

Luzerne County Farmland Preservation Board

Meeting Minutes – July 12, 2022

The Luzerne County Farmland Preservation Board met in person at the Luzerne Conservation District Tuesday, July 12, 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; Bryan McManus, commercial; Nancy Snee (called in), at-large; Matthew Jones, Executive Director of Luzerne County Planning and Zoning; and Alan Brezinski, Planning and Zoning Analyst for Luzerne County Planning and Zoning.

Meeting Minutes:

Linda Thoma called the meeting to order at 9:02 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/d30d1586d0600aeae7cc5c47ec15304cd003cd6ebf0d179cdde2ed81fee7ffa4>

Linda Thoma and Jon Lucas have renewed their terms on the Board. Their positions will now expire December 31, 2024. Discussion was had around two expired Board terms, Ransom Young, farmer and Matt Balliet, farmer. Applications were made available. The meeting minutes for October 13, 2021, were presented for approval via email prior to the meeting, and were also available at the meeting. Bryan McManus made the motion to approve the minutes. Rich Yost seconded it. Motion passed. Minutes that were approved at virtual meetings were signed.

Discussion was had regarding the passing of Joseph Brutosky a long-time surveyor for many of the farms in the preservation program. Joseph was currently working on the survey for the LDF Holdings farm which is slated to be used for encumbering funds by December 31, 2022. Jennifer Lauri, program administrator with the help of the Luzerne County Planning and Zoning identified a new surveyor to complete the survey for LDF Holdings.

Matthew Jones shared his thoughts for the 2023 budget. After reviewing farm preservation expenses for the past year Mathew will ask for additional funds for 2023 with the intent to have enough funds to preserve three farms per year. Funds requested will cover appraisals, surveys, title fees and other miscellaneous expenses to facilitate the preservation of three farms until the reimbursement by the State is received.

Jennifer shared information on the Benjamin Smith farm. The closing for this 132-acre farm in Hollenback Township was June 22, 2022.

Jennifer offered an update on the status of the next farm to be preserved, LDF Holdings. LDF Holdings is a 102-acre farm that will unite a large contiguous area in the Conyngham Valley area. This farm is currently being surveyed and an appraisal was completed.

Jennifer also provided an update for the Matt Balliet farm. Based on the deed closure a survey will not be needed. There is an appraisal in process for the farm.

Discussion of the funds balance for the program and 2022 waitlist was also had. The 2022 allocation is \$652,144.00. The Richard and Nancy Yost farm is number one on the 2022 waitlist. Jon Lucas made a motion to move forward with the preservation of this farm. Nancy Snee seconded the motion. Richard and Nancy Yost have a 55.4-acre farm in Sugarloaf Township. The farm is within 2 miles of nine preserved farms. He returned after the vote was taken.

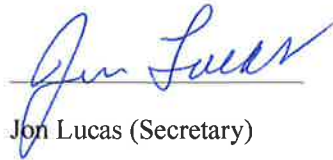
Jon Lucas made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:51 a.m. Nancy seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Prepared By:

For:



Jennifer Lauri



Jon Lucas (Secretary)