

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD**

**MEETING OF MARCH 12, 2019 3:30 P.M.**

Second Floor, Montgomery Room  
One Montgomery Plaza, Swede & Airy Streets  
Norristown, Pennsylvania 19401

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**BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDING:** Brett Altman; John Corkum; Theodore Poatsy, Jr.; Stephen Quigley; Jonathan Rinde

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**STAFF ATTENDING:** Danielle Dobisch; Scott France; Jody Holton; Anne Leavitt-Gruberger; John Marlatt; Denise VanBuskirk

**PRESS:** None

**GUESTS:** Dulcie Flaharty, MCPC Board Member

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The public meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Jonathan Rinde, Chair who led the Pledge of Allegiance and introductions.

**1. Reorganization of Farm Board**

Ms. Dobisch: Informed the Board and staff that a reorganization of the Board is required and requested nominations for Chairman and Co-Chairman for the 2019 year.

*A motion was made by John Corkum and seconded by Brett Altman to nominate Jonathan Rinde to serve as Chairman of the Montgomery County Agricultural Land Preservation Board. The motion was approved by all members present.*

*A motion was made by Brett Altman and seconded by Stephen Quigley to nominate John Corkum to serve as Co-Chairman of the Montgomery County Agricultural Land Preservation Board. The motion was approved by all members present.*

**2. Minutes of December 11, 2018 – BOARD ACTION**

*A motion was made by Brett Altman and seconded by Theodore Poatsy, Jr. that the minutes of December 11, 2018 be approved. The motion was approved by all members present.*

**3. Status of Farmland Preservation Program**

Ms. Dobisch: From the 2017 applications – The Davis Farm in New Hanover Township is still being reviewed; the Duhovis Farm settled on March 12, 2019; the Godshall Farm, Franconia Township application was approved at the State Board meeting in February and are awaiting State funds for settlement. From the 2018 applications – The Yerger Farm, Upper Hanover Township was approved at the State Board meeting in December and are awaiting State funds for settlement; the Bechtel Farm, Towamencin Township, Pfister Farm, Lower Salford and Towamencin Townships, the Weiss Farm, Upper Salford Township, and the McKeown Farm, Plymouth Township are in the survey process and the Agreements of Sale are being reviewed by the landowners. The Melanson Farm public offer is scheduled on today's Agenda.

**4. Melanson Farm Public Offer – BOARD ACTION**

Ms. Dobisch: The Scott & Sharon Melanson Farm had requested a second appraisal, at their own expense, of their 37.00-acre grain farm in Franconia Township. They were granted an extension to December 21 for their response to a new County offer based on the second appraisal. The Melansons have accepted the County's offer of \$18,250.00 per acre and Franconia Township has offered to contribute towards the purchase of the agricultural easement.

*A motion was made by John Corkum and seconded by Brett Altman to accept and enter into a formal Agreement of Sale for an agricultural easement on the Melanson farm property in Franconia Township (approximately 37.00 acres) for \$18,250.00 per acre with a contribution from Franconia Township. The motion was approved unanimously.*

**5. 2019 Farmland Preservation Applications – BOARD ACTION**

Ms. Dobisch: Presented the current list of all ranked farm applicants, including the 5 new farm applicants, for the Board's consideration.

As described in detail by Ms. Dobisch, the 10 top ranked farm applicants are:

- The Michael & Linda Evans Farm, a 119.47-acre beef & hay farm in Worcester Township, is eligible for state funding, with a score of 72.97.

- Edward Stokes Farm, a 117.00-acre grain farm (with a 2 acre exception area) in New Hanover Township, is eligible for state funding, with a score of 66.76.
- The Thomas Latshaw Farm, a 61.00-acre hay farm in Upper Hanover Township, is eligible for state funding, with a score of 61.10.
- The Dorothy Krazek Farm, a 35.00-acre hay farm in Upper Hanover Township, is eligible for state funding, with a score of 54.34.
- The Edward & Gail Foley Farm, a 35.00-acre beer grains farm in Upper Providence Township, is eligible for state funding, with a score of 50.12.
- The Larry & Darlene Suloman Farm, a 34.49-acre dairy farm in New Hanover Township, is eligible for state funding, with a score of 49.62.
- The Suzanne Banyacsky Farm, a 24.00-acre feed crop farm in Perkiomen Township, is eligible for county-only funding, with a score of 55.56.
- The Dale Frankenfield Farm #2, an 18.30-acre feed crop farm in Franconia Township, is eligible for county-only funding, with a score of 53.88.
- The Samuel Walker Farm, a 26.49-acre beef & hogs farm in Upper Providence Township, is eligible for county-only funding, with a score of 46.92.
- The Barbara & John Tim Farm, a 30.00-acre hay farm in New Hanover Township, is eligible for county-only funding, with a score of 46.62.

***Mr. Rinde moved the Board to Executive Session to discuss real estate matters.***

Ms. Dobisch: Mentioned that, as per direction from the State, appraisals are valid for 5 years. Several farms from the above list have already been appraised: the Evans Farm was appraised in 2018; the Suloman Farm, the Banyacsky Farm, and the Frankenfield Farm were all appraised in 2017.

*A motion was made by Brett Altman and seconded by John Corkum to support Staff's recommendation that the Stokes farm and the Tim farm in New Hanover Township; the Latshaw farm and the Krazek farm in Upper Hanover Township; and the Foley farm and the Walker farm in Upper Providence Township be*

*appraised to establish value of an agricultural conservation easement. The Board unanimously agreed to move forward with the appraisal of these farms.*

Ms. Dobisch: An official letter will be sent to the applicable townships notifying them of the farms in their municipalities that have applied for farmland preservation.

## **6. Legislation Update**

Ms. Dobisch: Gave an update on several legislative bills:

- HB 404 – Adds the Tree of Heaven to the noxious weed list. Future funding or grants may become available to eradicate the Tree of Heaven and the spotted Lanternfly
- HB 441 – Amends the ASA Law to allow wind power generation on preserved farmland that is 50 acres or more & granting right-of-way access
- HB 370 & SB 145 – Amends the ASA Law to allow for the voluntary relinquishment of the creation of one additional residence and to allow a subdivision for an existing residence to be permitted
- HB 574 – Amends the ASA Law to allow land trusts access to the state funding to preserve farmland. Many County Administrators were against this bill because it would reduce the county disbursements to share the funding with land trusts and not increase funding.

## **7. Other Business**

Ms. Dobisch: Distributed the Farmland Preservation Program 2018 Annual Summary which contains a yearly review highlighting the Program's preservation efforts from 1990 to 2018. Since the program was established in Montgomery County in 1990 there have been 9,660 acres of farmland preserved to date.

Also, the farm tour is planned for some time during the first week of June.

## **8. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 9, 2019 at 3:30 P.M. on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, One Montgomery Plaza, in the Montgomery Room, Norristown, PA.

*A motion was made by Stephen Quigley and seconded by John Corkum to adjourn the public meeting.*

Respectfully submitted,

Denise VanBuskirk