

1 **MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

2 **LAND EVALUATION AND SITE ASSESSMENT (LESA) UPDATE COMMITTEE**

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4
5 **DATE:** March 7, 2012 **PLACE:** John Dimit Conference Room
6 1776 East Washington Street
7 **TIME:** 6:30 p.m. **Urbana, IL 61802**

8
9 **VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:** Kevin Donoho, Debra Griest, Liz Jones, Kyle Krapf, Pattsy Petrie,
10 Bruce Stickers, Steve Stierwalt

11
12 **VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT :** Steve Moser

13
14 **NON-VOTING MEMBER PRESENT:** John Hall

15
16 **OTHERS PRESENT:** Hal Barnhart, Norman Stenzel, Andrew Kass

17
18 **CCRPC FACILITATOR:** Susan Monte

19
20
21 **1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

22
23 Ms. Griest called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. The roll was called and a quorum established.

24
25 **2. Approval of Agenda**

26
27 Ms. Griest requested that the public participation and review of the minutes be moved to the end
28 of the meeting so that the Committee could spend their time making progress on the significant
29 items and that the public would appreciate the opportunity to comment after the Committee was
30 done.

31
32 **Mr. Krapf moved, seconded by Ms. Petrie to approve the agenda and to move public**
33 **participation and review of the minutes to the end of the meeting. The motion carried by**
34 **voice vote.**

35
36 **3. Unfinished Business**

37 **a) Recommendation regarding Best Prime Farmland Definition**

38
39 Mr. Donoho distributed his amended version of the Best Prime Farmland Recommendation to the
40 Champaign County LESA Update Committee. He said that all of the changes are indicated on page 2
41 of the distributed document and are as follows: 1. Therefore be it further proposed that : The new
42 definition for Best Prime Farmland in Champaign County be considered as follows: Any proposed
43 site with an average LE score of at least 91 or any proposed site with a minimum of 10% of
44 Agricultural Value Groups 1, 2, 3, and/or 4 soils. 2. Best Prime Farmland is Prime Farmland soils
45 that under optimum management have 91% to 100% of the highest soil productivities in Champaign
46 County, on average, as reported in the Bulletin 811 Optimum Crop Productivity Ratings for Illinois
47 Soils. Best Prime Farmland consists of: a) soils identified as Agriculture Value Groups 1, 2, 3,
48 and/or 4 in the Champaign County Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) System; and b)

3/7/12

1 soils that, in combination on a subject site, have an average LE of 91 or higher, as determined by the
2 Champaign County LESA System; or c) any development site that includes a significant amount
3 (10% or more of the area proposed to be developed) of Agriculture Value Groups 1, 2, 3, and/or 4
4 soils.

5
6 Mr. Donoho stated that the insertion of “and/or” indicates that it could be any combination of the Ag
7 Value groups.

8
9 Ms. Petrie stated that if “or” is inserted it would not mean in combination of the Agriculture Value
10 Groups.

11
12 Mr. Stickers stated that it could be just one of the Agricultural Value Groups or it could be any
13 combination of the groups.

14
15 Mr. Krapf stated that he thought that it could be Agriculture Value Groups 1, 2, 3, and 4 or.

16
17 Ms. Petrie agreed.

18
19 Mr. Donoho stated that he had originally had it to indicate Agriculture Value Groups 1, 2, 3 and 4
20 and there was no indication of any combination of those groups. He said that he is trying to indicate
21 that if there is any combination of groups 1, 2, 3 and 4 and those combinations make up 10% or
22 more of the proposed site then that is the same as having a score of 91 or greater.

23
24 Ms. Griest agreed with Mr. Donoho.

25
26 Ms. Griest asked the Committee if there were any additional comments regarding the insertion of
27 “and/or.”

28
29 Ms. Petrie asked if it could just be Agriculture Value Group 1, 2, 3 or 4.

30
31 Mr. Donoho stated yes.

32
33 Ms. Griest stated that it could be just be 10% of any of the Agriculture Value Groups.

34
35 Ms. Petrie stated that it was stated that it could be in combination.

3/7/12

1
2 Mr. Donoho stated that there could be 6% of Agriculture Value Group 1 therefore only 4% of
3 another Agriculture Value Group is required to equal 10%. He said that any combination of the
4 four Agriculture Value Groups could equal 10%.
5
6 Mr. Stickers stated that if you total up the percentage of each one of those four Agriculture Value
7 Groups and the total is 10% or more then it would be considered Best Prime Farmland.
8
9 Ms. Griest stated that she agreed with Mr. Donoho and Mr. Stickers. She thanked Mr. Donoho for
10 taking the time in putting together this very comprehensive list. She asked the Committee if there
11 was anything that Mr. Donoho might have overlooked.
12
13 Mr. Hall stated that if you figure the total percent of Agriculture Value Groups 1, 2, 3, and 4, outside
14 of the CUGA, that percent of the total prime farmland is 78.8%. He asked the Committee since
15 when does the best of anything equal 79% of it, because he fails to see how such is possible.
16
17 Ms. Griest stated that she agrees with Mr. Hall but she was trying to get through Mr. Donoho's
18 prepared list prior to discussion regarding the actual value that the Committee wants to settle on.
19
20 Ms. Petrie read a portion of an e-mail from Terry Savko from the Illinois Department of
21 Agriculture Bureau of Land and Water Resources, as follows: Regarding the point scale and
22 whether to use high and very high, the overall point spread is difficult to establish due to the overall
23 productivity of the soils in Champaign County. Ms. Petrie stated that the for this Committee to
24 succumb to the argument that if we chose to protect 75% of the soils in the County then that is
25 something that we should be doing because these are soils that should be protected and given
26 consideration for that protection.
27
28 Mr. Stickers stated that if you look at all of the land in the cornbelt it is the best of the best and we
29 have a lot of it.
30
31 Ms. Petrie continued to read a portion of Ms. Savko's e-mail as follows: I agree on the need to
32 evaluate the revised LESA in five years. In fact, I would suggest to look at the SA in two years just
33 to see they truly evaluate what they were designed to evaluate. Ms. Petrie stated that she does not
34 believe that they can be based on 20 years at all.
35

3/7/12

1 Ms. Griest stated that she does not see the argument as being 20 years. She said that she reads the
2 message from Ms. Savko differently from Ms. Petrie's interpretation. Ms. Griest stated that Ms.
3 Savko also indicated that many of the soils are above the 90 relative value (RV) range. This
4 automatically makes the LE point totals higher than found in many counties with LESAs, thus
5 raising the overall point total. Ms. Griest stated that Ms. Savko is sending a message that the
6 Committee should really look carefully at this and see if the Committee is protecting too
7 much.

8
9 Ms. Petrie stated no.

10
11 Ms. Griest stated that she and Ms. Petrie are going to have to disagree on this matter because she is
12 not going to be convinced by Ms. Petrie and she is not going to convince Ms. Petrie therefore they
13 will just need to disagree on this point because Ms. Savko is not present to clarify her e-mail for the
14 Committee.

15
16 Ms. Petrie stated that for the Committee to look at the point range of the other counties is not useful
17 because they have much different land than Champaign County.

18
19 Ms. Griest asked Ms. Petrie if she hasn't been advocating this whole time that the Committee should
20 be looking at the other counties.

21
22 Ms. Petrie stated that she is discussing the point range that should be used.

23
24 Ms. Griest asked Ms. Monte to thank Ms. Savko for her comments.

25
26 Ms. Griest stated that she does agree with Ms. Petrie regarding Ms. Savko's recommendation of
27 looking at the SA factors in two years just to see if the SA Factors truly evaluate what they were
28 designed to evaluate.

29
30 Ms. Griest asked the Committee if there were any additions or deletions to Mr. Donoho's document.
31 She said that she would like the document to be a substantial piece of the package that will be sent to
32 the County Board, unless someone strongly objects.

33
34 Ms. Petrie stated that she does not believe that the document should go to the County Board in
35 this form and should be presented as a resolution.

3/7/12

1

2 Ms. Griest asked why.

3

4 Ms. Petrie stated that the resolution format is the Board's prerogative.

5

6 Ms. Griest asked if the County Board would not perceive this document as the Committee presenting
7 them with a tool where they have to do less work to put it in that format. She said that she will
8 discuss this issue with Mr. Weibel.

9

10 Mr. Stickers stated that he likes the format in which the document is currently written.

11

12 Ms. Monte stated that this is not a replacement for any kind of County Board Resolution but is a tool
13 that summarizes the Committee's recommendation.

14

15 Mr. Krapf stated that it is just one way of making a motion.

16

17 Mr. Stickers stated that he is not on the County Board therefore he may be missing something
18 therefore he will not disagree with Ms. Petrie.

19

20 Ms. Petrie stated that she is only talking about the format.

21

22 Mr. Stickers stated that he does like the format of Mr. Donoho's document because it does indicate
23 all of the points.

24

25 Ms. Jones stated that Mr. Donoho's document is exceptionally logical after seven months of
26 Committee meetings and the work that the Committee has completed.

27

28 Ms. Petrie stated that the second to the last sentence on page 1 of Mr. Donoho's document states the
29 following: Whereas: A new definition for Best Prime Farmland should place conversion limits on
30 development similar to the previous LE score for BPF.

31

32 Mr. Griest stated that his motion is saying that it should be equivalent to an LE of 85.

33

34 Mr. Donoho stated that it should be very similar. He said that he used the word "similar" because
35 we can't say the same. He said that we are talking about groups that are different and the way that

3/7/12

1 they are measured is a little different therefore you can't say "the same" but it is a totally revamped
2 tool and this is one portion of that tool.

3

4 Ms. Griest asked Mr. Donoho if it was his opinion if the Committee, during their next discussion,
5 turns to page 2 and desires to make any changes in either the LE score of 91 or the 10% of
6 Agriculture Value Groups 1, 2, 3, and/or 4 that the final "whereas" on page 1 may require
7 adjustment because they may not be as similar to an LE of 85.

8

9 Mr. Donoho stated that it is possible but we do not have reams and reams of statistical data for a
10 couple of hundred sites to see how everything shapes out. He said that we are painting a picture that
11 will be recognizable but it will not be perfect and it will be as close as we can come with the
12 information that we have available to us now. He said that we are trying to use a very unnatural
13 thing to define natural occurrences. He said that usually similar soils of ag value groups are located
14 close to each other and in a specific order and that order contributes to how we end up with the
15 value. He said that Mr. Barnhart gave an example at a previous meeting where he showed
16 differences between evaluating an entire site as one or cut it up differently. Mr. Donoho said that whether
17 we settle on the LE of 91 and everything else which is included in his document or not as long as we stick to
18 the Ag Value Groups we will find that more of the evaluations are assessed especially when we shoot for an
19 LE number first and if we don't achieve it we can look closer at the 10% and find that many of those soils
20 will basically be at an LE of 91 or greater and not favorable for development. He said that he believes that
21 we will find more situations like that with the LE proposal laid out like this than we would have with the old
22 system just pure LE of 85. He said that we are looking not only at the group effort but a combination of
23 groups and the likelihood that these groups lump together at the same location.

24

25 Ms. Griest asked the Committee if there was any further discussion.

26

27 Ms. Petrie asked Mr. Donoho if he is just applying this to the proposed development site or to the
28 entire site.

29

30 Mr. Donoho stated that whatever is being proposed as the site.

31

32 Ms. Griest stated that the LE can only be for the portion of the site which is being proposed for
33 development. She said the Committee adjusted SA Factor 2 to include a measure of what proportion of a
34 larger 'parent' parcel the proposed development site is. She noted that this is not going to be a perfect
35 system.

3/7/12

1
2 Mr. Donoho stated that during Meeting #10, Mr. Barnhart gave an example of a 40 acre parcel,
3 which was one of the original sites, and the average LE for the entire parcel was 94 therefore the
4 10% would not apply. Mr. Donoho stated that if the landowner decides that if he cannot build on the
5 entire 40 acres therefore he will chop it up in such a way that half of the tract has an LE score of 100
6 and the other half has a really low LE of 75 the combined total would be 87.5. He said that currently
7 he is proposing a 10% rule therefore the landowner's parcel would not be eligible for development
8 because it has 50% in Groups 1, 2, 3 or 4.

9
10 Ms. Griest asked the Committee if there was any further discussion.

11
12 Ms. Griest asked Ms. Monte if she had any comments.

13
14 Ms. Monte stated no. She said that the "whereas" portion of Mr. Donoho's document is pretty clear
15 for the most part.

16
17 Mr. Donoho asked Ms. Monte to explain.

18
19 Ms. Monte stated that there are different ways to interpret the fifth "whereas" statement. She believes that it
20 is okay to refer to '1 to 18' because the 18th group is consistent with water and doesn't have two soil
21 classifications that apply to it and it is part of a whole and sets itself apart from the other 17 parts.

22
23 Mr. Donoho stated that he tried to be specific in dealing with every single thing that we have
24 discussed.

25
26 Ms. Griest stated that she asked everyone to come back to the meeting with their mind made up on
27 their target LE score, Ag Value Groups and percentages. She said that Mr. Donoho's proposal is on the table
28 and we need to see where we stand on that proposal. She asked the Committee if they agreed with the
29 proposal or if more discussion is required.

30
31 Mr. Stickers stated that he is perfectly happy with Mr. Donoho's proposal.

32
33 Ms. Griest stated that she was hoping for a little more movement because the LE of 85 disadvantages many
34 property owners that would be better suited for development and she does not believe that this takes a step
35 forward however, if the consensus of the Committee is an LE of 91 then she is willing to agree to the

3/7/12

1 position. She said that in two years the County will be looking at this again to re-evaluate the LESA to see if
2 it is really working. She said that she believes that in two years the County will be right back in the same
3 spot with an LE of 91 in the four ag groups at 10% and wondering why this Committee did not do much.
4 She said that she believes that the Committee has made a huge step forward in changing the methodology so
5 that the next group has a better tool to start with and will have a better chance to see how it performed before
6 they make their decision.
7

8 Ms. Jones stated that she has thought all along that the variable here is how the percentage is determined.
9 She said that 10% appears to be very conservative and if the goal is to protect our farmland then that keeps it
10 very tight, but if the goal is to allow some movement then to go to perhaps 15%, the question becomes how
11 much farmland would that free up.
12

13 Mr. Donoho stated that at the last meeting he asked the Committee of the offers of the site reviews that came
14 through in the last few years, what portion of those offers were real and not test sites. He said that in the end
15 it will be a judgment call by this Committee to make a decision on where they want to go with this. He said
16 that he struggled with the numbers and he tried to explain his thought process in arriving at a number and
17 also something that represented the Committee's discussions and agreements.
18

19 Mr. Hall stated that it isn't clear why an LE of 91 was chosen and that is the essential part of the best prime
20 farmland recommendation. He said that he was going to draft a "whereas" clause because he stated his
21 reservations about this recommendation but one thing that he could say is that an LE of 91 includes
22 everything within 10% of the highest productivity and generally when you are within 10% of something you
23 are pretty much there. He said that even though he disagrees with the amount of farmland that this covers he
24 can logically agree that it is within 10% instead of 17% or 18% like the current LESA.
25

26 Mr. Donoho stated that he wanted to lay out an explanation and in many cases some of the "whereas" are
27 factual and other things are assumptions or the idea behind why this could be feasible.
28

29 Mr. Hall stated that he believes that they are appropriate but he believes that we are missing something.
30

31 Ms. Griest stated that she understands why an LE of 91 based upon the following: Whereas: Previous Best
32 Prime Farmland definition utilized the most readily available information to arrive at a simple "LE" score for
33 the definition; and Whereas: A new definition for Best Prime Farmland should place conversion limits on
34 development similar to the previous LE score for BPF. She said that the last "whereas" was the fundamental
35 rationale for the LE score of 91. She said that we are trying to achieve at least what we had before with that

3/7/12

1 LE.

2

3 Ms. Petrie stated that the test sites were based on that number.

4

5 Mr. Donoho stated that he considered mentioning the test sites.

6

7 Ms. Petrie stated that there could be one additional “whereas” indicating that the LE of 91 was not just
8 pulled out of thin air and was that a reasonable amount of research went in to it.

9

10 Mr. Krapf stated that we better be careful indicating test sites.

11

12 Ms. Petrie asked Mr. Krapf if he had a suggestion on how to do it.

13

14 Mr. Krapf stated no, he is just being cautious. He said that the Committee has been at this for seven months
15 and it isn’t perfect and it isn’t going to make everyone happy.

16

17 Ms. Griest stated that it isn’t going to be perfect.

18

19 Mr. Krapf stated that we have to start somewhere therefore he would agree with the 10% and move forward.

20

21 Ms. Monte noted that the Committee is being too hard on themselves because we have only looked at the
22 recommendation for best prime farmland for four months not seven months. She said that the Committee
23 primarily worked on the LESA update during the first three months.

24

25 Ms. Jones stated that she has the concern that because the LESA is a tool that is worked with all of the time,
26 that there is a reason to redo this and that part of the Committee’s objective was to make it more effective
27 She said that with as much time and effort that is being taken we do want to make sure that we have an
28 effective policy. She asked Mr. Hall to repeat his concerns regarding the definition of best prime farmland
29 under current consideration.

30

31 Mr. Hall stated that a recommendation of Agriculture Value Groups of 1, 2, 3 and 4 is not 79% of the prime
32 farmland we have today but what we are projected to have twenty years in the future. He said that it is
33 projected that we will still have 79% of all prime farmland under the definition of best and he does not
34 accept that 79% is the best. He said that he does not know any instance where just having $\frac{3}{4}$ of something is
35 having the best of it and for that reason he does not believe that this will make any progress at the County

3/7/12

1 Board.

2

3 Ms. Petrie stated that she is concerned that if the Committee does not do it in this context which is even
4 higher than my sense of what the ZBA will accept.

5

6 Ms. Jones stated that the Committee needs to be clear on what we should be doing.

7 Ms. Petrie stated that we could be doing these things but if we want them to get implemented then we have
8 to take everything into consideration.

9

10 Ms. Jones stated that we are not making much change.

11

12 Ms. Petrie stated that she disagrees because the Committee has made a great deal of change and it has been
13 an iterative walk down the pathway to get where we are and rather than having a 'flat' LE of 85, which has
14 existed for twenty years, this gives flexibility on how we will look at sites.. She said that an LE of 91 would
15 be a considered a low "A" level.

16

17 Mr. Donoho stated that not everyone can be a straight "A" student.

18

19 Mr. Hall stated that he would say that an LE of 91 would not be an "A" student but a high "B" student.

20

21 Mr. Donoho stated that the test that is being taken is harder than anyone else's test.

22

23 Ms. Griest stated that fundamentally she agrees with Mr. Hall and she supports his position but when we are
24 talking about the 79% of Champaign County that is somewhat deceptive in that the ag groups and best are
25 defined as part of all soils not only Champaign County. She said that it may be 79% of Champaign County
26 but we have a really great blessing in Champaign County to have such a high quality soils to begin with
27 therefore 79% of the honor students doesn't make them less of an honor student.

28

29 Ms. Petrie stated that the grade span for the top 10% of Harvard students is much tighter than the grade span
30 for the top 10% at Podunk U.

31

32 Ms. Griest stated that the question which is being posed is do we want to protect 79% of Champaign
33 County's soils.

34

35 Mr. Donoho stated that the effect would be yes, to at least protect that percentage of the soils because these

3/7/12

1 are just statistics and natural deposition is not considered in this but this is a great starting point. He said that
2 the issue comes down to what sites are most likely for development and it will not be on land in the middle
3 of nowhere but on land closer to where there is already development. He said that there are some portions of
4 the County which will not be developed and we are going to protect those equally. He said that to consider
5 that these percentages of land would be available or potentially available for development is true but only to
6 the extent that anyone would ever want to.

7
8 Ms. Monte noted that by-right development can occur anywhere in the County.

9 Ms. Griest stated that the best prime farmland has governance over certain rights of by-right development.

10
11 Ms. Monte said that best prime farmland impacts the maximum size of a lot, but does not prevent its
12 development.

13
14 Mr. Hall stated that he does not know what this has to do with what soils are most productive. He said that
15 the discussion regarding being careful with by-right or higher standards for an RRO is irrelevant. He said
16 that best prime farmland is the most productive soils.

17
18 Mr. Stierwalt stated that he is in favor of protecting every bit of farmland but what we also need to do is to
19 get a differentiation so that there is an opportunity for development. He said that the charge of this group is
20 not only to protect farmland but to have enough differentiation in the LESA scores so when there is pressure
21 for development it directs that development to where we would like it to be.. He said that we want the
22 numbers to cause some differentiation so that this is a useful tool.

23
24 Mr. Donoho stated that in arguing the point of differentiation would be that the raw LE score will serve, to
25 some degree, that differentiation. He said that the only place a differentiation will be seen is on page 5 of the
26 LESA worksheet. He said that if an offer comes in with a raw score of 91 or greater then they will score
27 overall the same and the only way to show a difference is to make note that they score a different LE score
28 on page 5 but we don't use that number any differently than just that it is or isn't a score of whatever.

29
30 Ms. Griest stated that the "whatever" would be whether it was or was not considered best prime farmland.

31
32 Mr. Donoho stated that Ms. Griest is correct because it really is a yes or no question.

33
34 Ms. Jones stated that she finds this discussion very productive. She said that when it was previously
35 discussed that there are some parts of the County which are less likely to be developed we could be

3/7/12

1 discussing an area which was never productive farmland anyway.

2

3 Mr. Donoho stated yes, but it could also be floodplain.

4

5 Ms. Jones stated that the 79% of the acreage that is considered best prime farmland is in the area where
6 people are more likely to live and there is very little leeway for people to have a place in the country because
7 the review will be as tight as it was before. She said that there is a public demand for some changes in
8 zoning to fulfill the need but she would like to have something to back it up and maybe it's to move to an LE
9 of 93. She said that originally Mr. Moser indicated an LE of 93.

10

11 Mr. Stickers stated that Mr. Moser proposed an LE of 92 and at that time the Committee was not ready to
12 make any decision although Mr. Moser's proposal did not include any percentages.

13

14 Ms. Monte stated that Mr. Moser was looking at Agriculture Value Groups 1, 2 and 3.

15

16 Mr. Griest stated that Mr. Moser was looking at a score that would capture Agriculture Value Groups 1, 2
17 and 3.

18

19 Ms. Petrie stated that Mr. Moser was only looking at Agriculture Value Groups 1 and 2.

20

21 Ms. Jones stated that an LE of 91 does not change much.

22

23 Ms. Griest asked if we all agree that the proposed LE of 91 is not much of a change from the existing LE of
24 85.

25

26 Ms. Petrie stated that we have changed a great deal and she is concerned about having a conversation within
27 a Committee whose charge was to work on a tool to conserve agricultural land and be concerned about
28 development. She said that the Committee's goal is the conservation of agricultural land and if we are going
29 to lean over to the issue of development then that leads to another conversation. She said that if the
30 Committee is looking at opening up development then we need to also have a conversation about the cost to
31 the County.

32

33 Ms. Jones stated that she would like to restate her opinion. She said that when a higher value is placed on
34 what is our most precious resource—then that is what we truly want to preserve. She said that we have gone
35 back to preserving most everything. She said that she would go along with that if best prime farmland was

3/7/12

1 evening dispersed throughout the County. She said that because we have these huge areas that are not best
2 prime farmland, the balance is thrown out.

3
4 Ms. Petrie stated that at one point and time she suggested that the County be sectioned out with different
5 criteria for the different areas of the County although she is not suggesting that the Committee go back to
6 square one.

7
8 Mr. Donoho stated that he is aware that Ms. Petrie suggested that but he does not believe that it will solve
9 the problem. He said that in the interest of simplifying things that would be the biggest thing that could
10 complicate things.

11
12 Ms. Jones asked if there is any way to tighten this up by placing more value on the best prime farmland.

13
14 Mr. Donoho stated that everyone in their own minds are close to deciding where they think that raw LE score
15 bar needs to be. He said that the raw LE number now, based on previous meeting discussions, closely
16 approximates the old LE of 85.

17
18 Ms. Petrie stated that Mr. Hall previously mentioned that a proposed LE of 85 was more equivalent to 88,
19 and for me to stretch to 91 was a stretch.

20
21 Mr. Krapf noted that we are not talking about CUGA.

22
23 Ms. Jones stated that she is not pushing for development but is pushing for the value of our best prime
24 farmland, and Steve Moser made me aware of the need to do this early on.

25
26 Ms. Griest stated that the Committee is making a recommendation to the County Board and the County
27 Board has the right to change the recommendation, modify the recommendation or reject it in any way,
28 shape or form that they choose. She said that we are trying to achieve a recommendation to move
29 forward and she has been asked by the County Board Chairman to try and move this forward after
30 tonight's meeting because after tonight the Committee will lose Ms. Monte's services. She said that
31 everyone has indicated that there is a level of uncertainty and it is understood that the Committee is not
32 able to bring forward a perfect product and with no amount of time will the Committee be able to
33 present a perfect product. She said that the Committee will have to move forward something that will go
34 out to the field and ultimately be tested for actual use over the next few years and then be revisited.

35

3/7/12

1 **Ms. Petrie moved, seconded by Mr. Donoho to accept Mr. Donoho's proposal regarding Best Prime**
2 **Farmland.**

3
4 Ms. Petrie stated that there was some discussion of adding additional language to the last "whereas" on page
5 one of the proposal.

6
7 Mr. Donoho stated that he does not believe that it is necessary to include the additional language.

8
9 Ms. Griest stated that the Committee's discussion was to leave out the additional language.

10
11 Ms. Monte stated that she wanted to clarify that the present motion is about the best prime farmland
12 recommendation, and the test sites related more to the LESA draft.

13
14 Ms. Griest stated that the recommendation is for a LESA score of 91% and/or 10% of Agriculture Value
15 Groups 1, 2, 3 and/or 4.

16
17 Mr. Siterwalt asked if the County Board can change the LE of 91 to something else if they believe that the
18 Committee is being too conservative.

19
20 Ms. Griest stated yes.

21
22 Ms. Griest stated that she is sure that the Committee will have representation on both sides of the County
23 Board on both sides of that position. She said that Ms. Petrie will represent the more conservative side and
24 Mr. Moser will represent the more lenient side. She said that she anticipates an active discussion at that
25 level.

26
27 Ms. Griest asked if there was any further discussion regarding the motion on the floor and there was none.

28
29 **The motion carried by a unanimous vote by all those present.**

30
31 **b) Protection Ratings (of the Draft LESA Update)**

32
33 Ms. Monte stated that her previous e-mail and the March 7, 2012, memorandum includes
34 information indicating that the CUGA break in the LESA draft would occur after SA Factor #2 so
35 that SA Factors #1 and #2 would apply to all sites and SA Factors #3 through #10 would only apply

3/7/12

1 to areas outside of the CUGA site. She said that this would allow an adjustment to the protection
2 rating so that lowering the range to 160 or below would more evenly equalize the point spread. She
3 provided information about other Illinois LESA Protection Ratings and how amazing they range.
4 She said that the medium protection rating range for Ogle County is only 10 points. She said that
5 relatively speaking the LESA draft is in pretty good shape with regards to the protection ratings.
6

7 Ms. Petrie stated that determining whether or not a site is within the CUGA is SA Factor #4 and the
8 way that the wording is set she would suggest that #4 comes after SA Factor #2 and has its own
9 slice because the way this reads is: factors that apply only on site of the CUGA and SA Factor #4 is
10 whether the site is located in the CUGA.
11

12 Ms. Monte asked Ms. Petrie if she is proposing to switch the order of SA Factor #3 and SA Factor
13 #4 because she does not see any issues in doing so and it would probably be a very good idea.
14

15 Ms. Petrie stated that moving SA Factor #4 to SA Factor #1 was discussed at a previous meeting.
16 She said that she is suggesting an SA Factor to determine CUGA and making that SA Factor #3 and
17 using SA Factors #4 through 10 apply to areas outside of the CUGA.
18

19 Ms. Griest stated that SA Factors #3 and #4 would flip which was Mr. Hall's previous
20 recommendation as well.
21

22 Mr. Stickers agreed.
23

24 Ms. Monte stated that logically this would be a good change.
25

26 Ms. Griest asked the Committee if everyone was in agreement in flipping SA Factors #3 and #4.
27

28 The consensus of the Committee was that they agreed.
29

30 Mr. Donoho asked if there was an advantage or disadvantage in having three ratings versus four
31 ratings or vice versa.
32

33 Mr. Hall stated that the more you can identify the better and he would encourage the Committee to
34 keep it.
35

3/7/12

1 Ms. Griest stated that from having used these ratings with zoning she would find that four is more
2 helpful than only three.

3
4 Ms. Petrie stated that we have never had a conversation about the assigned points to the different
5 factors.

6
7 Ms. Griest stated that we have had ongoing discussions about points assignments.

8
9 Mr. Donoho stated that we have shifted points around here and there.

10
11 Ms. Griest asked the Committee if everyone is comfortable with the points as assigned.

12
13 Ms. Griest asked the Committee if everyone is comfortable with the four overall ratings groups as follows:
14 Very High, and High, and Moderate, and Low.

15
16 Mr. Stickers stated yes.

17
18 Mr. Donoho stated that he and Bruce Stickers discussed this issue this morning and they would be
19 comfortable with three groups although if the County would rather have four so staff can make better
20 decisions then they would support four.

21
22 Ms. Petrie stated that she would have a better comfort level if the spread was more even. She said
23 that each group should be a 50 point spread and she does not see any justification for the way the
24 spread is currently written.

25
26 Mr. Donoho stated that the spread is directly related to soils.

27
28 Ms. Monte stated that we are discussing protection ratings and Ms. Savko acknowledged that this is
29 a very difficult task given the high quality of soils which are across the board. She said that to have
30 even protection ratings is never a thing that could be achieved.

31
32 Ms. Petrie stated that she is discussing the spread.

33
34 Mr. Hall asked if Ms. Petrie is discussing the spread between High, Medium and Low or the spread
35 between Very High, High, and Medium.

3/7/12

- 1
2 Ms. Petrie stated that she is discussing the spread from Very High, High and Moderate.
3
4 Mr. Hall asked Ms. Petrie why those should all be equal because Moderate is a whole class as is
5 High.
6
7 Mr. Stickers stated that High and Very High is the same because it takes the very best of the best
8 soils and makes it equal and then the Moderate is 75 points or perfectly equal.
9
10 Ms. Petrie stated that if it is an attempt for differentiation then why not just have three instead
11 of four.
12
13 Mr. Stickers stated that it is an attempt for differentiation and that it is helpful.
14
15 Ms. Griest stated that this is another one of those points that time will test and will have to be
16 revisited at the next round. She said that at this point the best that the Committee can do is make a
17 recommendation on what the Committee believes is reasonable.
18
19 Mr. Stickers stated that it might be helpful for people who are developing because if they see the
20 Very High they may decide that there is no chance of all for development at the site and if it is High
21 then they had better have a good proposal for approval at the ZBA.
22
23 Ms. Griest stated that they would have to have a very compelling set of circumstances. She said that
24 even with Moderate they are going to have to jump through some extra hoops.
25
26 Ms. Petrie stated that she is stating her concerns for the public record. She said that when you look
27 at planning law the words “arbitrary value” on page 8 opens this up as being viewed as an arbitrary
28 and capricious document. She said that if we cannot justify why this spread is a certain way then we
29 could get ourselves in a position of people wondering why we chose such a spread.
30
31 Mr. Stickers stated that you cannot logically justify 50/50/50 any better than you can 50/25/75.
32
33 Ms. Monte stated that there is an explanation regarding use of the word “arbitrary” on page 8.
34
35 Ms. Petrie stated that page 8 discusses the 25 acre lot size limit and asked how such was

3/7/12

1 incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance.

2
3 Ms. Monte stated the use of the word is qualified in the text of the Update draft, and for that reason she
4 is comfortable with use of the word “arbitrary.”

5
6 Ms. Griest asked the Committee if they are incorporating this recommendation as it appears in the
7 March 7th memorandum into the Update.

8
9 Ms. Monte stated as further modified by Ms. Petrie.

10
11 Ms. Griest stated that she is only discussing the rating scale or range.

12
13 Mr. Stickers stated that if people want to free up more land for development then this will actually
14 accomplish that goal because we set a higher bar for things to be protected and a lower bar for development.
15 He said that if Champaign County’s points are compared to other counties you find that we have some of
16 the highest points for protection ratings.

17
18 Ms. Griest stated that Mr. Stickers is correct although our questions are not equal to other counties’
19 questions, so we do not know what questions they act to compare on a one to one correlation.

20
21 Mr. Stickers stated that it is true that they may not be perfectly comparable.

22
23 Ms. Griest stated that the questions have changed therefore our validation experience from our test sites is
24 represented in the table shown.

25
26 Ms. Griest asked the Committee if there were any additional questions regarding the protection rating.

27
28 **c) Recommendation of Draft LESA Update**

29
30 Ms. Monte stated that the e-mail which she sent to everyone with the February 28, 2012 Revised Draft LESA
31 summarized the adjustments that were discussed at the last meeting simplifying the wording of SA Factor
32 #2.C.2. She said that SA Factor #2.C.2 was broken out into logical statements that are easier to absorb and
33 process.

34
35 Ms. Petrie stated that the differential term for ‘lesser than’ and ‘greater than’ 25 acres is not consistent

3/7/12

1 throughout the document.

2

3 Ms. Monte agreed and said that this type of final editing check will be important to make.

4 Ms. Griest asked Ms. Monte if she would edit the document once the Committee agrees on the concept.

5

6 Ms. Monte stated yes.

7

8 Ms. Griest stated that the Committee would desire to have consistent language throughout the document.

9 Ms. Petrie stated that her intent was to just mention it tonight but she did mark up every example on her
10 document so that the document can be consistent.

11

12 Ms. Griest stated that 2.C.1 states: the subject site is larger than 25 acres. She asked if a 25.0 acre site
13 would be no, or is the Committee's intent that it is 25 acres or more.

14

15 Ms. Monte stated that we use more than 25 acres in SA Factor #1.

16

17 Mr. Donoho stated that if it isn't exactly 25 acres then you don't know how to answer the question.

18

19 Mr. Hall stated that it indicates larger than 25 acres therefore it is very consistent.

20

21 Mr. Donoho stated that right before it states that it is not larger than 25 acres.

22

23 Ms. Monte stated if there is any chance that there is a mistake then a good final editing check will eliminate
24 any error.

25

26 Ms. Petrie noted that the inconsistency is at the bottom of page 9 beginning with the following text: the
27 subject site is located within the CUGA, etc. and that certain final editing will need to occur to reflect the
28 flip in SA Factors # 3 and #4.

29

30 Ms. Griest asked if 25 acres in 2.C. is not best prime farmland. She asked if it was yes or no.

31

32 Ms. Monte stated that the way it is written the answer would be no.

33

34 Ms. Griest stated that she was hoping that it would yes.

35

3/7/12

1 Mr. Krapf asked Mr. Hall for his interpretation.

2

3 Mr. Hall stated that he would interpret it the same way as he does in SA Factor #1 and 2.B. He said that we
4 are only ever interested if it is bigger than 25 acres.

5

6 Ms. Griest asked the Committee if everyone was in agreement that we want 25-acres to be a 'no.'

7

8 Ms. Monte stated the document needs to be consistent throughout and final editing for format should achieve
9 that.

10

11 Ms. Griest stated that the blue box at the top of page 10 continues to answer the following SA Factor
12 questions only if the subject site is outside the CUGA which goes to the beginning of new number #4. She
13 asked if there were any further adjustments or changes.

14

15 Ms. Petrie stated that when she previously brought up the issue that there are some types of crops which are
16 hard to identify with the digital orthophotography on the subject site Mr. Hall stated that an actual site visit
17 would be necessary.

18

19 Ms. Monte said that language is included in SA Factor #6 regarding the possible need for an actual site visit.
20 She said that there was conversation that when the digital orthophotography is updated the date shown
21 would be revised.

22

23 Ms. Petrie asked about Site Assessment #8 on page 16, the date of April 12, 2011 and whether that date of
24 the ditigal orthophotography would be changed when new digital orthodphotography becomes available.

25

26 Mr. Stickers stated no. He said that the Committee is setting things in stone.

27

28 Ms. Petrie stated good. She said regarding SA Factor #9 on page 18, that, as an editorial point, the narratives
29 throughout the Update draft need to be parallel.

30

31 Ms. Monte said that SA Factor #9 is not like SA Factors #3 and #8, and that SA Factors #3 and #8 are very
32 much alike. She said that SA Factor #9 refers to the nearest non-farm dwelling.

33

34 Ms. Petrie questioned the scoring under SA Factor #9 and whether it is possible to identify the '10th nearest
35 non-farm dwelling.'

3/7/12

1 Ms. Monte stated that the scoring is relatively easy with the use of GIS and a map.

2 Ms. Griest asked the Committee if there were any further adjustments and there were none.

3

4 Ms. Griest entertained a motion to recommend the February 28, 2012, LESA Update with the changes and
5 corrections which the Committee discussed at tonight's meeting.

6

7 **Mr. Krapf moved, seconded by Mr. Stickers to recommend the February 28, 2012, LESA Update as**
8 **amended. The motion carried by the members present with one opposed.**

9

10 **4. Approval of Minutes (February 22, 2012)**

11

12 **Ms. Petrie moved, seconded by Mr. Krapf to approve the February 22, 2012, minutes as submitted.**
13 **The motion carried by voice vote.**

14

15 **5. Public Participation**

16

17 Mr. Norman Stenzel stated that the Committee has not fulfilled the intent of the federal legislation.

18

19 Ms. Griest asked if there was any other business.

20

21 Ms. Monte asked if the Committee wanted to review the LESA Update timeline.

22

23 Ms. Griest requested that Ms. Monte inform the Committee of the expected timeline for this
24 recommendation.

25

26 Ms. Monte stated that she believes the Committee's recommendation will move forward to the Committee of
27 the Whole and then be scheduled for a public hearing at the Zoning Board of Appeals.

28

29 Ms. Petrie asked Ms. Monte when the recommendation will move forward to the other levels for
30 approval.

31

32 Ms. Monte stated that there will be a public hearing before the ZBA. She said that Ms. Savko
33 shared her indication that she is supportive of the Draft LESA and that she has no concerns or issues
34 that she needs to remark on regarding the SA Factors therefore she believes that it is ready to move
35 forward to the County Board.

3/7/12

1

2 Ms. Griest asked if Ms. Savko needs to send the County an official document indicating such or will
3 she receive a copy of the ZBA's recommendation and she will send back her written approval.

4

5 Ms. Monte stated that Ms. Savko's e-mail was simply an indication for the Committee that she is okay with
6 the draft as it is proposed and that she will see it again after the County Board has signed off on a draft at
7 which point she will provide comments.

8

9 Ms. Griest asked if Ms. Savko will see the draft before the ZBA or after the ZBA.

10

11 Ms. Monte stated that Ms. Savko will see the draft during every step.

12

13 Ms. Petrie asked if the Committee will receive a copy of Ms. Monte's final edits.

14

15 Ms. Monte stated that the draft will be a public record.

16

17 Ms. Griest requested that all Committee members receive a copy of the final draft document that will
18 be moved forward to the Committee of the Whole.

19

20 Ms. Petrie asked if the Committee will be sending any comments to the Committee of the Whole.

21

22 Ms. Griest stated that she does not believe that was an expectation and there hasn't been a
23 vehicle in which the Committee was supposed to do that. She said that she had hoped to present
24 a summary report of the Committee's activities to the County Board as she saw those activities as
25 Chairman. She encouraged the Committee members to attend the meetings to present comments

26

27 Ms. Petrie stated that it should be made clear that the LESA should be reviewed again in five years.

28

29 Ms. Griest stated that another review in five years is part of the master plan.

30

31 Ms. Petrie stated that she is trying to set the stage so that the review does not run under the radar
32 again.

33

34 Ms. Griest stated that the Committee has no way of guaranteeing that.

35

3/7/12

1 Ms. Petrie stated that she isn't asking for a guarantee only placing it in the public record.

2
3 Mr. Stickers stated that in 2004 he and Mr. Leon Wendte gave a presentation indicating that the
4 LESA should be updated and everyone scoffed at their presentation. He said that there are other
5 people who would probably bring this to the County Board's attention but whether they decide to do
6 anything or not is their prerogative and if it isn't working then there will be some discussion that it
7 was suppose to be reviewed or needs to be reviewed because of A, B and C.

8
9 Ms. Griest stated that there will be comments from both sides of the issue.

10
11 Ms. Monte stated that the RPC website will continue to be maintained regarding the LESA Update and
12 will contain the Committee's activities and records.

13
14 Ms. Petrie stated that the website is a wonderful resource for information and data.

15
16 Ms. Griest thanked Ms. Monte, Mr. Hall and Mr. Kass for their hard work during this process with
17 the Committee.

18
19 **6. Adjournment**

20
21 **Mr. Krapf moved, seconded by Mr. Donoho to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried by**
22 **voice vote.**

23
24 The meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

25
26
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3/7/12

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SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

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