

Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 24, 2020

Present: Mr. Jeffrey Frey, Chairman
Mr. Gary Landis, Vice Chairman
Mr. Edward C. Goodhart, III, Secretary
Commissioner Ray D’Agostino (via teleconference)
Mr. Jered Hess
Mr. Andrew Lehman
Mr. Roger Rohrer

Absent: Mr. Matt Young
Mr. Daniel Zimmerman
Ms. Jessica Graham, Farmland Preservation Specialist

Staff: Mr. Matthew Knepper, Director
Mr. Kevin Baer, Farmland Preservation Specialist
Ms. Noelle Fortna, Farmland Preservation Specialist
Ms. June Mengel, Farmland Preservation Specialist
Mr. Garland Treese, Administrative Assistant

Guests: Jeb Musser, Lancaster Farmland Trust

I. Call to Order

Mr. Jeffrey Frey called the meeting to order at 8:12 a.m.

II. Review of Mission Statement

Mr. Gary Landis read the 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. Announcements

- A. The Agricultural Preserve Board met in Executive Session on September 24, 2020 at 7:15 a.m. to discuss real estate transactions, potential litigation and litigation, including the Quarryville Resorts, LP/Fryberger matter.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the August 27, 2020 meeting made by Mr. Andrew Lehman and seconded by Mr. Roger Rohrer.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

V. Business from Guests

Jeb Musser - Lancaster Farmland Trust spoke about the upcoming “Together for the Land” event that will be held virtually on October 21, 2020. There will be a raffle and silent auction. Information can be found on the Lancaster Farmland Trust website.

VI. Business

A. Request for Subdivision/Land Development - None

B. Request for Rural Enterprise – None

C. Ranking Discussion

Mr. Matthew Knepper opened discussion with the Board to continue last month's discussion about possible changes to the current ranking system and associated (county) minimum criteria.

Mr. Knepper reviewed the current ranking weights along with potential factor descriptions. The Board reviewed "Places 2040 Future Land Use: Agricultural Priority Preservation Area" Maps, prepared by Jessica Graham using County Planning Commission data.

The Maps illustrate two options for the Board to consider adopting in place of the Future Land Use Map ranking component. Both of these maps have been incorporated in the County's Places 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The Agricultural Preservation Area is more general; whereas, the Agricultural Priority Area is parcel specific. Mr. Jeb Musser told the Board that the Lancaster Farmland Trust has recently incorporated the parcel specific, Agricultural Priority Area map into their ranking system.

The Board expressed a few different concerns and/or ideas:

- Mr. Gary Landis asked if there would be a way to incorporate both maps?
- Mr. Knepper answered that would be a possibility might not be terribly effective b/c much of the land located in the Agricultural Preservation Area is already accounted for in other ways (ex: Ag Zoned, Harvested cropland, Agricultural Security Area, Preserved property, etc.)
- Mr. Edward Goodhart wondered if the Board could view this map with the farms that are already preserved identified as well?
- Mr. Knepper added, that if the Board decides to use the parcel specific map, messaging will be very important. The intent is not exclusionary, it is just one factor to evaluate priority.
- Mr. Landis agreed, he suggested that it will important to send the right message and not encourage the thought process that if a property is not in the "Ag Priority Area" it is to be sacrificed to development.
- Mr. Roger Rohrer asked Mr. Andrew Lehman what his take is on how the building/development community views farmland preservation?
- Mr. Lehman stated that it is his opinion that the building community generally views farmland preservation favorably. Years ago, farmland preservation was thought to be in direct competition with the development/building industry, potentially making it both difficult and more expensive to develop/build. In today's climate it is not farmland preservation that is a challenge for the industry. Building new is increasingly more expensive and it is difficult for the industry to lower the price to see what the market can bear. There are so many associated costs that are the challenge.

In conjunction with the maps, Mr. Knepper prepared an overview entitled "Farmland Potential Factor Description." This document clearly breaks down the various Farmland Potential Factors into Various categories with the associated ranking weight: Required Minimum Criteria (State and/or County), Requirement of Easement, Required by Statute as Ranking component. He also distributed a "Farmland Potential Factor Ranking" and the Board members were asked to rank in order of importance the 6 ranking factors in this category.

Because of a few new(er) factors that are set to be incorporated into the ranking system, there is an opportunity to evaluate and possibly shift the weight/scores around within this particular category. Mr. Knepper will prepare a summary of the Board's responses and use that as a base to devise a proposed change to this category.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 a.m.

The next scheduled meeting of the Agricultural Preserve Board

Thursday, October 22, 2020, at 8:00 a.m.

Lancaster County Public Safety Center

101 Champ Blvd. Manheim, PA 17545