



BERKS COUNTY *agricultural land* PRESERVATION BOARD

Berks County Agricultural Center
1238 County Welfare Road, Suite #260
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www.countyofberks.com/dept/deptofag

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
Louise A. Swartley

Ex Officio:

Robert C. Ziegenfus, Ph.D.

Minutes from the December 18, 2019 Meeting

The Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Board (Board) held a regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, December 18, 2019 at 7:30 PM at the Berks County Agricultural Center. David Phillips, Chair, called the meeting to order. Board members present included Wilson Balthaser, James Coker, Robert Ludgate, Sr., Clyde Myers, and David Phillips. Jeremy Meck arrived during the meeting. 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 November 20, 2019 meeting, as drafted. (R. Ludgate, W. Balthaser)

Discussion: None.

Vote: Motion carried. J. Coker abstained.

III. STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION UPDATES

- The Board reviewed the previously distributed Status of Recommendations. Docket #1909 is now planned for recommendation to the State Board of Farmland Preservation for the February 20, 2020 meeting.
- T. Hildebrand informed the Board that the landowners of Docket #9812 wished to amend their application to include an additional 2.15-acre parcel, which is located in the center of their current application. Hildebrand added that the landowners had originally applied in 1997 and had been selected in 2019 after deciding to donate approximately 20 acres of woodland. Hildebrand noted that the 2.15-acre parcel in question was also woodland and adjacent to the donation area.

Motion: A motion was made to permit the landowners of Docket #9812 to amend their application to include the additional 2.15-acre wooded parcel as part of the donation area. (J. Coker, C. Myers)

Discussion: None

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

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

- C. Myers reported that the most recent feature article in the *Reading Eagle's* Berks Country had highlighted Daryl Alger of Bethel Grains.
- C. Myers also reported that a new set of letters requesting donations to the Sign Project will be sent in the next few weeks to Farmers Markets.

- K. Fies added that approximately 75% of the signs that have been requested have been delivered to or picked-up by the landowners. The Board discussed possibly presenting landowners with a sign at future settlements.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review of Conveyance Report

- T. Hildebrand explained the Conveyance report, which was reviewed by the Board. Settlements #543.0, #279.1, and #279.2 have transferred correctly; Settlements #586.0, #535.0.FD, and #660.0 transferred incorrectly, but are in the process of being corrected and do not require Board action at this time. M. Sprow has been in contact with the attorney for Settlement #586.0 and has sent a letter to the attorney for Settlement #660.0.

B. Certification of 2020 ACE Program Easement Purchase Funds

- T. Hildebrand reminded the Board that a motion was needed for the County to certify funds to be matched by the State for easement purchases in 2020. Hildebrand explained that the current funds included \$1,000,000 from the general fund committed by the County Commissioners, as well as any interest collected from 2019 Clean and Green roll-back tax penalties, which will be totaled at year-end, and any donations received during 2019.

Motion: A motion was made to request that the County Commissioners certify funds to be matched by the State for agricultural conservation easement purchases in 2020 in the amount of \$1,000,000 plus the interest collected from Clean and Green roll-back tax penalties and any donations received during 2019. (R. Ludgate, J. Coker)

Discussion: None.

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

C. Announcement of 2020 BCALPB Chair

- T. Hildebrand informed the Board that David Phillips had been appointed as Chair of the Board for 2020 at the December 5, 2019 Commissioners meeting.

D. Election of 2020 BCALPB Vice Chair

- T. Hildebrand reminded the Board that a Vice Chair would need to be elected for 2020. Hildebrand added that a new Board member, Kimberly McGrath, had been appointed to replace Wilson Balthaser, who had not sought reelection as a township supervisor for 2020. McGrath is a township supervisor in Amity Township. She and her family own two preserved farms; a 42-acre farm preserved through Berks Nature, and a 62-acre preserved through the State and County Program.

Motion: A motion was made to nominate James Coker for Vice Chair of the BCALPB for 2020. (C. Myers, R. Ludgate)

Discussion: None

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- T. Hildebrand discussed the contents of the Board Packet, which included totals of easements by County after the December 12, 2019 State Board of Farmland Preservation meeting and the 2020 Board meeting calendar.
- K. Fies will prepare a 2019 inspection review for a Board meeting early next year.
- The Board and staff thanked Wilson Balthaser for his service on the Board.
- The Board discussed beginning to plan for the 75,000 acre celebration. T. Hildebrand noted that these are typically held in conjunction with a State Board of Farmland Preservation meeting; Hildebrand added that she would forecast reaching 75,000 acres at either the June or August State Board meetings.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

Motion: A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 pm. (W. Balthaser, C. Myers)

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file.

Amanda K. Burkard-Sell
ACE Program Coordinator