

Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Association

2016 Spring Business Meeting
State College Visitor's Center
Centre County Hosts

May 18, 2016

ATTENDANCE

Executive Committee

Matt Knepper, Lancaster County - President
Ellen Dayhoff, Adams County - Vice President
Cindy Kahley, Union County - Treasurer
Sarah Walter, Centre County - Secretary
Donna Fisher, Blair County - Member-at-Large

Guests

Hannah Smith-Brubaker, PA Deputy Secretary of Agriculture
Doug Wolfgang, Director, PA Bureau of Farmland Preservation
Stephanie Zimmerman, Admin Officer II, PA Bureau of Farmland Preservation
Dawn Patrick, Admin Officer II, PA Bureau of Farmland Preservation
Norm Lathbury, Centre County Agricultural Land Preservation Board
John Howard, PA Bureau of Farmland Preservation
Andy Loza, PA Land Trust Association
Jeff Swinehart, Lancaster Farmland Trust
Destiny Zeiders, PA House, Ag & Natural Affairs Committee

County Administrators and County Staff

Cindy Sanderson, Adams County
Mark Clowney, Adams County
Tami Hildebrand, Berks County
Amanda Burkard-Sell, Berks County
Kimberly Fies, Berks County
Donna Fisher, Blair County
Rich Huether, Blair County
Mary Ann Bower, Clinton County
Stephanie Williams, Cumberland County
Eric Johnson, Lackawanna County
Angie Foltz, Lebanon County - proxy
Jeff Zehr, Lehigh County
James Ferry, Luzerne County
James Weber, Luzerne County
Elizabeth Emlen, Montgomery County
Maria Bentzoni, Northampton County
Jason Childs, Potter County
Andrea Reiner, Schuylkill County
Jackie Rouse, Sullivan County
Eric Naylor, York County – proxy
David Boose, York County

Other Contributing Members

Sally McMurry, Former Professor of History, Penn State University
John Akers, Bedford County Conservation District Board

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, RECOGNITIONS, AND MILESTONES

President Knepper welcomed everyone and thanked the Conference Committee for their efforts to organize the Spring Meeting. President Knepper led introductions around the room.

OPENING

President Knepper called the meeting to order at 9:33AM.

Membership Roll Call was read by Cindy Sanderson. 17 voting members were present determining a quorum. Election of Officers was postponed to await the arrival of Elizabeth Emlen.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The October 29, 2015 business meeting minutes were distributed in the conference packets. *Ellen/Adams moved to approve the October 29, 2015 minutes. Donna/Blair seconded the motion. No objections. Motion carried.*

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Kahley distributed and discussed the Treasurer's Report with the balance on hand May 6, 2016 as \$2,555.04. *Angie/Lebanon moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Maria/Northampton seconded. No objections. Motion carried.*

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Cindy Sanderson presented the Membership Report. Out of 67 Counties, 57 have an Ag Land Preservation Program. 31 Counties have paid for voting membership, leaving 26 non-member Counties. There are six outside contributing memberships, and one sponsor. *Maria/Northampton moved to accept the Membership report. Eric/York seconded. No Objections. Motion carried.*

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Relations Committee – Donna Fisher gave an update on the PFPA website and encouraged Counties to submit photographs of preserved farms to post.

Sarah Walter reported that the PFPA Ag Progress Days (APD) booth was visited by individuals from 35 counties and 2 states for a total of 177 visitors. The cost for a booth for APD 2016 (August 16-18) will be \$350. A discussion of the mileage reimbursement rate followed and it was decided that no mileage reimbursement will be offered for 2016. PFPA members are encouraged to volunteer for the APD booth during 2016, details to follow via email.

Ellen/Adams moved to approve a \$350 expenditure for APD 2016. Maria/Northampton seconded. No objections. Motion carried.

Conference Committee –Ellen thanked Sarah Walter for her assistance with planning the meeting. The Fall 2016 meeting will be held in Somerset County on October 11-12. Spring 2017 will be held again in conjunction with the PALTA conference in Lancaster on May 4-6.

A brief pause in committee reports was allowed to conduct Election of Officers after the arrival of Nominating Committee Chair Elizabeth Emlen at 9:55 AM.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Elizabeth initiated the nomination of officers.

Elizabeth/Montgomery moved to appoint Matt Knepper as President. Ellen/Adams seconded. No objections. Motion carried.

Elizabeth/Montgomery moved to appoint Ellen Dayhoff as Vice President. Maria/Northampton seconded. No objections. Motion carried.

Elizabeth/Montgomery moved to appoint Sarah Walter as Treasurer. Ellen/Adams seconded. No objections. Motion carried.

Elizabeth/Montgomery moved to appoint Maria Bentzoni as Secretary. Matt/Lancaster seconded. No objections. Motion carried.

Elizabeth/Montgomery moved to appoint Donna Fisher as Member at Large. Matt/Lancaster seconded. No objections. Motion carried.

Ellen/Adams moved to end nominations and election of officers. Cindy/Union seconded. No objections. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS (Continued)

Policy Committee Report – President Knepper gave a report on legislation of interest (See handout). The following was discussed in detail:

- SB1136: many in the group were opposed to this legislation due to its impact to funding for AG Land Preservation.
- HB 83: the group reviewed and discussed a draft of the legislation.

Maria/Northampton moved to take an opposing position on SB1136, specifically to oppose the proposed decreased interest percentage and shortened term of rollback interest for properties expelled from Clean & Green and to support an increase of the rollback period to ten years and for the interest rate to remain the same. Tami/Berks seconded. Two objections. Motion carried.

Ellen/Adams moved to take a supporting position on HB83 excepting the paragraph highlighted in blue on the handout (section vii). Matt/Lancaster seconded. No objections. Motion carried.

Break – 11:10-11:17 AM *The Official Meeting remains open until the end of the day to permit action on any issues.*

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS – None

PA Deputy Secretary Remarks – PA Deputy Secretary of Ag addressed the group about the coming challenge of farm transitions and the role of easements in that transition.

PA Department of Ag Update - President Knepper introduced PDA Bureau of Agricultural Preservation staff Doug Wolfgang. Doug thanked PFPA for the invitation. Doug summarized the funding sources for ag preservation and reported that statewide funding remains stable with contributions from the cigarette

tax, and environmental stewardship fund bolstered by Act 13 Marcellus Shale impact fee dollars. He reminded everyone to encumber 2015 funding by the end of 2016. Doug commented on the scarcity of topsoil when compared to the population as it exists today and as it will grow in the future, and the need to protect that topsoil in order to feed the world. Easements provide a great return on investment and administrators are reminded to utilize that fact to garner support whenever possible. The Bureau is working on a Preserved Farms Resource Center. Rick Day continues to update GIS information for easements throughout the State. PDA has tentatively finalized a cooperative agreement with the ACEP program and 2016 applications are under review. Counties should look to apply for 2017 ACEP in November of 2016. ALCAB continues to review ASA condemnation throughout the State. Doug clarified that NPDES permitting for storm water work is not a violation if it is necessary for agricultural production. PDA is reviewing the formula for fund distribution statewide, but no specific updates are available.

Ellen requested a memo from PDA detailing easement conveyance procedures to share with attorneys and landowners who resist the required conveyance process (recording of easement deed). John Howard agreed to provide this memo in the near future.

John Howard spoke briefly about the Farm Transition Center and a PDA survey regarding farm transition.

President Knepper presented retiring PFPA Member Jeff Zehr with the American Farmland Trust/PA Farmland Preservation Association Local Hero award and gift basket, and spoke about his positive impact on PFPA members and PA Ag Land Preservation as a whole. Jeff Zehr accepted and thanked the group.

Lunch – 12:29 PM *The Official Meeting remains open until the end of the day to permit action on any issues.*

President Knepper welcomed the group back from lunch at 1:24 PM and initiated a Panel Discussion regarding violations. Matt Knepper discussed a violation in Lancaster County involving a paintball operation on a preserved farm. Elizabeth Emlen discussed a case in Montgomery County involving a mulch operation on a preserved farm. Eric Naylor discussed a case in York County involving a proposed wedding venue. Matt Knepper discussed a second case in Lancaster County involving a proposed farm lodging venue. Doug Wolfgang discussed unique rural enterprise requests throughout the State. Discussion ensued.

President Knepper welcomed Andy Loza, whose remarks included commentary on Growing Greener 3, what we felt our impacts were, if any, to conducting inspections every other year, and PALTA efforts to measure the impact of ag easements on water quality in the Chesapeake Bay.

ADJOURNMENT & DOOR PRIZES - Matt Knepper presented door prizes.

Maria/Northampton moved to make Jeff Zehr a Member Emeritus. Tami/Berks seconded. No objections. Motions carried.

Ellen/Adams moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:14 PM. Sarah/Centre seconded. No objections. Motions carried.