

Luzerne County Farmland Preservation Board

Meeting Minutes – October 23, 2019

The Luzerne County Farmland Preservation Board met on Wednesday, October 23, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at the Luzerne County Conservation District Office, 325 Smiths Pond Road, Shavertown, PA.

Attendance: The following members were in attendance: Linda Thoma (by phone), Board Chair, at-large; Jennifer Lauri, program administrator; Jim Weber, Luzerne County; Heath Eddy, Luzerne County; Jon Lucas, farmer; Ransom Young, farmer; Rich Yost, municipal; Bryan McManus, Developer; Nancy Snee, at-large.

Meeting Minutes:

Linda Thoma called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

The meeting minutes for November 17, 2018, were presented for approval. Nancy Snee made the motion to approve the minutes. Rich Yost seconded it. Motion passed.

Discussion was held regarding two expiring Board terms, developer and municipal. The terms will expire 12/31/2019. Bryan McManus, the current developer, did request an application.

Jennifer shared information and photos of the Ochs and Mylet farms that were preserved on August 12, 2019.

Jennifer shared information on the status of the Stanovich/Kashubski parcel for preservation. A pin needed to be placed to coincide with the parcel deed. In advance of the board meeting, JTB Surveying was contacted concerning the pin and determined it would be best and most accurate if a new survey was completed. A pin could be placed without a new survey but it may not be accurate due to the date of the original deed. The State confirmed, post meeting, a new survey would be needed.

Jennifer informed the Board on the status of the Moyer farm preservation. The appraisal has been completed and reviewed. The appraisal indicated an easement value of \$3,400 / acre. Nancy made a motion to move forward and offer Gary Moyer \$3,400 / acre for a perpetual easement. Jon Lucas seconded it. Motion passed.

The current 2019 waitlist was presented and reviewed by the Board. The next farm at the top of the waitlist is Richard & Susan Larock. The second farm is Joseph & Patricia Gans. A motion was made by Jon to move forward with both farms and request an appraisal for each. Motion was seconded by Rich Yost. Motion passed.

Funds for the Moyer and Larock farm will need to be encumbered by December 31, 2019 in order to use the 2018 state funds.

Discussion was had concerning the money to be encumbered by December 31, 2019. A balance of \$34,790.00 remains from 2017 and the 2018 allocation is, \$474,837.00. The 2019 allocation is \$519,412.00. The 2018 allocation and remaining 2017 allocation will be used to fund Gary Moyer and part of the Larock farm. The 2019 allocation will be used for the remainder of the Larock farm.

A discussion was had concerning the House Bill 370. Language was provided by the State to be added to our Guide. The Board reviewed the language and approved contingent upon discussion details being addressed. Bryan McManus motioned and Rich seconded. The Board would like clarification on farms preserved and subdivided and then the resident dies or moves, does that subdivided portion have to stay within the farm or will money need to be paid back?

Other Business:

Bylaws and Program Guide Update – Every edit was not brought before the Board as many were simply modifications to formatting, grammar and spelling. The significant edits and/or additions were addressed as follows:

Discussion around the deadline to apply. The Board will wait to hear how the State Board handled a similar situation in another county.

The Board removed the livestock and crop reporting PASS information in the Guide as well as the application based on approval from the State.

There was discussion regarding acreage offered for easement at the time of application and applicants not being able to adjust this amount at a later date otherwise requiring a new survey and appraisal which would be paid for by the applicant.

The Board discussed the appraisal deposit increase from \$500.00 to \$1,500.00. The Board was in favor of this change.

There was discussion around what poses as an urgent situation as far as a farm being moved up on the waitlist to be preserved under “offer of easement purchase by County Board” (1B). After some deliberation, it was agreed to remove that statement completely.

Nancy Snee made a motion to approve the Bylaws and Program Guide Update with the suggested changes including the pending responses from the state. Rich seconded it. Motion passed.

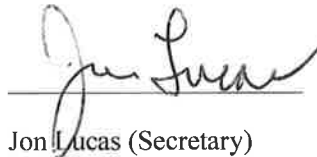
Jon made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:15 a.m. Ransom Young seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Prepared By:

For:



Jennifer Lauri



Jon Lucas (Secretary)