

GREENE COUNTY FARMLAND PRESERVATION BOARD  
MINUTES  
RECONVENING OF THE SEPTEMBER 15, 2010 MEETING

I. RECONVENING

**On a motion by Corbly Orndorff, the September 15<sup>th</sup> meeting was reconvened on October 5<sup>th</sup> at 10:50 a.m. in the Mezzanine Conference Room, 19 South Washington Street, Waynesburg, Pennsylvania. Jim Willis**

**seconded.** Those present were Dave Shipman, Vice Chairman; Rick Thistlethwaite, Treasurer; Carl Biddle, Director; Corbly Orndorff, Director; Jim Willis, Director; Lisa Snider, District Manager, Greene County Conservation District; Laurel Rush, Ag Technician, Greene County Conservation District; and Becky Salosky, Fiscal Officer, Greene County Conservation District.

A revised meeting agenda was presented.

II. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Appraiser - Additional information was received from two appraisers regarding bids to complete the Farmland Preservation requirements. Laurel prepared a summary of this information (attached) which was mailed to all board members for review. She said that although she spoke to Joe Chico, the only formal bid received for the applications received to date was from Scott York for \$1,000 for the 53 acre Willis parcel and \$1,600 for the 130 acre Willis parcel. The contract includes a time frame of 30 days from the date that it is signed. **A motion was made by Carl Biddle to use Mr. Scott York, York Realty to complete the appraisal work. Rick Thistlethwaite seconded. (Motion Passed and the decision regarding the 53**

**acre or 130 acres is referred to later during the meeting)**

- b. Attorney for Easement Purchase and Title Search - Laurel reported that solicitations were made to four attorneys as directed by the board at the last meeting; Greg Hook, Brandon Meyers, Kirk King, and Kim Pratt to complete work for the Title Search and Easement Purchase. Kim Pratt could not complete the work in time and Kirk King never returned numerous phone calls. Greg Hook submitted a bid of \$150 per hour and Brandon Meyers bid was a flat rate of \$1,500. Since the Title Commitment/Title Insurance cost is determined by the appraisal, it is could not be included in the quote. Via e-mail, Attorney Hook indicated that he could meet the November 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. **After discussion, a motion was made by Carl Biddle to utilize Attorney Greg Hook, confirm with him the November 1<sup>st</sup> deadline, and ask that he inform the board immediately of any problems found in his research. Corbly Orndorff seconded. (Motion Passed)**
- c. Surveyor – Bids were not solicited. **A motion was made by Carl Biddle to obtain the services of Miles Davin as the surveyor. Jim Willis seconded. (Motion Passed)**
- d. Application Acceptance - One application, for the Jim Willis property, has been received for the Farmland Preservation Program. The current application consists of 2 parcels totaling 183.03 acres. Laurel presented the application and noted that it includes two parcels. According to past practices, and per the landowner's request, both parcels were scored separately. **A motion was made by Corbly Orndorff to accept the Willis application with two parcels. Rick Thistlethwaite seconded. (Motion Passed with one**

**abstention, Jim Willis, since he is the property owner).**

- e. Application Modification and Ranking - Laurel reported that the deadline for applications is by the close of business today, October 5<sup>th</sup> at 4:30. The board agreed to move forward with the ranking and that any applications received prior to the deadline must be ranked. If new applications are received a special meeting must be called.

The total acreage of the Willis farm is 268 acres with two parcels being offered for easement. These parcels to be considered for easements consist of 130 acres and 53 acres. Originally, only a \$50 application fee was received with the Willis application which included both parcels on the application, during the ranking process the applicant is given the chance to separate parcels submitted as long as an additional application fee is submitted for each parcel. If it is Mr. Willis' wish to preserve both parcels he may choose to separate the applications. Laurel noted that there is an older Conservation Plan, completed in 1983, for the whole farm and the property met the soils and the production requirements. After discussion, Mr. Willis decided to modify his original application to just include the 53 acre parcel and submit an additional application fee of \$50 for the 130 acre parcel. **A motion was made by Corbly Orndorff to accept the applications as presented. Carl Biddle seconded. (Motion Passed with one abstention, Jim Willis, since he is the property owner).**

Laurel reviewed the LESA ranking of the two parcels as follows. The 53 acre Willis parcel ranked higher, with the majority of the soils falling under the Class I-IV Soil Category. This parcel also contains a higher percentage of road frontage, crop land and land stewardship. Public water is available on both parcels and both have the same percentage of non-agricultural uses. The LESA

final ranking was as follows: the 53 acre Willis parcel had a score of 67.56 and the 130 acre Willis parcel had a score of 53.03. **After discussion, a motion was made by Rick Thistlethwaite to accept the farm ranking as presented by Laurel, which provides that the 53 acre parcel owned by Mr. Jim Willis to be ranked highest, if no other applications are received prior to the close of business. If additional applications are received, a special meeting will be called. Carl Biddle seconded. (Motion Passed with one abstention, Jim Willis, since he is the property owner).**

- f. Notification to High Ranking Applicant - Laurel distributed a draft of the letter to be mailed to the high ranking applicant, provided no additional applications are received. At this time, a request is made for a "payment of good faith" or an appraisal fee. In addition to the letter, a sample Deed of Easement, a W-9, and an Appraisal Release Form are mailed. A deadline of October 18, 2010 was set for the return of the above information.

### III. DISCUSSION OF STAFF REPORTS

Laurel noted that she received about 6 phone calls requesting additional information and/or applications for the program.

Lisa noted that she received an e-mail from Consol stating that at this time, they are unable to provide funding for the program. Should the situation change, they would reconsider.

### IV. NEXT MEETING

Lisa stated that a Special Meeting may be called if the Appraisal and Title Search information is received for the potential Willis easement

and found to be in order. It was noted that if this special meeting was called or prior to the regular meeting the County Solicitor, Cheryl Cowen will be forwarded and allowed time to review the offer letter prior to the board's approval. This will give the County adequate notice of a potential easement purchase by the program. Greg Hook will also need to review the document as well for the Board.

The next meeting will be November 17<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.

V. ADJOURNMENT

**With no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Rick Thistlethwaite to adjourn the meeting at 11:30 a.m. Carl Biddle seconded. (Motion Passed)**

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca K. Salosky  
Fiscal Officer  
Greene County Conservation District