**Ag Committee Meeting**

**November 22, 2022**

**Waite Park**

Committee Chair Sue Schulz called the Ag Committee meeting to order on November 22, 2022, at 10:00 am. The meeting was held at the Pizza Ranch in Waite Park (110 2nd St South).

Members present were Sue Schulz (Chair), Alexander Bersie, Chad Benda, Connie Erickson, Dan Panka (DOR), Karl Lindquist, Mark Landsverk and Mike Dangers. Members absent from the meeting was Katelyn Fedorko and Ryan Kraft. Kyle Gustafson and Justin Massman were also present from DOR.

The DOR was extended an invitation to attend the meeting so we could discuss their position on the 50% rule for special ag homesteads. Following many meeting within the DOR, they concluded they will not be changing their position on the 50% rule and will not be supporting the possibility of requiring special ag parcels to have a minimum of 10 acres in production. DOR indicated there was no need to match acres regarding classification and homestead, this situation deals with homestead and not classification. Also, there are not any tax court decisions to support the change. DOR also expressed the metro area has a lot of 40-acre tracts that have community gardens or small acreages being cropped. Another concern discussed was the lack of a definition for actively farming and actively engaged in farming. Following extensive discussion, DOR and the Ag Committee agreed that this may be a law the legislature committee should weigh in on. DOR’s responsibility is to interpret the law as written. The committee felt it would be a good idea to have and ag and legislative committees meet to discuss the direction MAAO should take on the possibility of drafting language to make a change.

The ag trends were discussed, the trends are generating +15 to +20% increases as well as some areas potentially going up +40%.

It was asked if the ag committee could prepare/present a 2 hour or 4-hour class at Summer Seminars and the Fall Conference. A 2-hour class will be given at Summer Seminars “Setting Ag Values” with potentially 4 presenters and a 2-hour class at the Fall Conference “CER to CPI Conversion” with Karl Lindquist and Sue Schulz presenting. Basic Ag will be offered again in June 2023.

The updating of CPI’s was discussed, once the county has converted to CPI’s, it is recommended that the CPI’s be reviewed from the web soil survey as the CPI’s change due to new technology. It is recommended the CPI’s should be reviewed every few years or every 8-10 years. Farmers are having their soils retested as the original CPI’s were developed 20+ years ago. The new CPI information will assist the farmer with fertilizer application, seed population/etc.

It was determined from attending Farm Fest and consulting with the vendors connected to ag construction, the construction costs of ag outbuilding are up 100%.

A new conservation contract was discussed, the contract is part of a loan forgiveness program-it was stated if the land was felt fallow for 5 years, a portion of the loan would be forgiven, and the land would automatically be considered organic.

Following no additional discussion, meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Erickson