

## **Luzerne County Farmland Preservation Board**

### **Meeting Minutes – December 15, 2022**

The Luzerne County Farmland Preservation Board met virtually, December 15, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. Anyone interested in attending the meeting had the opportunity to attend as it was announced a week prior in the Citizen's Voice newspaper.

**Attendance:** The following members were in attendance: Linda Thoma, Board Chair; Jon Lucas, farmer; Rich Yost, municipal; Jennifer Lauri, program administrator; Nancy Snee, at-large; and Martin Smith, farmer.

#### **Meeting Minutes:**

Linda Thoma called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. The meeting was recorded for minute taking purposes as well as availability if requested. The meeting can be found at <https://transcripts.gotomeeting.com/#/s/b49c0b57abaeddbbf71e6344444eef0a341bc46b7e1916e0844020dec7d4bc62>

Linda thanked Martin Smith for joining the Farmland Preservation Board. She also announced that Bryan McManus's position expires 12/31/2022. If he would like to continue to serve on the board, Bryan will need to complete and submit an application.

The meeting minutes for October 28, 2022, were presented for approval via email prior to the meeting. Linda requested that the indication of two motions being passed be added to the minutes prior to approval. The correction was made. Martin Smith made the motion to approve the minutes. Jon seconded it. Motion passed.

Jennifer provided a brief summary on the L.D.F Holdings farm. This is a farm in Black Creek Township, it adjoins the GansII farm. Matt Bayzick, LDF Holdings accepted the offer of \$3,100 per acre for the easement of their 102.47-acre farm. The farm is ready for the encumbering of funds deadline.

Jennifer also provided a brief summary on the Matthew Balliet farm, originally the Thomas Schaffer farm. This is a farm in Butler Township. Matt Balliet accepted the offer for \$3,500 per acre for easement of his 53.58 acres. This farm is not needed to meet the deadline to encumber funds. This farm is slated to be presented for approval at the February 23, 2023, State board meeting.

Following the board meeting on October 28, 2022, Jennifer worked on obtaining additional pertinent information regarding the proposed UGI gas line through preserved farms in the Sugarloaf, Conyngham and Hobby areas. A regulation station is also being proposed on one of the preserved farms as well.

Currently there is an easement on it for an existing gas pipeline. UGI is proposing a second line and requesting permission to proceed through preserved farms with the line. UGI provided maps of the existing and proposed gas lines as well as a draft plan of the regulation station. It is expected that the regulation station will remove approximately three acres from agricultural production permanently. UGI has assured site conditions will revert to the original site conditions prior to the gas line being installed. Additionally, a second preserved farm will be affected as UGI uses the farm's fields to stage piping for the boring under a stream.

The Board discussed the possibility of UGI reimbursing The Luzerne County Farmland Preservation Program for the acres that will be lost from production. The compensation would be for the amount originally paid per acre. It was not known if this was a viable option or not, but the question has been asked of the state. Jon made a motion to allow the gas pipeline and to approach UGI for compensation for the lost acreage provided the state allows the request. Rich seconded the motion. Motion passed.


At the October 28<sup>th</sup> board meeting, the board preliminarily approved additional subdivision beyond the already permitted 2-acre subdivision but wanted the specific language before giving final approval. On a few occasions prior to today's board meeting, Linda and Jennifer met to review the current Luzerne County Farmland Preservation Program guide and make proposed revisions to allow for subdivision in addition to the permitted 2- acre subdivision. After reviewing other county's criteria for subdivision, they organized proposed revisions to the program guide that allow for subdivision beyond the 2 acres and still maintain the integrity of the program. Changes were presented to the board and discussion was had on all items they modified and/or added. The changes that the board agreed to will be made, then presented to the board for their final approval with all of the changes pending approval by the State Board.

Rich Yost made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:17 a.m. Nancy seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Prepared By:

For:

  
Jennifer Lauri

  
Jon Lucas (Secretary)