

Cindy B. Harding, Chair
Thomas E. Boldin
Carl V. Homan
Frederick G. Moore



Joseph Homan
Thomas Songer III
Ronald J. Hoover
Dennis E. Buffington
Diana Griffith, Coordinator

CENTRE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JANUARY 28, 2021

Present: C. Harding; T. Boldin; C. Homan; J. Homan; T. Songer; R. Hoover

Staff: Diana Griffith (Centre County Planning Office)
Stacy Mann (Centre County Planning Office)
Raymond Stolinas (Centre County Planning Office)

Public: None

The meeting was called to order by Chair Harding at 7:31 p.m. and was held in the BlueJeans virtual meeting platform. The meeting was recorded for future reference.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Homan and seconded by Mr. Boldin, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the July 30, August 13 and December 10, 2020 meetings. Motion carried.

Informational Items

Board Reorganization

Ms. Griffith reported that the current offices are held by:

Chair, Ms. Harding “appointed by the Board of Commissioners”

Vice-Chair currently vacant; Secretary, Mr. C. Homan; Treasurer, Mr. Boldin.

Mr. Boldin nominated Mr. Songer for Vice-Chair. On a motion by Mr. Boldin and seconded by Mr. C. Homan, the Board voted to elect Mr. Songer for Vice-President and retain Mr. C. Homan as Secretary and Mr. Boldin as Treasurer. Motion carried.

Certification of 2021 Agricultural Preservation Funds

Ms. Griffith reported the 2021 Agricultural Preservation Funds were certified at the January 21 Board of Commissioners Meeting: County \$80,000; Rollback Taxes \$9,548; for a total of \$89,548. The State requires the Certification of Funds to be submitted by January 31 and the Board has two years from the time of issue to commit those funds. As a result of no municipal contributions, the County will have a lower State allocation in 2021 than in 2020.

Donald A. and Teresa L. Grove Farm Closing

Ms. Griffith reported that the 82-acre Grove easement was funded by State, County and Potter Township agricultural easement programs. This was the County’s 56th farm to be preserved and the 11th property to be preserved in Potter Township, bringing the township’s total acreage for preserved farms to 1,612 acres. A press release was distributed.

Larry and Suzanne Harpster Farm Approval

Ms. Griffith reported that Brian Pedrick of Agrarian Associates has completed his appraisal of the property. The completed appraisal will be shared with the Board; the state is assisting to help settle on the correct price per acre. The Harpsters are donating development rights to the woodland; it is a complex formula but is expected to be in the \$3,000 an acre range. At that time an offer will be made to the Harpsters and they will be invited to sign an Agreement of Sale. The proposed State Board date for the farm is June 17, 2021. Ms. Harding asked for the detailed formula to be shared when the calculations are final.

Pauline E. Cooper Estate Farm Survey

Ms. Griffith reported we are collecting the bids from the prospective surveyors. Bids are due by 5 p.m. Wednesday, February 24. Bids will then be opened at 1 p.m. Thursday, February 25 by herself and Ms. Man. Proposals will be presented to the Board at the meeting that evening and the selected surveyor will be notified on Friday, February 26. The survey has a completed deadline date of Monday, April 26. The proposed State Board date for this Farm is June 17, 2021.

Addition of 76 acres to the Potter Township Agricultural Security Area

Ms. Griffith reported that the Potter Township Board of Supervisors approved the addition of a 76-acre farm owned by Mark T. and Amy L. Sharer to its Agricultural Security Area. This brings the total acreage in the Potter Township ASA to 11,879.17 acres.

PACE Program Presentation

Ms. Griffith reported that in light of the Ferguson Township Supervisors' decision to cut funding for Ag Easements from the 2021 budget and questions raised during their budget discussion, the Ferguson Township Manager requested a presentation to the Township Board of Supervisors at its organizational meeting on January 4, 2021. The supervisors' new chair asked how their funds are leveraged and whether their contributions represent a duplication of taxpayer dollars. They questioned why their contribution matters and suggested there would be zero impact if the farms will be preserved by the County and State without their financial support. Supervisors also asked how they might become more engaged with the program.

Mr. Griffith followed up with the following action items:

- Provide them with an annual waitlist of ranked farm applicants in Ferguson Township
- Provide them with annual inspection reports for Ferguson Township preserved farms
- Consult with the State about the funding formula and provide further clarification on how municipal contributions are leveraged to yield a greater allocation of State funds

Ms. Griffith explained that the source of the ongoing state funding is a 2-cent per pack tax on cigarettes, which generates approximately \$20 million a year for the program. The Commonwealth formula for funding is complicated. But when the formula is applied to the State's allocation for Centre County, the impact is clear, especially when the County's certified match funds are lower than in the previous year. This year's certified match funds are lower because we have zero municipal contributions committed for 2021. This results in a lower State allocation of approximately \$75,927 to the County, which is evident in the 2020 and 2021 budgets.

	2020 Budget	2021 Budget
Centre County Funds	\$80,000	\$80,000
Clean and Green rollback tax penalties	\$9,548	\$9,548
Municipal Contributions	\$55,250	\$0
Total Funds Certified	\$144,798	\$89,548
State allocation based on formula	\$569,366	\$493,439

Stewards of our Farmland PowerPoint Presentation

Ms. Griffith presented a visual tour of our preserved farms that were inspected in 2020 to date. The remaining inspections will be completed in early March. The state requires a list of inspected farms to be

submitted by March 31, 2021. The tour will also be posted on the County website.

Items for the Good of the Order

Open Position on the Board

Ms. Griffith reminded the board of the vacant position that needs to be filled. Mr. J. Homan suggested Ralph Wheland as an additional member to represent Ferguson Township.

Mr. C. Homan thanked the staff for keeping the program going throughout this crisis, as these are not normal times.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for February 25, 2021 in Room 146 of the Willowbank Office Building beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. J. Homan and seconded by Mr. Songer, the meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m. Motion carried.

Submitted by,

Stacy Mann
Recording Secretary