

# Town Plan Commission Leads Considers Farming and Natural Resources in 2025

**January 9, 2006.** Prior to this meeting, an invitation was sent to the dozen landowners in the Buchanan that own large tracks of farmland on the easternmost end of the township. This special invitation was distributed in an attempt to get local farmers to come to the meeting and share their ideas about the future of farming in Buchanan. The farmers who attended indicated that they were most interested in retaining the flexibility to sell their land for development. They were open to the concepts of conservation subdivision design and did believe that some farmland would remain in the Town in 20 years. However, they were not interested in seeing the Town mandate farmland preservation (through Exclusive Agricultural Zoning or other means).

During the meeting, Amy Emery of OMNNI Associates, spent time relaying some of the preliminary results from the community-wide survey distributed this past fall. 900 residents responded to the survey and as such, it provides a statistically significant gauge of resident ideas and concerns for the future. It will be an important guide in the planning process. A more complete picture of the survey results will be presented at the Mid-Course Mapping Meeting in March 2006.

Those in attendance this evening reviewed the DRAFT Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element prepared by OMNNI. The chapter incorporates much information that was in the Town's last plan, but adds additional information to comply with the requirements of the Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law. The document profiles existing farmlands, natural resources and historic sites. It describes different approaches used to protect farmland, historic sites and natural resources and it concludes with a series of action statements.

Much of the discussion at the meeting focused on the Vision statement at the beginning of the chapter. With local farmers present, the statement was revised to more accurately reflect the realities of farming and what is anticipated, with respect to farmland, in 2025. A draft of the revised chapter is available on this web site in the Draft Plan Chapters Section. Interested residents are encouraged to review the information and offer comments.

The Plan Commission will be reviewing the chapter over the next month. It will be discussed again briefly at the February 2006 meeting to incorporate any changes noted by the Plan Commission.

The next meeting with OMNNI will be on February 13, 2006 in the Town Hall. At this meeting, OMNNI will present the first DRAFT of the Economic Development Element.