

Thomas E. Boldin, Chair  
Thomas Songer III, Vice-Chair  
Dennis E. Buffington  
Cindy B. Harding  
James Heckman



Ronald J. Hoover, Secretary  
Ralph Wheland, Treasurer  
Diane Homan  
Joseph Homan  
Diana Griffith, Coordinator

## CENTRE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD

Willowbank Office Building • 420 Holmes Street • Bellefonte, PA 16823  
(814)355-6791 • Fax: (814)355-8661 • [www.centrecountypa.gov/agland](http://www.centrecountypa.gov/agland)

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MARCH 24, 2022

**Present:** T. Boldin; D. Buffington; C. Harding; J. Heckman; R. Hoover; R. Wheland; D. Homan; J. Homan

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

**Public:** Ed Dunkelberger, Doug Wolfgang, Department of Ag

---

The meeting was called to order by Chair Boldin at 7:31 p.m. The meeting was held in Room 146 of the Willowbank Office Building and was recorded for future reference.

#### **Introductions**

Guests introduced themselves. Present and new Board members introduced themselves.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

On a motion by Mr. Buffington and seconded by Mr. Wheland, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the January 27, 2022 meeting. Motion carried.

#### **New Business**

##### Pennsylvania Sunshine Act

Mr. Boldin read the following statement to the board as a reminder of the PA Sunshine Act. *Voting members of an agency are not permitted to deliberate except at a public meeting. In other words, agency members exchanging opinions about an upcoming vote or encouraging other agency members to vote a particular way in an email discussion, or a discussion held via social media would violate the Sunshine Act.*

##### Request for Board's Support

Ms. Griffith reported that she researched the archives and found some history of the right-of-way and can forward to the board. Ms. Harding said she personally would like the board to write a letter of support for Mr. Dunkelberger to West Penn Power requesting that they be reasonable in relocating the power lines that cross his farmland. Mr. Wolfgang asked Ms. Griffith to forward him the contact information for Mr. Dunkelberger and the history of the right-of-way so he can have the legal department review and possibly reach out to West Penn Power on his behalf. On a motion by Ms. Harding and seconded by Mr. Homan, the board voted to follow up with Mr. Wolfgang after he has spoken with West Penn Power to see how the board feels it should proceed. Motion carried.

##### Review of Survey Bids for the Webb and Nancy Miller Farm

Ms. Griffith opened the four bids received for the Miller Farm Survey.

Land Services Group - Cunningham Surveys - \$7,000

Gregory Shufran - \$2,850

Hawbaker Engineering - \$4,200

Stahl Sheaffer Engineering - \$7,820

On a motion by Mr. Buffington and seconded by Ms. Harding, the Board voted to award the bid to Gregory Shufran for the price of \$2,850 for the Miller Farm in Ferguson Township. Motion carried.

## **Old Business**

### Farmland Appraisal Questions

Mr. Wolfgang joined the meeting tonight via Teams and gave a presentation of the appraisal process and what the State is looking for in the appraisals they receive from participating counties.

### Select Appraiser

On a motion by Mr. Hoover and seconded by Ms. Harding, the Board voted to approve the Appraiser Brian Pedrick at the proposed bid of \$1,750 and \$2,500 for Federal Appraisal. Motion carried.

### Review of Conservation Plan Requirements

Mr. Wolfgang stated that every preserved farm is required to have a Conservation Plan that addresses all soil, water and nutrient concerns on the farm. Under the Clean Streams Law an Ag E&S Plan and Manure Management Plan are a “separate law separate requirement” but those Ag E&S Plans may or may not address all soil, water and nutrient concerns. If they do, the plan is fine, but if there are other concerns, they will need to be addressed and go a step further. The Ag E&S plan may or may not meet criteria depending on the actual farming circumstances. Chair Boldin stated that he believes Centre County’s plan has stood the test of time and is a good one. At this time, discussion closed and no vote was taken.

### Review of the Bylaws

Ms. Harding asked for a summary of the reasons for changing in the bylaws and why? Chair Boldin stated that per the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act, voting members are not permitted outside of the regular meetings to engage in in-person, email, phone or social media communications to discuss agenda items that will be voted on at a meeting. Looking back at the minutes for example, “*Chair Boldin asked if there was discussion on the motion. Mr. Wheland stated that he and Ms. Harding have discussed the appraisal process.*” He added: “If we were going to vote on that, maybe you two should have had that conversation only at a public meeting with all board members present.”

## **Agricultural Land Preservation Coordinators Report**

Ms. Griffith reported that she attended soil health workshops at the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture conference in February and farmland preservation workshops at the WeConservePA conference in March. The David G. Burket farm survey bids will be ready to open at the meeting on April 28. The 2022 LESA evaluations are in progress and should be finished by the April meeting. In addition, inspections will start earlier this year, beginning in the spring, with 20 site visits being planned per month. All 60 preserved farms will be inspected during each growing season.

## **Items for the Good of the Order**

With regard to Centre County’s 2020 encumbered funds not being used in their entirety, Ms. Harding stated that “we walked away from the opportunity to preserve a farm in Centre County” and she does not want to see that happen again. Mr. Wolfgang stated a county has two years to spend or encumber farmland preservation funds by December 31 of each year. The funds can be spent by going to settlement or encumbered by having a signed agreement of sale and proof of clear title and work to present to the state board state board. Ms. Harding said the board needs to have a plan in place as she feels the ball was dropped last year and state funds were lost. Ms. Griffith clarified that “no ball was dropped and no one walked away

from an opportunity to preserve a farm.” She reminded the board that the two farms approved to move forward were of smaller acreage than usual, and that the board did not approve the larger Amish farm in second place on the ranked PACE waitlist, as this farmer has an AG E&S and manure management plan but no NRCS conservation plan. Ms. Griffith reminded the board she had notified them of this unusual circumstance. Mr. Wolfgang agreed that this happens from time to time in counties because of timing or landowner issues, and assured the board that the funds are not lost; they are recycled back into the program to be redistributed to other counties. When one county does not have enough approved applicants in order to use up all of its funds, it does not mean that farms in other counties cannot benefit in 2023. He advised the board that if they can approve applicants earlier in the year, without delays, it will be less of a burden to meet the requirements for encumbering funds by the December 31<sup>st</sup> deadline.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for April 28, 2022 in Room 146 of the Willowbank Office Building beginning at 7:30 p.m.

### **Adjournment**

On a motion by Mrs. Harding and seconded by Mr. Homan, the meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m. Motion carried.

Submitted by,

Diana Griffith  
Recording Secretary