



PLANNING DEPARTMENT
Cumberland County

Cumberland County Agricultural Land Preservation Board
Meeting Minutes
September 13, 2023
7:30 AM – In Person/Zoom

1. Call to Order

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Board Members: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corey Carothers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Denny McCullough |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Barry Frantz via Zoom | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phyllis Nye |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Klinepeter | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> William Piper |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Mack | |
| Planning Department Staff: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jessica Cohick | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kirk Stoner |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elizabeth Grant | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Williams |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mark Kimmel | |
| Solicitor | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robert Frey | |
| Advisory Members: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Liaison - Vince DiFilippo via Zoom | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CAEDC - Stacey Cornman |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conservation District -Carl Goshorn | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Penn State Extension - Anne Miller |

2. Agenda Modifications and Approval

ACTION: A motion to approve the agenda “as is” for the September 13, 2023 meeting was made by Phyllis Nye and Denny McCullough seconded. Vote was approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes

Denny McCullough made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 12, 2023 board meeting, Phyllis Nye seconded the motion. Vote was approved unanimously.

4. Public Comment

None.

5. Unfinished Business

Update on 2021-2023 Farms

Ms. Williams referred the Board to the 2021-2023 status update sheets for review and provided the following highlights:

2021 Farms:

The three outstanding federal farms received final acceptance from NRCS and we have their checks in hand. Settlement will be scheduled in the next month.

2022 Farms:

All farms are proceeding as expected. Hoch title issue remains outstanding.

2023 Farms:

Appraisals have been completed and offers are later on the agenda. The Asper Farm, which crosses the Franklin County line, will be considered in 2024 as Franklin County has approved out of ranking order provisions. The Simmons Farm appraisal is pending. East Pennsboro Township has reviewed and approved the partnership agreement, subject to attorney review, to work together on preservation.

6. New Business

Review of 2017-2023 Appraisal Data

Ms. Williams gave a presentation on the appraisal process and how the easement value is determined. The following key findings were provided for appraisals conducted between 2017-2023:

- Average easement values are on an upward trend, approximately \$500/acre
- Average easement values remain below \$4,000/acre
- Less than 1/3 (30%) of easement values exceed \$4,000/acre
- Easement values are not increasing at the same pace as farm sales
 - Average development values increased 31%
 - Average agricultural values increased 40%
 - Average easement values increased 15%
- 90% bargain sales have dramatically accelerated preservation efforts

Discussion took place on increasing the \$4,000/acre cap. With increasing farm sales, there is a concern that easement values may not be high enough to attract a quality pool of applicants. Further discussion took place on the goal of the program and rationale for a cap increase. A suggestion was made to increase the cap to \$4,500 per acre for 2024 and remain at the 90% easement value. It was noted that any changes to the policy would need to go to the state board for approval. If the board would decide to increase the cap, it would have to be approved and submitted to the state board with approximately a two-month turnaround time. Board members made the decision to hold off on any changes until all members are present to discuss.

2023 Offers

Stephanie Williams reviewed the budget information and appraisals for the 2023 farms. Total budget for the program year is \$4,194,968. 100% easement values ranged between \$3,020-\$4,300. Average easement value was \$3,715. Average 90% easement offer for “traditional sales” is \$3,478. Average 50% bargain sale value was \$1,312.

| Landowner Name | Township | Acres Offered | 100% Easement Cost/Acre | 90% or CAP | Easement Cost |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Wolfgang, Paul & Sharon | Monroe | 98.43 | \$4,300.00 | \$3,870.00 | \$380,924.10 |
| Newswanger, Loren & Brenda | Dickinson/Penn | 142 | \$3,825.00 | \$3,442.50 | \$488,835.00 |
| Deitch, Ralph L & Linda K | Middlesex | 84.85 | \$4,275.00 | \$3,847.50 | \$326,460.38 |
| Rock Solid Dairy LLC | North Newton | 83.25 | \$4,045.00 | \$3,640.50 | \$303,071.63 |
| Hoch, Paul & Harry | Southampton | 80 | \$3,860.00 | \$3,474.00 | \$277,920.00 |
| Waggoner, Troy A | West Pennsboro | 36.68 | \$3,450.00 | \$3,105.00 | \$113,891.40 |
| Hershberger, David | Hopewell | 113.84 | \$3,915.00 | \$3,523.50 | \$401,115.24 |
| Hair, Gertrude M & Brian | Penn | 72.37 | \$3,600.00 | \$3,240.00 | \$234,478.80 |
| Thurbon, Deborah A. | Penn | 57 | \$3,670.00 | \$3,303.00 | \$188,271.00 |
| Pauli, Cheryl D. | Lower Frankford | 70.92 | \$3,705.00 | \$3,334.50 | \$236,482.74 |
| Boyce, Robert C. & Kathryn A. | Lower Frankford | 45.78 | \$3,020.00 | \$1,510.00 | \$69,127.80 |
| Lil Ponderosa Acres LLC | Lower Frankford | 43.22 | \$3,075.00 | \$1,537.50 | \$66,450.75 |

Phyllis Nye made a motion to approve the 2023 offers at 90% with a cap of \$4,000/acre as outlined above, Denny McCullough seconded. Vote was approved unanimously.

7. Reports

Solicitor Report:

None.

Staff Updates:

Stephanie Williams provided the following updates:

Farmland preservation workshops are scheduled for September and October for potential applicants.

The process continues for updating the Comprehensive plan and Land Partnerships plan. Members were encouraged to participate in a community survey. The survey will remain open until October 31.

Given staffing issues, inspections were prioritized and limited to potential higher risk properties. State law dictates all farms must be inspected every other year. Approximately 40% of the inspections are completed and closed out for 2023. All farms must be inspected in 2024.

The Conservation District 2022 annual report was provided.

Advisory Member Updates

Stacey Cornman, CAEDC – Offices are moving out of Carlisle to Mechanicsburg the end of September. The Farm Fresh trail started in August and runs through November with over 500 people already registered. Planning and CAEDC staff met had had a discussion on ways to promote and support the Board/Program within the community.

Chairman Piper shared that Representative Gleim is having a farmer's breakfast on September 29th from 9-11am at West Pennsboro Township Firehall.

8. Adjournment

ACTION: Phyllis Nye made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Denny McCullough seconded. Vote was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:48am.

Minutes Submitted By: Jessica Cohick, Office Manager