



BERKS COUNTY *agricultural land* PRESERVATION BOARD

Berks County Agricultural Center
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County Commissioners:

Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair
Kevin S. Barnhardt
Mark C. Scott, Esq.

Board Members:

David L. Phillips, Chair
James R. Coker, Vice Chair
Wilson M. Balthaser

Robert E. Kopfer
Robert B. Ludgate, Sr., PE, PLS
Jeremy R. Meck

Steven C. Mohn
Clyde A. B. Myers

Ex Officio:

Robert C. Ziegenfus, Ph.D.

Minutes from the September 25, 2019 Meeting

The Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Board (Board) held a regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, September 25, 2019 at 7:32 PM at the Berks County Agricultural Center. David Phillips, Chair, called the meeting to order. Board members present included James Coker, Robert Kopfer, Robert Ludgate, Sr., Steven Mohn, Clyde Myers, and David Phillips. Also in attendance were Mark Sprow, Esq. Special Counsel for the Board; Tami Hildebrand, Executive Director; Kimberly Fies and Amanda Burkard-Sell, staff.

I. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS – None.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: A motion was made to approve the minutes of the August 28, 2019 meeting, as drafted. (J. Coker, R. Kopfer)

Discussion: None.

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

III. STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION UPDATES

- The Board reviewed the previously distributed Status of Recommendations. There have been no changes since the Status of Recommendations was distributed.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Five-year Outreach Activities Plan – Status of Projects

- A. Burkard-Sell reported that to-date donations received for the Farm Forever Sign Project totaled of \$20,325.00 and funds continue to be received. T. Hildebrand clarified that manufacturing of the initial 300 signs had already been paid.
- C. Myers reported that he had spoken with Stacie Jones, editor of the Reading Eagle's Berks County publication; articles featuring preserved farms will resume. The next article will feature Irish Creek Stables and there will be an article about Centre Township's Land Protection Program, as well.

B. Conservation District Board of Directors – Farmer and Public Director Nominations

- T. Hildebrand reminded the Board that the Berks County Conservation District was seeking nominations for two of its Directors: Farmer Director, Larry Gelsinger and Public Director, Brian Boyer; both current Directors are interested in serving another term. Robert Ludgate had previously been suggested for the Public Director and Larry Gelsinger had been suggested as the Farmer Director.

Motion: A motion was made to nominate Robert Ludgate, Sr. for the position of Public Director on the Berks County Conservation District Board. (C. Myers, S. Mohn)

Discussion: None

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: A motion was made to nominate Larry Gelsinger for the position of Farmer Director on the Berks County Conservation District Board. (J. Coker, R. Kopfer)

Discussion: None

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

C. Settlement #724.0 – Lucas Request for Modification to the ACE

- T. Hildebrand reminded the Board that at the previous Board meeting, a request had been reviewed for the construction of a 24 x 48' equipment building / pavilion on Settlement #724.0 (Lucas). Hildebrand added that the Board had requested a follow-up letter be sent with additional questions as to the use of the structure, since the crop land is rented to another farmer. The Board reviewed the request and the landowner's responses.

Motion: A motion was made to approve the request for the modification with the stipulation that the structure be used primarily for agricultural equipment storage. (C. Myers, J. Coker)

Discussion: None

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review of Conveyance Report

- The Board reviewed the Conveyance report. Settlements #478, #82, #146, and #487 have transferred correctly; Settlement #586 is still outstanding but will be corrected when ownership transfers from the Bank. Settlement #19 had originally transferred incorrectly but have been corrected.

B. Act 33 – ACE Program Subdivision

- The Board reviewed the language of Act 33, which pertains to subdivision of preserved farms. T. Hildebrand informed the Board that since the Act had been signed into law, the State Bureau of Farmland Preservation had provided language to be added to County Program Guidelines across the State. Once all of the Counties approve the update, the State Board will vote to approve the change to County Programs en masse. Hildebrand added that the Board had not supported the language when the proposal was a Bill and was presented as an option, rather than a required change. The Board discussed the merits of the proposed change as a tool for landowners.

Motion: A motion was made to approve the proposed language to change to the Program Guidelines in accordance with Act 33. (J. Coker, R. Kopfer)

Discussion: None

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

C. PENNVEST – Proposed Grant Application for Orin Moyer's Waste Facility

- T. Hildebrand informed the Board of a request that was received to review a PENNVEST project on the Orin Moyer farm in Windsor and Greenwich farm. The farm itself is preserved and there are sixteen (16) preserved farms within two (2) miles, two (2) of which are adjacent. Hildebrand described the project, which will include the installation

of a waste facility and best management practices, which will allow the Moyers to increase their organic dairy herd to 116 cows. Hildebrand added that the project will cost approximately \$700,000 and will be fully financed through the grant. K. Fies added that this is a unique project in that Team Ag is submitting the proposal and PENNVEST has not previously funded these types of projects.

Motion: A motion was made to recommend the proposed waste facility on the Moyer farm for a PENNVEST grant. (R. Ludgate, J. Coker)

Discussion: None

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

D. BCALPB 2020 Meeting Calendar – Draft

- The Board reviewed the proposed 2020 meeting calendar, with meetings scheduled for 7:30 pm on the last Wednesday of the month, with the exception of November and December, which were moved due to the Holidays and July, in which there is no meeting scheduled. The Board discussed potentially changing the meeting time to an earlier time of day to accommodate the wishes of the staff but decided to leave the time at 7:30 pm.

Motion: A motion was made to accept the 2020 Board meeting calendar as drafted. (C. Myers, S. Mohn)

Discussion: None

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- T. Hildebrand presented the following easement modification requests that had been received:
 - Settlement #528 (Seidt-Gibbons) - a request to construct a 40 X 70' pool within the curtilage area. This request does not conflict with the terms of the deed of easement.
 - Settlement #309 (Bennetch) - a request to construct a 900 sq. foot addition to the existing residence within the curtilage. This request meets the terms of the deed of easement.
- T. Hildebrand reviewed the contents of the Board packet, which included information on: the Ag Education Summit, which will be held on Monday, October 14, 2019 and will be a common in-service program for teachers focused on returning agriculture to the classroom; the first Berks County Cheese Trail scheduled for Saturday, October 5, 2019, which features six (6) dairies throughout the County, five (5) of which are preserved farms; and the American Farmland Trust's "Women's Learning Circle" on October 22, 2019, which is designed to inform women landowners and farmers about the conservation resources available to them.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

Motion: A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 pm. (R. Kopfer, J. Coker)

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda K. Burkard-Sell
ACE Program Coordinator