mr. Struck said yes, the CPB can choose to do many things with the FPP.

Supervisor Schoessow asked, even if development rights were bought, would it still be eligible for the tax credits.

Mr. Struck said yes, likely, given that the farmland met the tax credit criteria as far as income-based earnings on agriculture and also followed conservation practices (best management practices BMPs). Tax credits between \$10 - \$15 / acre can make a difference for some agricultural owners, but not others.

Supervisor Schoessow noted that if a landowner knows they'll be there for 10 years, then it may be worth it.

Supervisor Vogel noted that Portland, Oregon has an Urban Growth Boundary that dictates development. This boundary has created home values that are high there as a result of not being able to grow the residential land use.

Mr. Struck noted that there are a lot of market forces that create that dynamic.

Chairperson Ross stated that this is an important discussion. The FPP must meet requirements for the state program if Ozaukee County is to participate; the county can decide not to participate too.

Supervisor Maquire noted that sometimes the "do nothing" strategy is the best strategy.

Mr. Struck stated that there are around 60 current landowners who wouldn't be able to take the credit anymore if the FPP wasn't updated this year.

Mr. Struck mentioned the target audience opinion survey again and noted that the first eight questions are demographic questions that get tied to the rest of the survey respondents' answers. This doesn't show up when taking the survey online, but general farmland preservation questions, numbers 9 - 28 starting on page 32 of the agenda packet PDF, are for anyone to answer. Questions 29 and 30 on page 35 are for municipalities to answer only. The last questions, numbers 31 - 44 starting on page 35, are for

agricultural operators and owners to answer only. The survey is available to fill out online until April 30th. Mr. Struck encouraged CPB members to fill the survey out and also let others know about the survey.

iii. Focus Groups – Agriculture Owners/Farmers/Users

Mr. Struck introduced the discussion notes from the March 20th focus group meeting on page 40 of the agenda packet PDF. Mr. Roback put together this summary. Similar conversations were had at recent CPB meetings. Some of the bullet points are echoed in Supervisor Schoessow's comments today. This meeting was an informal discussion, and attendants were provided with the public survey information. The question sheet that the meeting attendants were provided with is on page 39.

Supervisor Vogel brought up the last bullet point for question 1 on page 40 of the agenda packet PDF and asked if he was correct in thinking that this response means that the people Ozaukee County is targeting don't want the government help.

Mr. Struck stated that he is not sure that is how he would interpret the response but does not know exactly what the attendants were thinking at the time.

Supervisor Schoessow stated that most of the people he has talked to are comfortable with getting the tax credit, and that's it; that's the extent of their desired involvement. Everybody is entitled to do what they want because they own their land; people acquire land by working hard.

Supervisor Vogel stated that it seems like private property rights are the most important element.

Ms. Vogeler noted that federal money is available, but it has a lot more strings attached. Many farmers want assistance, but don't want to jump through all the requirements of the funding (federal).

Mr. Struck noted that federal funding support often requires more paperwork to be filed.

Ms. Vogeler stated that in the Town of Belgium, of the 61 current FPP certificates, a majority of the farmers are required to have a soil and water conservation plan anyways. Several of them are also CAFO (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation), so they have to submit reporting to the state anyways. If they were to back out of farmland preservation, they would still need to have a plan per other agreements or programs that they are part of.

Mr. Struck stated that farmers need to meet conservation practices for the tax credit. The fact that there's a conservation practice requirement for the FPP credits is somewhat immaterial because farmers often need to complete that requirement for other funding opportunities or benefits, they receive anyways.

Chairperson Ross stated, to summarize, there are overlapping benefits of different programs.

Mr. Struck noted that he thinks that is typical because many of the programs that exist encourage good farming practices.

Ms. Vogeler stated that MMSD buys conservation and agricultural easements, and the funding comes from federal funds. The Town of Belgium does not have this easement opportunity because it is not within the Milwaukee River Watershed Project Area. She noted that the Land and Water Management Department has been trying to find other groups/agencies that do offer funding for the Town of Belgium and they haven't had any luck yet.

Mr. Struck noted that the Department (Planning and Parks) had applied to the State of Wisconsin (through DATCP) Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) program when it existed (one funding cycle essentially) and the Department was awarded a grant to purchase an agricultural easement on a Buffalo/Bison farm in Belgium at the time. However, shortly have the grants were awarded the legislature defunded the PACE program and those awards were never realized including the one for

Ozaukee County. If Ozaukee County wanted to invest in something for Farmland Preservation, another option would be to fund easement purchases where there is not funding available (e.g. Town of Belgium).

Chairperson Ross thanked Ms. Vogeler for the information and said that there's a lot that CPB members don't know about this program; the context is very important. Chairperson Ross also thanked Supervisor Schoessow for his input. The CPB can focus on just the state program or can focus more generally across the county. The FPP goes beyond just the state requirements.

Supervisor Rishel asked, once the survey results are compiled, if the Department expects to get an idea of whether people want to invest in items outside of the state program.

Mr. Struck stated that he expects to get a sense of what people think about Farmland Preservation in the County and perhaps something actionable (e.g. support purchase of agricultural conservation easements). A lot of other counties don't ask funding-related questions. These types of questions were also in Ozaukee County's previous public opinion survey.

Supervisor Vogel noted that the survey response is a pretty small sample, relative to the whole population of Ozaukee County.

Mr. Struck stated that the 2010 UW River Falls survey was a statistically significant survey of the County; funding-related questions were asked in this survey also. This year's survey is a targeted audience survey; it is not a random sampling and may have skewed results, based on who completes the survey. The results of this survey will not be statistically significant like the other public opinion surveys conducted by UW River Falls; however, we hope to still have some useful information.

Supervisor Holyoke mentioned that for those who live in the Village of Thiensville (who has the survey posted on their website), initially he wondered why these residents would want to answer questions on farmland preservation. But, if Ozaukee County acts on some of these financial items, it will affect people throughout the whole county financially.

Chairperson Ross stated that the CPB might not feel comfortable making recommendations based on the survey, but if CPB members have a desire to allocate funding towards farmland preservation, Ozaukee County could do a broader survey if needed in the future.

Mr. Struck reminded CPB members to review the statistically significant results from the 2010 and 2020 public opinion surveys as there is information in those that is well vetted.

Mr. Struck mentioned that the CPB previously decided not to pay someone to do this most recent (target audience) survey. The survey will not be statistically significant, as survey groups were targeted and the survey was not a random sample of the County. The 2020 survey included three questions related to farmland preservation. The 2010 survey had more questions related to Farmland Preservation and some specific to funding. Mr. Struck also sent the survey to all the Ozaukee County Board members and municipalities. It's up to the municipalities to decide who they request to take the survey and who they send it to. The survey is also open to the public and will collect respondents' zip codes. The survey closes on April 30th.

iv. Public Information Kickoff Meetings – Rescheduled

Mr. Struck stated that the kickoff meetings needed to be rescheduled and that there are two new dates shown on the flyer starting on page 41 of the agenda packet PDF. These meetings will have an open-house format, but a slideshow presentation will be included at the beginning of the meeting as well.

Mr. Struck stated that conditional approval of Chapter 4 would be helpful to keep things moving, but some parts will be modified in future as more public involvement items are held and included.

Supervisor Maguire made a motion to conditionally approve Chapter 4, Public Involvement for A Farmland Preservation Plan for Ozaukee County: 2050. Seconded by Supervisor Holyoke. A voice note was taken. Motion carries unanimously.

Mr. Struck asked CPB members to let him know if they have more thoughts on the SWOT with regards to new items, including some items from the last FPP or on prioritization of the SWOT.

b. Review, Discussion and POSSIBLE ACTION – CHAPTER 6, Vision, Issues and Recommendations for A Farmland Preservation Plan for Ozaukee County: 2050.

Mr. Struck stated that Chapter 6 of the FPP draft starts on page 45 of the agenda packet PDF. The Department updated the public handout version of the PPP summary, which is included on pages 41-44 of the agenda packet PDF. Chapter 6 was drafted before Chapter 5, as Chapter 5 deals with the designated Farmland Preservation Areas (FPAs), which require more input from municipalities given zoning requirements and overall participation. Chapter 6 starts to get into the plan recommendations. The draft includes information that staff pulled together from what is known to date. Staff drew heavily on past discussions and input from the last FPP. Mr. Struck provided a quick outline of the chapter. The vision statement meshes closely with the Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Ozaukee County: 2035. The chapter goes from goals, to objectives, to policies, and then to programs and action items. Many of the key issues are revisited; the Department would welcome CPB members' thoughts. Yellow highlighted sections in this chapter are from the existing FPP, for the CPB's review. The vision statement is largely from the existing FPP and can be rewritten with the CPB's input. The Department would appreciate CPB members' reactions; anything in the chapter can be removed, edited, added to or otherwise refined as it is a draft based on public input, the last FPP, CPB member comments to date, and other programmatic areas.

Supervisor Holyoke mentioned the first highlighted item on page 50 of the agenda packet PDF: urban development/sprawl. In the City of Mequon there are lots of homes on 5-10 acre lots. If the City of Mequon limited lot sizes to one acre, more people could live in a given area.

Mr. Struck noted that the lot size that leads to the most sprawl is between 2-5 acres. A five-acre lot is considered rural residential. In the region, lots that are 2-5 acres is very common. Many lots likely started at 5 acres and were split with changes to zoning. While it is true that 5-10 acre lots don't allow for as many residential units, it is consistent with rural residential in the Region. 2-5 acre lots often generate the sprawl and need for infrastructure that would not otherwise be needed to fewer 10 acre lots. There are a lot more septic demands as well with the smaller lot sizes that are not in a sanitary sewer area.

Supervisor Schoessow mentioned that the City of Mequon has many conservancy-style subdivisions. Around 11-12 acres of farmland was left in many subdivisions. The farmland was split off and the land was kept denser to keep agriculture. There are water issues in these subdivisions as homes weren't developed in mind of water and drainage for farmland.

Mr. Struck noted that conservation subdivisions are another tool or option that can be effective if implemented well. We will discuss conservation subdivisions more in the Implementation Chapter (Chapter 7).

Supervisor Schoessow mentioned that the City of Mequon realized that with the 5-acre lots, they aren't getting the tax money they want, so they are experimenting with the conservation subdivisions.

Mr. Struck noted that the City of Mequon is unique, it's not like the City of Cedarburg which is entirely served by sewer and water utilities. From that sense, Mequon provides unique opportunities for something like conservation subdivisions and transfer of development rights.

Mr. Struck noted that there are strong opinions about the most efficient land use.

Supervisor Schoessow noted that Ozaukee County can't regulate the city zoning. The City of Mequon doesn't want to have exclusive agriculture.

Mr. Struck did note that the City of Mequon only has overlay zoning for farmland, meaning that there is an underlying zoning district whether residential or something else. This overlay zoning is not compliant with the State Farmland Preservation Program, so would need to change to have an eligible area in the City of Mequon.

Chairperson Ross stated that Chapter 6 doesn't appear to speak to priorities.

Mr. Struck stated that priority information can be added to Chapter 6 if CPB members would like. As it is, Chapter 6 shows all the options that exist and some options that could exist and provides a menu of items to implement depending upon the situation as noted above.

Chairperson Ross asked CPB members for their thoughts on how they want the FPP to manifest the CPB's priorities.

Supervisor Vogel mentioned that there is more of an interest in preserving wildlife, instead of farmland. City of Mequon farmers don't want more government involvement. Looking at the bigger picture, the owners of farmland are not overly supportive of farmland preservation (depending upon how that is defined).

Supervisor Schoessow stated that he doesn't think they aren't supportive; they are saying that they are okay with the current state. That's as far as they want to take it, generally.

Mr. Struck mentioned that different parts of Ozaukee County have different natural resources too. Fredonia has a mix of wetlands and farmland. Belgium has less waterways and larger tracts of land. There's a difference in land use. This has to do with how the Ozaukee County was glaciated, among other factors. Natural resources play into what farmland looks like in different areas of the County.

Chairperson Ross stated that this feels like an opportunity for the CPB to adopt a good menu of options, but also state which items are priorities. Encouraging the County Board to consider investment opportunities might be difficult.

Mr. Struck noted that page 56 of the agenda packet PDF talks about some of these policies. The goal to "preserve a sufficient amount of agricultural land to ensure farming remains viable in Ozaukee County" lists objectives for doing so, including protecting farmland based on the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) analysis scores of 6.4 or higher and protecting the most productive agricultural lands. Then the policies start to flesh out how that happens. Discouraging land divisions in high priority protection areas could possibly be an avenue for implementation. Another item on that list is to take advantage of state programs. Ozaukee County has previously worked on several boundary agreements. There was an agreement in the Port Washington area, and that's probably why the data center wasn't introduced earlier. Ozaukee County might want to take up a land division ordinance or fund an (agricultural) conservation easement program. There are action items shown in this chapter and they can be further prioritized, if desired by the CPB.

Supervisor Holyoke noted that it seems like the boundary agreements have limits.

Mr. Struck stated that the goal of boundary agreements is to have an agreed upon land use in a specific area, but yes, they are limited. The issue is that incorporated municipalities have more land use controls to inhibit their participation with Towns.

Supervisor Vogel mentioned that the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust Inc. has been renamed to Restoring Lands: *A Wisconsin Land Trust*.

Mr. Struck stated that the name can be updated in the FPP document.

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Supervisor Rishel stated that once this plan gets adopted it comes down to who picks up and implements or executes the ideas.

Mr. Struck noted that that responsibility largely falls under the jurisdiction of the Natural Resources Committee at the County, but of course, municipalities have a very important role in implementation as well.

Supervisor Holyoke stated that the CPB is handing the FPP over to someone else (NRC, Municipalities, etc.) to prioritize actions and that the public and County Board support is needed to implement anything.

Chairperson Ross stated that the CPB should probably adopt a cover letter for the FPP to pass to the Natural Resources Committee, as he worries about the loss of information as the CPB passes this over for implementation.

Supervisor Rishel stated that, ultimately, some other group needs to implement the FPP. If in five years from now things change, Ozaukee County could pull an idea out of the FPP and implement it.

Mr. Struck mentioned that the Department uses planning documents, like the FPP, at the staff level to implement projects and prioritize actions. That's where these plans become valuable. If staff sees a program in the FPP that seems like a good fit for the current time, it can be brought to the Natural Resources Committee or County Board for approval or action.

Supervisor Rishel stated that he sees this plan as infrastructure. Depending on the timing and current opportunities, Ozaukee County may pick something from the FPP to act upon.

Mr. Struck stated that the FPP will be updated throughout this year and then adopted. The last plan was compiled 10+ years ago (2013), but there are many similarities.

Chairperson Ross asked the group how the CPB should take the body of knowledge in the FPP to implementation; that's the struggle. Ozaukee County doesn't have an effective strategic planning process that this would fall into. There's a gap; it requires a long-term view.

Supervisor Rishel noted that he doesn't know what to do with the gap either; he sees the FPP as a framework.

Vice-Chairperson Richart mentioned that he saw something in the Milwaukee Journal that one way to save farmland is to sell the economic benefits. This is not just from a farm standpoint but from a taxpayer standpoint meaning less infrastructure and service cost.

Supervisor Schoessow stated that he thinks there are models of that. In the City of Mequon, that was highlighted sometimes in the past, that the rural areas didn't require the service, but then later it was said that they did.

Supervisor Rishel mentioned that people ask why Ozaukee County can't just stop development; at some point Ozaukee County will need to raise taxes to provide the same services.

Supervisor Rishel asked if having more farmland helps the tax increases.

Supervisor Schoessow mentioned that it depends on who is in the office at the time; he has seen it both ways.

Mr. Struck mentioned that there are studies that talk about the cost of services compared to the land use; there are nuances to every community. If land can be kept as agriculture, it has a lower infrastructure and service cost typically.

Supervisor Richart stated that the CPB should get the new FPP to the County Board and if the idea of funding something is questionable, the Board could do a binding or non-binding referendum to get the residents' opinion.

Chairperson Ross stated that he is asking the CPB to hand off a FPP document that provides guardrails for initiatives for farmland preservation and/or also follow Vice-Chairperson Richart's model to seek funding for initiatives that are prioritized in the FPP.

Supervisor Rishel stated that he thinks the CPB could state that there are three ideas they think are the most viable to provide to the County Board, but it's going to require funding.

Mr. Struck mentioned one final note on Chapter 6: after each goal/objective, there's a local recommendations section for local municipalities to take up if they desire.

Supervisor Rishel made a motion to conditionally approve Chapter 6, Vision, Issues and Recommendations for A Farmland Preservation Plan for Ozaukee County: 2050. Seconded by Vice-Chairperson Richart. A voice vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Other Business

Chairperson Ross asked if there was any other business to discuss today.

There was no other business brought before the CPB.

7. Next Meeting Date(s) – Wednesday, June 18, 2025

Mr. Struck stated that the next meeting will be Wednesday, June 18th, 2025. The CPB will take a month off in May, so staff can continue to work with municipalities and complete public involvement items (e.g. survey, meetings, etc.).

Chairperson Ross noted that he will likely not be in attendance for the June CPB meeting. Vice-Chairperson Richart will lead the meeting in this case.

8. Adjournment

Supervisor Holyoke made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Supervisor Maguire. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:48 AM.