

MEETING OF PELICAN RIVER FOREST COMMITTEE
MARCH 6, 2023
Minutes

Committee members present: Chairman Robert Briggs, Supervisors Roach, Winkler, Ryden and Almekinder.

Call to order: Chairman Briggs called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. in the County Board Room of the Oneida County Courthouse. The meeting has been properly posted and mailed in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting law and the facility is handicap accessible.

Approve agenda: Motion by Winkler to approve today's agenda with the order of items at the Chair's discretion. Seconded by Almekinder. All aye; motion carried.

Public comment:

Robert Kraetsch – Schoepke Resident – Opposed to the resolution as presented and would like to see this land put into the conservation easement.

Karl Fate – Crescent Resident - Opposed to the resolution and the inaccurate information included in the resolution.

Kathleen Cooper – Pelican Resident– Expressed concern with the agenda item being misleading. Opposed to the resolution.

Clint Miller – Conservation Fund member and owner of property. Miller stated that he is available to answer questions for the committee.

Kelly Kraetsch – Schoepke Resident - Spoke about timelines needing to be changed at the state.

Tom Ladue – Stella Resident – Asked that the committee look for a compromise as this is an important piece of land for future generations.

Tina Vanzile – Forest County and Sakaogon Chippewa Community – Tribal council entered a resolution to support the establishment of the easement and a copy of the resolution was provided.

Matt Carothers – Hazelhurst Resident – Thanked the County Board for establishing the committee to review the resolution. Encouraged the board to look at the phase two easement and deed.

Dan Butkus – Waunakee Resident – Oneida County Property Owner. Opposed to the resolution. Would like to see a public hearing held.

John Scott – Racine County resident – Oneida County property owner. Opposed to the resolution and supportive of the conservation easement.

Joseph Steinhage – Newbold Resident – Opposed to the resolution and in favor of the conservation easement.

Jim Frymark – Enterprise Resident - Opposed to the resolution. Advocates looking at the potential of this land for future recreation and future use. Asked that the public hearing is scheduled.

Ted Rulseh – Cassian Resident – Lakes and Rivers Association – Supports the conservation easement and opposes the resolution.

Ron Eckstein – Pelican Resident – Supports the conservation easement. Encouraged the committee to look at other conservation easements and how they are currently being handled.

Dean Helpe – Antigo Resident – In favor of the conservation easement.

Eric Rampala – Cassian Resident – Clean Waters Action – Opposition to the resolution.

Encouraged the committee to listen to the residents.

Public comment closed

Resolution #25-2023 Resolution to Object to the State Removing Future Taxable Land by Purchasing Conservation and Access Easements – Briggs asked that the committee spend time researching various aspects of the resolution and assigned tasks to each committee member. Briggs reviewed the task assigned for each committee member. Holewinski gave an overview of the committee members that were appointed and why each member was appointed to the committee. Holewinski stated that Supervisor Winkler is the chair of the UW-Conservation Committee, Supervisor Almekinder is the Chair of the Forestry Committee, Supervisor Ryden is a member of the Conservation Congress, Supervisor Roach is a member of the Planning and Development Committee and has extensive knowledge on state government and Supervisor Briggs was appointed as the town most affected by the proposed easement. Holewinski gave the history of the proposed resolution, how it came to be and expressed concern with the language in the draft easement. Holewinski spoke to future tax impacts, current land that is tax exempt, MFL and agriculture land and spoke to future development. Winkler stated that the taxable land in Forest County is 11% and Forest County Board has had a number of issues with meeting the budget needs in Forest County. Winkler encouraged the committee to pay attention to the taxable land and possible impacts in the future.

Dates and items for future agenda/meetings: The next committee meeting will be held on Monday, April 3rd at 10:00 a.m.

Adjourn – Briggs adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tracy Hartman, Recording Secretary
Oneida County Clerk