TOWN OF COTTAGE GROVE
PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 23, 2026

1) Notice of the meeting was posted at the Town Hall and on the Town's website. A quorum was present, with Steve Anders, Tom Banigan, Troy Eickhoff, Kris Hampton, and Dave Muehl attending in person. Mark Kudrna attended virtually. Clerk-Treasurer Kim Banigan took minutes. Town Planner Mark Roffers was also present.

2) Anders called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

3) Approve minutes of previous meetings: **MOTION** by Muehl/Hampton to approve the minutes of the August 26, 2026 meeting as printed. **MOTION CARRIED 6-0.**

4) Public Concerns: (Note that this was taken later in the meeting to accommodate Town Planner Mark Roffer's schedule): Dave Hanson, 2242 Nora Road, inquired about creating a new residential lot on his 43 acres for a shed-house for his son. He has already made arrangements to purchase a development right. No concerns were expressed by Commission members, and the Clerk-Treasurer advised him on the process.

5) Discuss/Consider designating 33 acres north of Hope Road as planned for Neighborhood Development on the Future Land Use Map, as requested by Fred H Witte & Sons Inc. (Tabled from August meeting): Mr. Witte had provided multiple documents from various parties advocating for the neighborhood development (Attachment A). Emails were received from Jo Winkler-Bley (opposing the change) and Mary Wick (supporting the change). Both emails are in Attachment B. Several citizens were in attendance with wishes to speak. Anders limited them to 3 minutes each. Jo Winkler-Bley, 3772 Bohnsack Ln, offered to speak but said she had nothing more than what was in her email. Tristann Weber, 404 E School Road, gave his full support for the change, stating that the proposed development plans contained beautiful lots, parks, and green space, and would be beneficial for Cottage Grove. Matthew Fleming, Attorney for the Wittes, suggested a refocus on this being only a change to the color of the property on the Future Land Use Map, stating that there will be opportunities to address concerns over the actual development in the future. He said the location offers good access to major transportation corridors without using a lot of Town roads. He also questioned last month's procedures regarding the recusal of Dave Muehl from the vote. Anders said he had mixed legal advice and now understood Muehl could not be compelled to recuse himself. Muehl said he feels sure that he can be objective on this matter. Irene Clark, 2690 Hope Road, said they moved here 20 years ago because of the agricultural preservation, and felt that if approved, this will change the character of the Town for all of us. Ann Gausmann, 2827 Hope Road, said she lived at this address 20 years ago, for a period of about 20 years, and the natural environment there was instrumental in the homeschooling of her children. She felt the proposed development would not be conducive to the environment or wildlife there. She also commented on traffic, which she said is already dangerous due to drivers not obeying speed limits. Don Huibregtse, 3657 T-Bird Way, said that since 1981 he has resided at three different residences in the Town, and is super excited for the senior housing options proposed by this development. Brian Pook, 3599 S. Hope Rd, was present virtually and expressed his concerns over additional traffic and destruction of the rural qualities they moved here to enjoy.

   Roffers explained that the resolution he prepared for item 6) below separates all of the other amendments proposed for the Comprehensive Plan from the map amendment requested by the Wittes to make it easier for the Commission to vote to approve all or just some of them. It also suggested conditions to be met before the Witte parcel would actually be updated as Neighborhood Development on the map, including a legal description of the exact area, evidence of sale of at least 60% of the 10 lots the Wittes are working on South of Hope Road, and a deed restriction tying the

future development to the requirements of the Comprehensive Plan. (Roffers left briefly and returned after the vote on the resolution below.)

MOTION by Hampton/Kudrna to recommend moving the 33 acres north of Hope Road to the Neighborhood Development area. **Motion carried 4-2** (Anders and Eickhoff opposed).

6) Discuss/Consider adoption of Resolution 2026-09-23 Recommending Amendments to the Town Comprehensive Plan: **MOTION** by Hampton/Muehl to adopt the resolution as drafted, for discussion. Banigan suggested that for the Witte property, the condition that 60% of the 10 lots in progress south of Hope Road should have occupancy permits, not just building permits. Hampton and Muehl **AMENDED THEIR MOTION** to accept this suggestion. **MOTION CARRIED 6-0.**

7) Discuss/Consider Dane County 2026-OA-15 Amending Chapter 82 of the Dane County Code of Ordinances, Amending the Farmland Preservation Plan: **MOTION** by Anders/Hampton to recommend approval of Dane County 2026-OA-15. **MOTION CARRIED 6-0.**

8) ADJOURNMENT: **MOTION** by Eickhoff/Anders to adjourn. **MOTION CARRIED 5-0**. The meeting ended at 8:43 P.M.

Submitted by: Kim Banigan, Clerk-Treasurer
Approved 10-28-2026

ATTACHMENT A

From: **Emily Petersen** Emily.Petersen@gwaar.org
Subject: RE: Rural "Aging-in-Place housing," Condominium Development - Town of Cottage Grove, Dane County, WI
Date: August 20, 2026 at 12:01 PM
To: dfwitte@gmail.com, dave@propertyshop-realtors.com
Cc: John Schnabl John.Schnabl@gwaar.org, Cookie Lough gmacookie43@gmail.com

EP

Hi Dave,

Thank you for reaching out to GWAAR and WAAN with the below inquiry related to aging in place and rural housing policy issues for older adults. Our GWAAR Executive Director, John Schnabl, sent me your email.

Ensuring that older adults are able to age in place, with dignity and choice, is a primary policy concern for WAAN. As you acknowledge, we cannot take a position on your project, but I can provide answers to your questions.

- Whether WAAN's housing issue briefly addresses rural aging-in-place supply, and what your current position is
    - I've attached our current issue paper on housing challenges for older adults. Currently, our focus is on state level solutions to housing barriers, so our current position focuses on policy levers that the state can control to ensure that there is an increase in housing stock available to older adults that is affordable and accessible. We have also taken positions in favor of state legislation that would allow local municipalities to encourage zoning changes that allow for multi-family housing, accessory dwelling units, and other higher-density housing projects to address lack of housing supply. More broadly, we are supportive of initiatives that combat social isolation and loneliness, which is a major health concern for older adults. Community spaces that prioritize opportunities for older adults to find connection are a policy priority for our group.
- Whether the barriers we are encountering — density limits, agricultural zoning, and the absence of any small-scale rural senior housing category — reflect a gap your members have identified
    - Yes, generally we have identified that density limits and lack of available housing stock are barriers for older adults to access appropriate, safe, and accessible housing. Other common barriers include the affordability of new housing projects and whether or not housing can be modified throughout the lifespan to accommodate acquired disabilities.
- Whether you can connect us with members working on rural housing supply, including the Area Agency on Aging of Dane County
    - Lynn Riley is the Director the Area Agency on Aging of Dane County and could provide additional insight into unique legislative concerns for the project. Her email is riley.lynn@danecounty.gov. You may also consider reaching out to Esther Olsen, who is the Chair of Wisconsin Senior Advocates, and a member of the Dane County Area Agency on Aging Legislative Advocacy Committee: emolson2@wisc.edu

I hope this is helpful and please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you!

Emily

Emily Petersen
Advocacy and Public Policy Director

Advocacy and Public Policy Director
Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc. (GWAAR)
P: 608-228-7253 I E: emily.petersen@gwaar.org
Like the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network on Facebook!
www.gwaar.org



From: David Witte <dfwitte@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2026 6:02 PM
To: Cookie Lough <gmacookie43@gmail.com>; John Schnabl <John.Schnabl@gwaar.org>
Cc: dfwitte@gmail.com; David R. Dinkel <dave@propertyshop-realtors.com>
Subject: Rural "Aging-in-Place housing," Condominium Development - Town of Cottage Grove, Dane County, WI

You don't often get email from dfwitte@gmail.com. Learn why this is important
CAUTION: This email originated from outside of your Organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Wednesday, August 19, 2026

Attachment available until Sep 18, 2026

Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network
c/o Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources
1414 MacArthur Road, Suite A Madison, WI 53714

Re: Rural "Aging-in-Place housing," Town of Cottage Grove, Dane County, WI — request for guidance:

Dear Chairperson Cookie Lough, Executive Director John Schnabl, and WAAN Leadership Team,

I am writing about a small rural development in the Town of Cottage Grove in Dane County, WI that includes age-restricted housing, and to ask whether it illustrates a policy gap your network is already tracking.

The Project:

1870 Witte Land LLC is developing a 33-acre rural condominium community at 2924 Hope Road in the Town of Cottage Grove, Dane County, Wisconsin. At build-out, it will include 39 homes, of which at least four are duplex residences deed-restricted to households 55 and older. The site is bounded by 165 acres of wetlands held under permanent federal Wetland Reserve Program easement, which means the surrounding open space cannot be developed at any point in the future. The senior units are designed for aging in place from the outset: single-level living, zero-step entry, and wider passage clearances, in a condominium structure where the association handles snow removal, lawn care, and exterior maintenance. Those maintenance burdens — not health status — are frequently what forces an otherwise capable older adult out of a rural home.

Why it fits the Town's own plan:

The Town of Cottage Grove Comprehensive Plan sets out objectives this project is built to meet rather than to seek exception from. The Plan contemplates additional rural residential development in and around existing subdivisions at densities greater than one home per thirty-five acres. It states an interest in shifting development rights away from lands the Town wishes to keep undeveloped. And it names preservation of the Town's glacial landscape and natural resources as a governing objective — which the adjoining WRP easement secures permanently rather than by covenant. We are pursuing this through the Town Plan Commission, Town Board, and Dane County's zoning process on the merits, and we expect scrutiny on density and on agricultural conversion.

What I am asking:

Not an endorsement of a private project — I understand that is not what WAAN does, and I am not asking you to weigh in on a local land use decision.
What I would value is your read on the policy question underneath it. Rural Wisconsin communities are aging faster than their housing stock is adapting, and residents who have lived in a town for forty years routinely have to leave it to find a home without stairs. Eight units does not solve that. But the obstacles we have encountered getting even eight units approved in a rural town may be instructive.

Specifically:

- Whether WAAN's housing issue briefly addresses rural aging-in-place supply, and what your current position is
- Whether the barriers we are encountering — density limits, agricultural zoning, and the absence of any small-scale rural senior housing category — reflect a gap your members have identified
- Whether you can connect us with members working on rural housing supply, including the Area Agency on Aging of Dane County

I would be glad to speak with a member of your leadership team, either in person or on the phone. If you would like to come to the next Town of Cottage Grove Planning Commission on August 26, 2026 at 6:30pm at 4058 County Road N. Cottage Grove, Wisconsin 53527, we would love to have you share your thoughts on our development which we understands only touches on the need for additional senior living in the Town of Cottage Grove.

Sincerely,

Dave Witte

Dave Witte – Manager – 1870 Witte Land LLC – dfwitte@gmail.com/ 608-843-7854

David Dinkel – REMAX Property Shop Deerfield, WI - dave@propertyshop-realtors.com/ 608-695-6262

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From: **Kristin Sobocinski** kristin.sobocinski@mgschools.net
Subject: Re: Fiscal impact analysis request — 1870 Witte Land LLC - Proposed 33-acre rural condominium development located in the Town of Cottage Grove - 2924 Hope Road
Date: August 27, 2026 at 12:13 PM
To: David Witte dfwitte@gmail.com
Cc: David R. Dinkel dave@propertyshop-realtors.com, Tanya Fredrich tanya.fredrich@mgschools.net, Katy Byrnes Kaiser kathleen.kaiser@mgschools.net

KS

Hi Dave,

Thank you for reaching out and for your kind words regarding our district's financial work. We always appreciate hearing from Monona Grove alumni and parents who care deeply about the long-term financial health of our schools.

Thank you for sharing the details and modeling for the proposed 33-acre rural condominium development at 2924 Hope Road. We ran the fiscal impact through our financial forecast model to analyze how an addition of $30 million in equalized value interacts with our revenue limits and tax levy.

Here is a summary of how this growth impacts the district:

- **Year 1 Mill Rate Impact:** Adding $30 million in equalized value expands the overall tax base. Had this total value been added in the 2025–26 fiscal year, it would have reduced the district's mill rate from $10.15 down to $10.07 per $1,000 of equalized value, providing immediate tax rate relief across the tax base.
- **Subsequent Years & Equalized Aid Adjustment:** Under Wisconsin's equalized aid formula, increasing our total property value per student reduces the amount of equalization state aid the district receives. By Year 2, as state aid decreases, the local tax levy increases by approximately $300,000 to offset that loss. As a result, the mill rate levels off and stabilizes rather than continuing to drop.
- **Student Enrollment Growth:** Under state revenue limit capacity rules, property value increases do not expand total spending authority. Revenue growth is primarily driven by resident student enrollment increases. If the development attracts new families with school-aged children, that enrollment growth will directly provide additional revenue limit authority and resources to support district operations.

Overall, the development offers an initial mill rate reduction in Year 1 followed by a stable, expanded tax base and potential revenue capacity growth through new student enrollment.

Thank you again for bringing this forward and for your continued support of Monona Grove schools. Please let me know if you have any questions or need further details as you move through the planning process.

Best regards,

Kristin Sobocinski

Kristin Sobocinski
Deputy Superintendent
Monona Grove School District Office
kristin.sobocinski@mgschools.net
(608) 316-1916
www.mononagrove.org

District Office Staff Guide

A generative AI tool may have assisted in drafting language for this document. The content was thoroughly reviewed and edited, and full responsibility is taken for its accuracy, clarity, and final wording.

On Wed, Aug 19, 2026 at 1:30 PM David Witte <dfwitte@gmail.com> wrote:

> Attachment available until Sep 18, 2026

Wednesday, August 19, 2026

Ms. Kristin Sobocinski
Deputy Superintendent
Monona Grove School District
5301 Monona Drive
Monona, WI 53716

RE: Fiscal impact analysis request 1870 Witte Land LLC - Proposed 33-acre rural condominium development located in the Town of Cottage Grove - 2924 Hope Road, Cottage Grove, WI 53527

Dear Deputy Superintendent Sobocinski,

My name is Dave Witte, and I am both an MG alumnus, current resident of Monona, parent of three students in the Monona Grove School District, and a family landowner in the Town of Cottage Grove since 1870. After my father's death in July 2025, the four remaining Witte family members have decided to develop the farm land into a beautiful 39 unit rural condominium development that we believe will benefit not only the communities of Cottage Grove and Monona but will also be a wonderful fiscal addition to the Monona Grove School District.

Before I get into further details, I want to say thank you for everything you have done for the MGSD; specifically handling the financial challenges you have faced since you accepted this position. I cannot image how overwhelming the mismanagement of school funds by the prior administration must have impacted you and your work. I know how much careful, often invisible work goes into keeping a district financially sound while serving students well, and I am grateful for your time.

1870 Witte Land LLC is proposing a 33-acre rural condominium development at 2924 Hope Road in the Town of Cottage Grove: 39 homes at build-out, of which 4 will be duplex deed-restricted 55+ duplex residences. The site adjoins 165 acres of wetlands under permanent federal Wetland Reserve Program easement, which caps any future expansion of the surrounding area.

I am writing to ask your office to model the fiscal impact of a proposed development. I am coming to you because this is a school finance question, and I want to be positive the tax implications to the Town of Cottage Grove and the Monona Grove School District are accurate.

At an estimated completed value of $30 million, and applying Dane County's 2025 mill rates for the Town of Cottage Grove parcels within the Monona Grove School District, the development would generate approximately:

- $620,000 per year in total property taxes across all jurisdictions, at the net combined rate of $20.68 per $1,000 of equalized value
- Approximately $441,000 per year in gross school-purpose taxes for Monona Grove School District, at the District's rate of $14.71 per $1,000 roughly $367,000 net of the school levy tax credit
- Approximately $105,000 per year in Town-purpose taxes for the Town of Cottage Grove, at the Town's local rate of $3.50 per $1,000

That represents roughly $30 million in new equalized value entering the District's tax base a meaningful, one-time addition, since the site is permanently bounded by 165 acres of protected wetland and cannot expand further behind it. We see this as a lasting source of support for the District and the students and families it serves.

I would be glad to share any further detail your office needs and would welcome the chance to talk this through with you directly. Once again, thank you in advance for taking the time to read this email and model the fiscal impact of a proposed development.

Thank you again for the work you and your coworkers do for Monona Grove students and families every day it does not go unnoticed. We are proud that this project, and the growth in the District's tax base it represents, can be a part of supporting that work for years to come, and I am grateful for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dave Witte

Dave Witte - Manager - 1870 Witte Land LLC

Development Address: 2924 Hope Road, Cottage Grove, WI 53527

Mailing Address: 5802 Winnequah Road, Monona, WI 53716 - dfwitte@gmail.com/ 608-843-7854

David Dinkel REMAX Property Shop Deerfield, WI - dave@propertyshop-realtors.com/ 608-695-6262

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2026-0826 Witte Farm Plan Commission 10 pages.pdf

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ATTACHMENT B

Town Of Cottage Grove Plan Commission 9/23/26

I am here tonight, with some other Town of Cottage Grove Residents, in person and online, to urge the Plan Commission to **Vote NO** to change the zoning from Agriculture to Residential Development and to **Vote No** to this proposal of developing 39 condominiums/duplexes on this 33 acre parcel of land.

Some of us have lived here for many years. Others have moved here to raise families and enjoy the mix of farmland, rural living and smalltown community. Homes sell very quickly here because of this.

For you, the Plan Commission-this is your job to look at the whole picture and the impact to the land and the people.

For the developer and land owners-this feels like it's about profit and "getting this done so I can retire" per Mr. Dinkel.

For the residents-we are here on *our own* time, using our voices to oppose this and you need to listen to us.

Is this proposal a good idea? That's a great question, yes, but not in this location. Here are some specific reasons we feel this way:

1. The Witte's have not appeared to have followed through on the development of the Wittewood parcel. They have not maintained the retention pond. We are asking that before you consider approving any zoning changes to the 33 acre parcel, the majority of the Wittewood parcels be sold and have building permits.
2. We are concerned about the impact this development would have on the surrounding legally protected wetlands and watershed. What impact will increased septic and wells have here? Storm water runoff and erosion? Light pollution. There is already regular flooding of Door Creek out of it's banks on the visible west bank adjacent to the 33 acre parcel and downstream.
3. We are concerned about current roads and infrastructure not being adequate for the increased traffic (not just the residents of the development but from deliveries of medical supplies, medications, food, and equipment. Etc.). We are also concerned about the large number of senior drivers with slowed or impaired reflexes pulling out onto a busy town road with concerning visibility and frequent wildlife crossings. Would road improvements fall on the backs of the Town Taxpayers?

4. This development has the potential to increase the isolation of the targeted population by placing them in the middle of a rural and wetland landscape and away from resources such as grocery stores, pharmacies, community centers, churches and healthcare.
5. We are concerned about the safety and mobility of the aging residents in a hilly development. Will there be sidewalks, road improvements to make it accessible to wheelchairs, powerchairs and walkers?
6. Mr. Dinkel previously answered when asked about who would steward as they put it the personal lawns and properties of the residents. He answered the owners would be responsible, not the HOA. Is this appropriate in an Age in Place development with a HOA? What other costs will there be to this aging population?
7. The reality of Aging in Place is that it can be very costly. In home care is upwards of $50/hr for trained staff, not even RN's. This is private pay. Not even Hospice is 24/7 hr care. Besides the physical layout needing to be accessible and able to transition with the residents changing condition and needs, there are things like power sources to be considered. Will there be back up generators for things like oxygen concentrators, breathing support, power chair and supply recharging for medically necessary durable medical equipment? Proximity to Emergency Medical response.
8. We feel you are painting an idyllic picture of living in this setting. Taking nature hikes in this landscape is not for the faint of heart. Ask anyone who actually lives here! Most years the mosquitoes can hold us hostage from late June until the first hard frost. There are epic numbers of biting flies, deer-flies as big as your thumb and ticks carrying Lyme Disease.

   This whole proposal feels out of touch from the portrayal of the location, the possible costs to the residents and the impact to the surrounding landscape of the Town.

   The decisions made here in the Plan Commission and on the Town Board to which some of you are elected, needs to have the Town's tax paying residents and future residents in mind and the big picture overall. It should not be swayed by what a particular family has done for the Township, not how much money this could generate or to help any developer's retirement.

   We strongly urge you to vote NO on this zoning change and proposal.

To the Cottage Grove Town Board, Sept 23, 2026

I have lived in the Town of Cottage Grove for over 45 years. (First in Nondal Heights, then Meadow Grove and now on a 6+acre farmette). I enjoy the open areas, the "country" feelings, the green lush landscapes, and sometimes the deer that seem to be EVERYWHERE! Moreover, I appreciate the convenience of driving to the Village of Cottage Grove, or the East Side of Madison for groceries, banking, supplies.

I really am disappointed seeing the fields, *endless fields*, of Solar Panels in our "back yard" while driving towards Cambridge and along Femrite Drive. I prefer the "Amber Waves of Grain", green fields of corn and soybeans, dotted with single family homes, flower gardens and sometimes horses or cows. I don't blame retiring farmers for selling (or leasing) their land for Solar energy. What else can they do when farming doesn't pay in this economy, or they get too old to farm? How else are they able to retire and to pay for their retirement?

They can develop the land, or sell to someone who will develop the land. I'd rather see suitable housing in an open environment that protects the integrity of the land…definitely, NOT more solar panels. RIGHT?

Personally, my farmette is getting to be more work than I'd like. I'm aging and considering moving into a condo in the next few years. BUT the thought of living in a high density housing area with a bunch of "Old People" does not appeal to me.

The Proposal before you tonight, the development of the Witte Farm property, appears to be environmentally and economically appealing. The views are spectacular! This neighborhood would enhance the Town's image of a mix of housing, open areas, and nature, yet close to Madison, and the I94 and I90 roadways for convenience.

I encourage you to **approve this proposed development**. It provides options for unique single family homes, as well as senior housing, with a community/neighborhood concept.

Thank You for your consideration,

Mary Wick