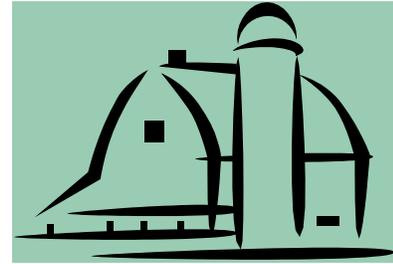


Greene County Farmland Preservation
19 South Washington Street, Suite 150
Waynesburg, PA 15370
724-852-5278



GREENE COUNTY FARMLAND PRESERVATION BOARD
MINUTES
AUGUST 25, 2010

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Cree at 6:18 p.m. at the Mezzanine Conference Room, 19 South Washington Street, Waynesburg, Pennsylvania. Those present were Bill Cree, Chairman; Dave Shipman, Vice Chairman; Rick Thistlethwaite, Treasurer; Archie Trader, Director; Jim Willis, Director; and Lisa Snider, District Manager, Greene County Conservation District.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no Public Comments.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Dave Shipman, the Minutes of the June 16th meeting were approved as mailed. Rick Thistlethwaite seconded. (Motion Passed)

IV. TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Thistlethwaite read the attached report as follows:

Checking Account - \$3,474.25
Easement Funds - \$96,794.00

A motion was made by Jim Willis to approve the Treasurer's Report as read. Dave Shipman seconded. (Motion Passed)

Lisa noted that a recent payment of \$450.00 was made to Attorney Greg Hook for final payment for work completed on the Petery Farm. Total amount paid to Greg Hook for the Petery easement is \$1,125.00.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

Board of Directors: William Cree III, Chairman; David Shipman, Vice-Chairman; Richard Thistlethwaite, Treasurer; Charles Day, Secretary; Carl Biddle; James Willis; Corbly Orndorff; Archie Trader, Commissioner

- a. Lisa announced that the Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Conference will be held in Gettysburg on October 26th and 27th. Registration forms will most likely be available at the next meeting.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

By Law Updates – The appointment of a Committee to review the current By-Laws was discussed at the June meeting. Lisa said that one change to be considered could be that of the current planning map that is mandated by the Bureau of Farmland Preservation and is used for ranking farms located in the county. A planning map for the program must be consistent with planning and development maps created for county and local comprehensive plans. She said that the current map is the map for Prime Farmland Soils and Soils of statewide importance, and is very broad and encompasses the whole County. She suggested that Greene County’s Comprehensive Plan be used to revise the planning map to target areas of development potential and growth. It is suggested that consultation with the County Planning Agency be consulted for this mapping. By just enhancing the current mapping to be consistent with local development potentials would increase the eligibility requirements so that parcels that are not high priority areas are not considered until those areas of higher development potential are addressed. This map can be updated as often as needed. Lisa also suggested that the PA Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Farmland Preservation Programs state minimum criteria for the program be reviewed to ensure that all criteria is addressed properly and review also, additional criteria that will allow the program to focus on areas of development potential. After discussion, it was decided that a committee of Bill Cree, Dave Shipman, Rick Thistlethwaite, and Jim Willis will meet in November to review the By-laws. They asked Lisa to review the By-Laws and note her suggestions.

Milesky Easement Purchases - Lisa reported that a meeting was held last week with Mr. Milesky, Mr. Cree, Mr. Shipman and she. Mr. Cree said the purpose of the meeting was to explain to Mr. Milesky the limits of available funding. He said they stressed, that “it is not all about the money”, but rather the preservation of the farm. Mr. Milesky has applied for around 300 acres for easement, but he would be willing to reduce the acreage because of limited conservation easement funds (approximately 110 acres could be offered). Mr. Shipman added that his main objective is to preserve “the home place”. To date, no word has been received from Mr. Milesky and the Board asked Lisa to contact him at the end of next week.

Ag Security Area – Halstead and Gapen - Lisa reported that the Gapen and Halstead Ag Security Area applications have been approved by the Greene Township Supervisors.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Farmland Preservation Administrative Funding - Since the last meeting, Lisa reported that due to state budget cuts, the Conservation District has been notified by the State Conservation Commission that funding for 2010-2011 will be eliminated by \$9,000; \$6,000 for the Ag Technician's salary and \$3,000 for the purchase of paper, copies, postage, etc. Lisa also said that the Conservation District Board, at their August 17th meeting, agreed to support the program until the Farmland Preservation Board can solicit local industries for financial assistance to offset the lost funding and reimburse the District. Lisa said that a letter has been drafted and the group discussed various companies to which it should be sent. They agreed that the letters should be sent as soon as possible, since many companies are now preparing their annual budgets. Chairman Cree agreed to personally deliver copies of the letter to Halliburton and Eastern America (both in his area).

Willis Application – Lisa said that she believes Laurel has completed the application. Also discussed was the time frame for the acceptance of the application. According to the By-laws, applications are accepted through November 30th; therefore applications would be presented to the board after that deadline.

VIII. DISCUSSION OF STAFF REPORTS

Lisa reported that she and Laurel attended the first Annual Southwestern Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation meeting in Bedford, Pennsylvania. She said that the meeting was very informative and issues associated with the landowner's compliance were discussed. She learned that ultimately it would be the County's responsibility to enforce easements or take court action if needed. Lisa also said that some county programs assess a fee to cover these costs. She explained that when a property owner agrees to an easement, a percentage of money can be put into a special fund at closing to cover the costs for the annual inspections, etc. Right now a Southwestern PA Board is working on a draft of this language and will be a pilot project for the State.

IX. NEXT MEETING

Changing the time of the September 15th meeting was discussed. It was decided to try holding a day-time meeting with the next meeting scheduled to be held on September 15th at 10:30 a.m.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjournment, the deadline for encumbering 2009 funds was discussed. It was explained that the 2009 funds (\$37,373) would need to be encumbered by December 31st, or they would be lost. Mr. Trader expressed the importance of getting an answer from Mr. Milesky as soon as possible and the Board asked Lisa to explain the situation to him.

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Dave Shipman to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 p.m. Rick Thistlethwaite seconded. (Motion Passed)

Transcribed from Meeting Tape By,

Rebecca K. Salosky
Fiscal Officer