



PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT

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To: Members of the Planning and Zoning, Land and Water Conservation, and Agriculture and Extension Education Committees

From: Jeff Schuler, Director

Date: June 23, 2016 *JPS*

Re: Upcoming Joint Committee Meeting

June 28th will be our first meeting to jointly review the Portage County Farmland Preservation Plan, as recommended for consideration by the Portage County Farmland Preservation Ad Hoc Steering Committee on April 18, 2016. The Ad Hoc Committee met for over a year to bring together the background information describing the County's agriculture industry, and worked to draw some preliminary issues, concerns, conclusions, and recommendations. They did excellent work, and have provided a very complete draft for the Governing Committees to pick up and finalize.

Attached you will find the final 20 pages (52 – 74) of that recommended document. Our first task as a joint review committee will be for all members to become familiar with the trends, conclusions, and recommendations included in these pages, and identify any areas where additional discussion will be required. I have made arrangements with Sara Brish of the Stevens Point Area Convention and Visitors Bureau to come to a meeting in July to discuss Agricultural Tourism. We will also want to spend some time in the Anticipated Changes in Agriculture Section (top of page 67) to flesh out Land Use Issues Related to Preserving Farmland; only two brief statements are there now.

At this first meeting I will be looking for all Supervisors who were actively involved in working with the Ad Hoc Committee to lead the joint committee in updating how the Plan came together, and where the gaps might be for filling in. Staff will be present to assist with this as well. The first 50 pages of the draft plan are available through the Farmland Preservation blog site, which you can link through the front page of the Portage County web site: www.co.portage.wi.us.

If you have any questions, or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.