

ADAMS COUNTY AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD
Minutes of Regular Meeting
March 3, 2022

Attendance:

Members – Attending in-person:

Chair Craig Yingling, David Boyer, Sidney Kuhn, Doyle Waybright,

Members – Attending by phone:

Ben Mearns, George Weikert

Absent:

Vice-Chair Dave Wenk, Chad Collie, George Taughinbaugh

Staff – Attending in-person:

Ellen Dayhoff, Mark Clowney, Kelly Koch

Staff – Attending by phone:

Sherri Clayton-Williams

Absent: None

Guests: None

The March 3, 2022 meeting of the Adams County Agricultural Land Preservation Board commenced at 7:31 p.m. in the Planning Office Conference Room at the Adams County Agricultural & Natural Resources Center. The date was moved from March 2 because some of our board members would be absent.

I. Board Business

A. Approval of January Meeting Minutes

There was a correction made on section VI.C. Smeltz Farm (formally Pringle). Doyle noted that it should be pervious surface not impervious.

Ms. Kuhn made a motion that the ACALPB approve the January 6, 2022 minutes, with corrections. Mr. Boyer seconded the motion; motion was approved unanimously.

B. Public Comments – none present

C. New Business

Ellen mentioned that later this month our Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Association (PFPA) and WeConservePA the state land trust organization (formally PALTA) will meet in Gettysburg for their spring conferences. Our staff has played an integral role in the creation of both conferences. If you are interested in attending, please reach out to Ellen. We will also be guiding two tours that week to various places around the county showcasing some unique preservation projects.

D. State Allocation Update

Ellen handed out the PA Department of Agriculture Bureau of Farmland Preservation 2022 Allocation of funds chart. This chart illustrates the amount of money each county has certified to the state as well as the amount of state funds each county received for 2022. Ellen reviewed how the State formula works, noting that many Counties not certifying as much funding as Adams receive more of the Grant Formula Funds, as that portion of the formula is based on Realty Transfer Tax Revenue.

E. Legislative Updates

1. HB1984 regarding subdivision

Currently, the law requires a minimum of 10 acres for a subdivision of a preserved farm. This bill permits and would require a county program to provide for the subdivision of a preserved parcel less than 10 acres to another preserved farm parcel. Ellen said this legislation has a narrow concept and unlike other proposed legislature in the past it is requiring the county program to allow for it versus opting to include it in their program guidelines. The Board was okay with the concept, but suggested more flexibility.

2. SB64 regarding Land Trust Reimbursements

Ellen noted that SB64 remains a topic among the preservation community. This bill would for \$2.5M of the state funds to be added to the Land Trust Reimbursement for land acquisitions and/or easements. Land trusts currently apply for reimbursement of incidental costs. This bill increases the pot. Ellen noted though that members of PFPA have been running the numbers and the current amount allocated for reimbursement is not fully expended each year. They questioned adding more money to this when it isn't being fully maximized at the current time. This bill also asks to increase the reimbursement amount from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per transaction. Ellen stated that this part of the bill is universally agreed upon. The last part of the bill would amend the law to direct a portion of the state-allocated farmland preservation funding to be set-aside for use by land trusts to preserve farms. These farms would have to meet all state minimum criteria. Ellen noted that most of the county programs in the state currently oppose the idea of taking money from the state allocation for this purpose. There has been no new movement on this bill recently, but it remains in the legislature.

Mr. Boyer made a motion that the ACALPB approve the increase in reimbursement funds from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per easement. Ms. Kuhn seconded the motion; motion was approved unanimously.

F. Eisenhower Drive Extension Project

Ellen gave the board the background on the project. This project has been discussed for over 20 years with the Adams County Transportation Planning Organization in addition to being recognized in the 1991 Adams County Comprehensive Plan. When our preservation program was working to preserve the Roman Catholic Clergyman properties located just north of McSherrystown in Conewago Township we were proactive and required an exclusion of 120 feet along the southern most boundary of the two farms. With knowledge of the possible alternative routes cutting through the center of the farm the board felt by excluding the southernmost boundary it would protect most of the farmland. At this time, Sherri explained to the board that the current project had previously considered three alternatives. The first is the alternative route that travels west from Eisenhower Drive north of McSherrystown bisecting some farmland and ending up on Hanover Road just before the South Branch of the Conewago Creek. This alternative can be found on their website: www.eisenhowerdriveextension.com. The second alternative would be making changes to the existing transportation network, specifically in Hanover. This alternative would disrupt over 50 parcels and do little to alleviate the congestion according to Penn DOTs study. This option was ruled out in the final draft of the Environmental Assessment. The third option would be to make no changes. Currently, there is a public comment period until March 10. Sherri noted that over \$4M has already been spent on the project as a result of the preliminary engineering and studies being conducted on the project. She anticipates a possible announcement of the project's future to be given by summer. The next stages will be final design, utilities, and the acquisition of right-of-ways with construction to begin in fall of 2024 if it happens.

It was noted that there will still need to be ALCAB review of the 120 ft excluded area as it is in an ASA.

II. Updates

A. Township Updates

1. Cumberland Township

Ellen is going to reach out to Ben Thomas and ask about Cumberland's budget and inclusion of funds for farmland preservation. After the passing of past Supervisor and preserved farm landowner Dave Waybright, it was mentioned that funds had been added to the township budget for farmland preservation.

2. Mount Joy Township

Craig announced that the two new supervisors are in favor of farmland preservation and want to talk to him more about it.

B. LCAC Updates

1. Ellen mentioned that the federal HSF project (The Hartlaub Farm in Mt Pleasant Township) that the LCAC is working on finally received approval of their appraisal at the federal level. The large 600-acre pastureland located on Hanover Road and Storms Store Road is one of two HSF projects the LCAC is working on and will be partially funded with the NRCS Grasslands of Special Significance funds as well as county funds.

C. Parks Recreation and Green Space Grant Program

1. Kelly noted the committee has an opening for the farmer member after the passing of Dave Waybright. She asked the Board if they had any suggestions. The committee meets twice a year. Craig said he would be interested if Kelly did not have another person step up.

Executive Session was not needed.

III. Round 14 - Ellen noted there was nothing new with the Round 14 Financial Report and Status Report.

A. Township Involvement

1. Union (HSF) and Conewago (HSF)

Ellen is getting ready to process the next five applications. In addition, LCAC is working with another landowner and Mt Pleasant Township to hopefully preserve 2 other farms in this same area.

B. Federal Applications

1. The first HSF (XIV-28) farm is back from the federal technical review. Ellen is hoping the next three will be coming back shortly. This farm will be on the April State Board Meeting agenda.

IV. Round 15

A. Opening of application cycle and public meetings

1. The staff has recommended the Round 15 application cycle be April 4 – June 3.
2. The public meetings will be Tuesday, April 5 at 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM.
3. We will send post cards out to past applicants, current preserved farm landowners, and those that have inquired over the last two years. Packets of all the information, including the application will be available for anyone that attends the meeting. The rest will be sent out in the mail.
4. All board members are welcomed to attend the public meetings.

Mr. Boyer made a motion to approve the Round 15 Application Cycle be April 4 through June 3.

Mr. Waybright seconded the motion; motion was approved unanimously.

V. Executive Session was not needed – no action

VI. Inspections, Transfers, Subdivision, Rural Enterprise Applications, Other Issues

A. Trail Project

1. Kelly reaffirmed that the landowner located between the Knouse and Hauser properties has indicated to the LCAC, Ellen, and herself the conditions to which he would consider allowing the trail to cross his property. These conditions are extensive and not something any of us can get involved in. Sarah Kipp from the LCAC is working to reroute the trail down the Hauser property onto Cashtown Road just enough to get back on the Knouse property.

B. Smeltz Farm (formally Pringle)

1. Ellen created a Rural Enterprise application for Mr. Smeltz to sign and return to us. It was sent to Mr. Benner, and it is up to him to obtain the appropriate signatures, which must be notarized.

VII. Program Guideline Changes (as time permits)

- A. Discussion and possible action to be taken for the following:**
1. No discussion this month

VIII. Staff Updates & Comments

- A. Ellen noted that the information coordinator position has been filled. Leigh Abraham has been hired. She previously worked for the County in the Probation office. Her first day will be March 7th.**

IVX. Adjournment

Ms. Kuhn made a motion to adjourn the March 3, 2022 ACALPB meeting at 8:52pm. Mr. Boyer seconded the motion; motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Clowney, Interim Secretary