

**Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, January 28, 2016**

**Present:** Mr. Jeffrey Frey  
Mr. Gene Garber  
Mr. Roger Rohrer  
Commissioner Dennis Stuckey  
Mr. Matthew Young  
Mr. Daniel Zimmerman  
Mr. Richard Hurst  
Mr. Gary Landis

**Absent:** Mr. Edward Goodhart, III

**Staff:** Mr. Matthew Knepper, Director  
Mrs. Nancy Ambler, Farmland Preservation Specialist  
Mr. Kevin Baer, Farmland Preservation Specialist  
Ms. June Mengel, Farmland Preservation Specialist  
Ms. Christine Le, Administrative Coordinator, Recording Secretary

**Guests:** Mr. Jeffrey Swinehart, Lancaster Farmland Trust  
Mr. Karen Dickerson, Lancaster Farmland Trust

**I. Call to Order**

Mr. Gene Garber called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m.

**II. Review of Mission Statement**

*"To forever preserve the beautiful farmland and productive soils in Lancaster County and its agricultural heritage; and to create a healthy environment for the long-term sustainability of the agricultural economy and farming as a way of life."*

**III. Executive Session**

The Agricultural Preserve Board met in executive session on January 28, 2016, at 7:15 a.m. to discuss real estate transactions and current litigation.

**IV. Approval of Minutes**

**Motion to approve the November 19, 2015 meeting minutes with corrections to list Commissioner Dennis Stuckey as present and Mr. Daniel Zimmerman as absent, made by Mr. Roger Rohrer and seconded by Mr. Jeffrey Frey. Approved unanimously.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**V. Announcements**

**A. 2015 Ranking**

The 2015 Ranking has been added to today's meeting agenda.

**B. Welcome Mr. Gary Landis, Clay Township Supervisor**

The Board gave their official welcome to Mr. Gary Landis as the new addition to the Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board (APB). Mr. Gary Landis thanked the Board for their support.

**VI. Business from Guests**

None

**VII. Old Business**

None

**VIII. New Business**

**A. Requests for Subdivision/Land Development**

**1) FRPP Construction Request: Dairy Facility:** Leon N. and Lucy H. Sensenig  
\_\_\_\_\_ Little Britain Township

Construction activities on farms preserved with FRPP funds require County Board approval for purposes of ensuring impervious surface limit is not exceeded. Construction of agricultural structures on farms not federally funded, or joint projects with the Lancaster Farmland Trust (LFT), do not need County Board approval. APB easements that are strictly County funded or State funded, that do not include funding from the LFT nor the federal government, do not have limitations on the number or location of agricultural structure impervious surfaces.

Landowners are requesting approval to construct a new dairy facility, which includes a freestall barn, parlor, manure storage, driveways and feed storage, on their 111.95 acre preserved farm. The resulting additional/new impervious surface is 2.21 acres. The baseline impervious surface plus the additional resulting impervious surface will leave a balance of 3.58 acres of impervious surface available.

APB staff recommends approval as it is within the impervious surface limitation.

**Motion to approve the Mr. Leon N. Sensenig and Mrs. Lucy H. Sensenig construction request based on Lancaster County Agriculture Preserve Board staff recommendation as presented made by Mr. Daniel Zimmerman and seconded by Mr. Jeffrey Frey. Approved unanimously.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**B. Request for Rural Enterprise**

**1) Amish Parochial Schoolhouse:** Amos S. and Sadie L. Stoltzfus  
\_\_\_\_\_ Clay Township

Farm was formally owned and preserved by Ivan G. and Fannie E. Martin.

Landowners are requesting approval to construct an Amish Parochial Schoolhouse that would occupy an area of 0.96 acres on the 61.791 acre parcel of their 123.58 acre preserved farm.

Request is consistent with other similar Amish schoolhouse requests on preserved farms. The Board has permitted them in the past.

Conditions of approval:

- ❖ School will be authorized by lease only
- ❖ Letter of Acceptance to be signed by property owner(s) and School Trustees
- ❖ Building and grounds are to be used solely for school purposes
- ❖ School size/dimensions as identified on Plan and Lease Agreement is approximately 0.803 acres
- ❖ Location of proposed site will not change
- ❖ Terms and conditions of ACE will be abided
- ❖ No subdivision of the site is permitted
- ❖ This approval is contingent on, at all times, verification by the Lancaster County Conservation District that the farm is following a Conservation Plan that is being/has been implemented according to schedule
- ❖ All other requirements that may be imposed by the Township, or any other regulatory body, must be met. This would include any additional approvals that may be needed to accompany the addition for special needs children.
- ❖ All provisions of the Application and this approval shall be binding on the applicants, the owner of the land subject to the Agricultural Conservation Easement, and their respective heirs, successors assigns
- ❖ If the use of the school is ever discontinued, that structure, and the area used around it, will either be demolished or used for agricultural production

**Mr. Matthew Knepper's comments:**

- If the easement allows for an additional house that they haven't used yet, and they would like to use the schoolhouse for additional housing, they are permitted to do so, so long as it is not in addition to the maximum number of houses permitted

**Motion to approve the Mr. Amos S. Stoltzfus and Mrs. Sadie L. Stoltzfus Amish Schoolhouse construction request with the Lancaster County Agriculture Preserve Board staff recommended conditions of approval as presented made by Mr. Jeffrey Frey and seconded by Mr. Daniel Zimmerman. Approved unanimously.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**2) Nookside Stables: Horseback Riding Adventure:** Don Hess

Chiques Rock Farms, Inc.  
East Hempfield Township

\_\_\_\_\_ Farm was originally preserved by East Hempfield Township. It was later sold to Greg Gehman, who developed the equine operation on the property. Don Hess, of Chiques Rock Farms, Inc., bought the farm on December 31, 2014. The new property deed was recorded with the Ag. Easement attached as an exhibit. Nookside Stables, horseback riding adventure, opened in Summer 2015. Additional details about birthday parties, sleigh rides, wagon rides and family days can be found on the website: [www.nookside.com](http://www.nookside.com).

**I. Equine Activity**

Mr. Don Hess is proposing a variety of equine related uses, such as horseback riding, pony rides, wagon rides, etc., for the farm. All equine related activities in the proposal are considered Commercial Equine Activity, permitted under the terms of the Ag. Easement, per the Commercial Equine Activity amendment of 2006. The definition

states activity including the boarding of equines, training with equines, instructing people in the handling, driving, or riding equines, and the use of equines for driving, riding, and pasture purposes are permitted.

**APB staff comments:**

- Recommends preliminary approval with conditions noted on page two, and to consider final approval if East Hempfield Township approves the request
- Agritourism activities require a special exception
- Lodging requires a variance
- Believes the equine related activities are considered Commercial Equine Activity, and therefore, are not considered a rural enterprise
- Mr. Hess is not planning on selling items unrelated to equine activity at the concession stand
- The Board has previously approved an equine-related request on another West Hempfield farm

**Mr. Matthew Knepper's comments:**

- Prior to the 2006 Commercial Equine Activity amendment, permitted horse operations on preserved farms were only breeding operations or training operations. Other equine activities were considered rural enterprises and had to be second to the main farming operation.
- The 2006 Commercial Equine Activity definition was an amendment to the State preservation law
- Suggested the Board mention in the motion that all of the equine activities discussed in the application are considered Commercial Equine Activity, which is permitted by the State law
- Mr. Hess wants clarification on whether his request is permitted under Commercial Equine Activity --- if it's not, he would request it as a rural enterprise
- Area above the hayloft is where the concession stand will sell tickets and related items
- The previously approved gift shop request on the West Hempfield farm was considered a rural enterprise

**Board comments:**

- Mr. Hess does not need the Board's approval for the equine activities
- Board must remember that the farm already has an existing commercial equine operation that is permitted by law

**II. Guest Lodging**

Mr. Don Hess is requesting approval to convert the lower level of an existing bank barn into seven suites for overnight guest lodging, 445 sq. feet each. Each suite would have a mini fridge and a microwave. Lodging is not like a traditional bed and breakfast. Parking will be on existing areas; new parking areas are not being proposed. Mr. Hess is also not taking anything out of ag. production for new parking areas, and is not proposing the construction of new structures.

**APB staff comments:**

- Mr. Hess spoke with the Township Zoning officer and Building officer, but they have not filed an application yet --- Township wants feedback from the Board first

- If the proposal was to have the seven suites in Mr. Hess's house instead, would it be permitted?

**Mr. Matthew Knepper's comments:**

- Board needs to know what the Township will permit --- that their conditions will not conflict with the Board's conditions
- In APB's Rural Enterprise Guidelines, under agritainment and agritourism, a bed and breakfast is permitted, but there is no specific definition that states a bed and breakfast has to be in the existing residence or existing farmhouse
- Under agritainment and agritourism, the following are examples the County Board may deem appropriate: "bed and breakfast accommodations or similar farm lodging"
- The Department of Agriculture's position is that the conversion of an existing non-residential structure into a residential structure does not require forfeiting the additional residential structure permitted by the easement
- In APB's 2009 Subdivision Guidelines, converting a non-ag. structure to use as a residence does count as an additional residential structure
- Mr. Hess's farm was preserved before that 2009 Subdivision Guidelines definition
- The rural enterprise guidelines in effect when Mr. Hess's farm was preserved permitted "accommodation of tourists and visitors in the primary residential or agricultural structures" --- his request would fit under such language
- The Board has never limited a landowner's ability to convert an old farmhouse into apartment units --- does not count as the additional residential structure(s), so long as they are connected
- Board did not receive an official denial from the Township
- There is no history of the Board approving or denying a similar request; it has not been seen before
- APB may have to go back and look at the guidelines under which the farm was preserved at that time
- Farm is east of Nook Sports
- APB's definition of agritourism and agritainment activities are defined as "farm-related tourism or farm-related activities permitted or authorized by a landowner, sometimes in return for a fee, for recreational or educational purposes which are incidental to agricultural production, with ongoing ag. production at all times"
- Definition of agritourism and agritainment also states "the landowner demonstrates compliance with all the requirements, including the following: the agritourism or agritainment enterprise does not render any portion of the land incapable of being immediately converted to agricultural use"
- Would the guest lodging render the structure incapable of being immediately converted to agricultural use?
- If the overnight guests are staying for the farm-related activities, it can make a stronger case as agtourism --- but not if the guests are staying to use Spooky Nook
- Board has previously allowed an entire barn to be used for storage, an ag. structure taken out of production for non-ag. use, but it did not prevent the structure from being able to be converted back for ag. production use
- This farm was already difficult to market even before the equine additions due to the size and value of the house and property --- this would only exasperate the situation for the next buyer who would likely feel even less inclined toward ag. production

- Landowner has not demonstrated the required approval from the Township --- the Board could deny the request for that reason
- Board could also argue that the proposed lodging is not consistent with the requirement that it does not render the land of being capable of being immediately converted to agricultural use

**Board comments:**

- Commercial operation in an agricultural zone
- Concerned that if the Board supports the use of variance on a farm that is ag. zoned, it would send the wrong message
- If the rest of property was traditionally farmed, the guest lodging would not be as much of an issue
- Permanently converting the barn into guest lodging will take the structure out of ag. production
- Only reason proposal is being pushed is because of the property's close proximity to Spooky Nook Sports
- Today's Board decision could set a precedent on whether to allow ag. structures to be converted into guest lodging
- Board's decision could encourage the Township to decline Mr. Hess's use of variance request
- Meeting ADA compliance and septic system requirements may prohibit conversion from moving forward
- Township may be hoping the Board denies this so the pressure to deny the request is taken off of their back
- If the landowner goes to the Township's Zoning Hearing Board, this is beyond the scope of reason why a variance would be granted
- Zoning Hearing Board may still be inclined to approve the guest lodging because of the development in the surrounding area
- There has to be a line drawn on the types of residence permitted
- Existing bed and breakfast structures that can accommodate 2 or 3 families usually has the landowner also living the same residence --- this is not the case for this request
- The guest lodging will likely not be classified as a residence
- If one of the units was going to be a residence for the landowner, or someone working on the farm, it would be more difficult to deny the request
- Since the guest lodging is clearly not part of the residence, or attached to the residence, the Board should deny the request
- If the Board was inclined to approve it, there would have to be certainty that the guest occupants are there for the horse farm, not for Spooky Nook
- Previously approved wedding venues on preserved farms may eventually be converted into lodging in a similar manner
- It is unlikely that a farmer that invested in a septic system, roof restructuring and a stormwater management system for guest lodging would be willing to take it all down
- Existing structures today may become even more valuable in the future
- Viability of agriculture is reduced by allowed commercial and industrial uses
- Had the property not been preserved, the property would have likely turned into a housing development
- Large houses on farms are not going to be unusual in the future
- This program's intent is to prevent this type of development from happening, to ensure farms were available for agricultural production

- If the farm was much larger, and had various equine activities, would the Board permit guest lodging if Spooky Nook was not in close proximity?
- Board needs to do what it can to accommodate agriculture
- People buy commercial land to do commercial operations --- why should other landowners get away with having a commercial operation in an agriculture zone?
- If the rooms were used for those directly involved with the property's ag. production, they would be permitted
- Approving the multi-residential guest lodging would contradict APB's mission statement
- The Board is open to reconsideration
- When there are grey areas, the Board needs to remember the mission statement

### **III. Bicycle Rental**

Landowner is also looking to have a bike rental operation on the farm for guests to use on the rail trail adjacent to the farm. The bikes would likely be rented to guests staying on the farm.

#### **APB staff comments:**

- If the bike rental is open to everyone, parking would become an issue
- If the bike rental was limited to the farm's guests, parking could be more controlled
- Mr. Hess said it is likely he would have to limit the bike rental to just guests
- The Township will limit the number of parking spaces the farm will have

#### **Mr. Matthew Knepper's comments:**

- Bike rental business is a rural enterprise
- In APB's types of potential agritourism rural enterprises, access for boating and non-motorized vehicles are permitted
- Mr. Hess is not building a new structure for the bike rental
- Parking is available on existing parking areas

#### **Board comments:**

- Bike rental is a commercial operation in an ag. zoned area
- If the multi-family residential is not approved, the bicycle rental will likely not go through as well
- Having a rail trail adjacent to an agritainment-type farm is very common
- Bike rental operation is no-impact --- does not interfere with ag. production
- Bike riding may help our cause by providing positive images of preserved farms
- No issues with the bike rental operation, provided that it is only for the guests of the farm
- Board has to consider how their approval decisions take away ag. productive land from farmers
- Consider approval of the bike rental operation because guests can access the rail trail without using a public road
- Number of cars does not matter so much as they are only using the parking spaces available

#### **Conditions of approval:**

- ❖ The bike rental rural enterprise is to be allowed as described and set forth in the Application, which will be inclusive of any additional information submitted via correspondence and points of clarification made by the Board

- ❖ The rural enterprise is to be allowed as described and set forth in the Application, if East Hempfield grants approval
- ❖ Any changes to the operation must be presented to APB for review and approval prior to undertaking such changes
- ❖ The preserved farm must continue to be used for agricultural production and the rural enterprise may not restrict the use of the farm for agricultural production and/or normal farming operations
- ❖ This approval is contingent on, at all times, verification by the Lancaster County Conservation District that the farm is following a Conservation Plan that is being/has been implemented according to schedule
- ❖ All other requirements that may be imposed by the Township or any other regulatory body must be met
- ❖ All provisions of the Application and this approval shall be binding on the applicants, the owner of the land subject to the Agricultural Conservation Easement, and their respective heirs, successors and assigns
- ❖ These commercial equine activities, and rural enterprise activities, must continue to meet all of the applicable conditions per the Agricultural Conservation Easement and Rural Enterprise Guidelines
- ❖ No additional parking can be provided
- ❖ Additional parking request will need to be presented to and approved by the Board
- ❖ New structures are not permitted

**Motion to deny the request to convert the barn into seven-unit suites because it is not consistent with the Board's mission statement and its Agritainment/Agritourism Rural Enterprise Guidelines, and to grant preliminary approval for the bike rental operation with the above conditions of approval as presented, and for the use of the hayloft for the sale of horse-related items because it is related to the commercial equine activity, made by Mr. Jeffrey Frey. Seconded by Mr. Matthew Young. Approved unanimously.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

#### **IV. Special Events/Family Days**

Landowner would also like to hold special events, such as fundraisers for non-profits, with the expectation of possibly 3 events per year, not exceeding 1 event per month. He would also like to hold family day events on the farm.

#### **APB staff comments:**

- Mr. Hess is asking for approval for the special events as well

#### **Mr. Matthew Knepper's comments:**

- The flyer presented the Board is advertising the activities happening this Fall
- Seems to be an agritourism type of use
- His proposal lists special events, not for weddings

#### **Board comments:**

- How do we know if the special events continue being for fundraisers?
- Even if the non-profit fundraisers do not generate a lot of profit, the events help continue to pay the bills
- What has happened to this farm is not the intent of this program
- The farm may be no longer available for viable agriculture, and the Board would like to see it actively productive, but it can act as a buffer to help preserve the farms on the North side

- This situation could happen to every preserved farm due to surrounding residential and commercial development
- Explosive development is likely not going to happen on this property because it is a preserved farm
- The farm is capable of being productive agriculture
- Wants to prevent allowing something now that would prevent turning a land back into cropland in the future
- Would like to see more preserved farms in the Spooky Nook area
- If more than one event per season is permitted, there will likely be impact on the farmland
- The value of these farms are shifting over to its non-agricultural uses

**Motion to approve the Mr. Don Hess request to hold special events/family days on his farm with the limitation of no more than one special event per month, with a maximum of four special events per year, made by Mr. Roger Rohrer and seconded by Mr. Jeffrey Frey. Approved unanimously.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**V. Christmas Around the World Nativity Event**

Landowner is also looking for feedback as to whether or not a proposal regarding an annual drive-through Christmas Around the World Nativity event would be considered.

**APB staff comments:**

- Mr. Hess was loosely considering the idea --- mainly wanted to hear the Board's feedback on whether it would be considered
- Event would be on existing surfaces
- Only issue may be the car exit path

**Mr. Matthew Knepper's comments:**

- Mr. Hess is permitted to have parking on the grass
- If it is for the permitted ag. production, or commercial equine use permitted by the easement, it is allowed
- If the additional parking is specifically for the rural enterprise, it is not allowed
- If the decision on special events is only once per month, no less than four per year, the Christmas drive could only occur once
- The Board previously approved a similar Christmas tree drive-through on one of the preserved farms --- the Board believed it was part of the landowners' commercial marketing of their commercial ag. production

**Board comments:**

- Can Mr. Hess gravel more farm lanes?
- If Mr. Hess wants to come back for an additional approval to hold the Christmas drive more than once a month, the Board can address it then

**VI. Signage**

Landowner is also requesting the Board's approval to enlarge an existing sign for the farm's equine activity operation.

**APB staff comments:**

- Township has already approved the current banner signage

- The new sign is to remind travelers of the farm's location since it cannot be easily seen from the bottom of the hill

**Mr. Matthew Knepper's comments:**

- Township has approved a sign, 24' x 4', that could be permanently attached to an existing structure
- Signage is not in APB's Rural Enterprise Guidelines
- Board had decided in the past to defer signage limitations to the Township

**Board comments:**

- He should be able to have a sign if there is a permitted use

**C. Lancaster Farmland Trust, Public Opinion Survey Results**

Karen Dickerson, Lancaster Farmland Trust (LFT), presented to the Board highlights of the recent 2015 Voter Attitude Survey (conducted December 6-10, 2015). The survey was carried out by Susquehanna Polling and Research.

Susquehanna Polling and Research is a nationally recognized firm that does work for businesses, state agencies, national trade associations and hospitals. They also do a lot of research for candidates for public office. Susquehanna Polling and Research does nationwide and state polling in over 20 states.

Karen Dickerson, Karen Martynick, and current chair, Caroline Morton presented the public survey results to the Commissioners last week.

Lancaster Farmland Trust is planning on doing an image, marketing and branding study later this year. As a prelude, LFT wanted research data from community polls that would show their attitudes towards farmland preservation. LFT plans to release the survey results publically sometime in the near future.

**Survey objectives:**

- Measure key concerns of County residents
- Quantify the County's performance on farmland preservation
- Generally assess voters' understanding, awareness and level of support for farmland preservation efforts
- Assess support for general farmland preservation messages

**Survey highlights:**

- Survey participants were registered voters of Lancaster County
- Results may have been influenced by recent tragedy in San Bernardino, California on December 2, 2015 --- survey was released on December 6<sup>th</sup>
- Pollers did not mention who sponsored the poll, but questions near end of survey asked for their awareness of Lancaster Farmland Trust
- 48% male respondents, 52% female respondents
- Fairly distributed sample size between ages 18 through 65+
- 20% rural, 55% suburban, 60% urban, 9% Lancaster City
- 51% Republican, 31% Democrat, 11% Independent or Other
- Top 5 indicated identifiers of Lancaster County: 1) Amish; 2) farmland; 3) agriculture; 4) local foods; and 5) open space
- Very strong correlation between reporting a high quality of life in Lancaster County and farmland preservation

- Top concerns: crime and public safety; unchecked growth and development, farmland, and traffic
- When people report having a very high quality of life, they are more likely to support issues like farmland preservation and conservation efforts
- 83% of respondents are either very concerned or somewhat concerned about the loss of farmland in the County
- 77% of respondents support continued use of County public funds specifically for farmland preservation
- Strong bi-partisan support that we should continue use of County public funds for farmland preservation
- 61% of respondents indicated they were willing to pay more than the \$11 per year in taxes they currently spend towards farmland preservation
- 92% of respondents think County and State officials should be doing more to preserve and protect farmland and open space
- 89% of respondents believe that preservation of additional farmland will improve their quality of life
- People are unaware of the amount of farmland lost to development every year --- public education opportunity
- Lack of understanding of how important the agricultural industry is to the County's economy --- public education opportunity
- Overall, strong consensus and intensity for support of farmland preservation

**Ms. Karen Dickerson's comments:**

- Wanted data that could show whether or not the Lancaster County residents support the farmland preservation efforts
- Younger generation are supportive of environmental causes
- Wants to send the message that farmland preservation is a good investment

**Board comments:**

- Very impressed by the survey results and initiation
- Commended the creditability of Susquehanna Polling and Research
- Impressed with strong public support for farmland preservation despite that 92% of respondents do not work for the farm industry
- Almost 55% of survey respondents were age 55 or older who likely grew up on a farm --- need to engage the younger generation
- Survey results helps support the farmland preservation efforts of LFT and APB
- County wants farmland preservation, but does not understand what preservation programs need to stay
- APB preserves about 2,000 acres per year; LFT preserves about 1,000 acres a year --- need to increase average annual preservation acreage
- Asked whether Ms. Karen Dickerson could share the public survey results with local planning commission meetings
- Survey results could influence top decision-makers in the future
- Asked Ms. Karen Dickerson to share the Board's appreciation for LFT's farmland preservation marketing efforts
- Collaborative synergy between APB and LFT has helped the success of the farmland preservation program

**Mr. Matthew Knepper's comments:**

- Commended Susquehanna Polling and Research for respecting the procedural and technical aspects of the survey --- objective, good sample size, blind survey
- Younger generation may still have indirect support for farmland preservation

#### **D. 2015 Year Review**

A map and a spreadsheet of each preserved farm in 2015 was given to the Board for review. Included was a sample of the farms that were approved by the Commissioners.

- 28 new preserved farms
- 2,171 acres preserved of approximately 2,221 deeded acres
- Total appraised value of easements at \$7.4 million were purchased with \$6.8 million, averaging of about 92% bargain sale
- Average per acre cost was \$3,157 per acre
- Good year for State funding
- Average market value was almost \$17,000 per acre for land
- Average appraised value was about \$3,400 per acre

#### **Board comments:**

- In preparation for reassessment, Property Assessment did an appraisal for the County --- found average market value for farmland in the County is approximately \$15,000 per acre
- Farms not enrolled in Clean and Green are likely going to see a huge tax increase

#### **E. 2016 Funding**

A copy of the 2016 Funding Resolution was given to the Board. It was approved by the Board of Commissioners yesterday.

- \$1.35 million of new funding available, same amount authorized last year
- Smaller amounts are cash, either already on-hand or already spent, that APB can add to the new funding. It is credited as part of the County match
- APB would be certifying just under \$1.6 million
- A similar financial return from the State is likely to happen again this year
- \$250,000 was authorized as a challenge grant for the LFT, an increase of \$50,000 from last year
- Resolution was approved unanimously by the Board of Commissioners
- Commissioner discussion was positive
- Of the \$1.35 million, there is no plan to borrow money

#### **F. 2015 Ranking**

Mr. Matthew Knepper asked the Board to hold the discussion for the 2015 ranking until next month's board meeting. Maps and more details will be provided.

Board authorization is needed to act on the top 10 ranking farms and the 50% bargain sales so the APB staff can start sending out appraisal letters to farms. Mr. Matthew Knepper wants to keep the process moving until there is 10 farms in the process of being preserved. Farms already in process on the list will be skipped over for the next farm down on the list.

**Motion to approve the top 10 ranking farms and the 50% bargain sales list as presented made by Mr. Roger Rohrer and seconded by Mr. Jeffrey Frey. Approved unanimously.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

## **G. Expanded Federal Tax Deduction for Easements**

### **Mr. Jeffrey Swinehart's comments, Lancaster Farmland Trust:**

- Back in December 2015, Congress passed and the President approved the fiscal package that included the expanded federal tax deduction for granting of an ag. easement or conservation easement permanent
- Was a major victory for land conservation
- Landowners can expect a tax deduction
- Any farmer can deduct up to 50% of their adjusted gross income per year
- Qualifying farmers can deduct up to 100% of their adjusted gross income
- Window is between 5 to 15 years

## **IX. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

### **The next schedule meeting of the Agricultural Preserve Board:**

Thursday, February 25, 2016, at 8:00 a.m.

Lancaster County Government Center

150 North Queen Street, Room 104

Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17603