

Greene County Farmland Preservation
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Greene County Farmland Preservation Minutes

July 15, 2015

Mezzanine Conference Room
Fort Jackson Building
Waynesburg, PA

I. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Bill Cree, III at 1:20 p.m. in the Mezzanine Conference Room, Fort Jackson Building, Waynesburg, PA.

Greene County Farmland Preservation Board (GCFLP) Members

Bill Cree, III, Chairman; Dave Shipman, Vice Chairman; Rick Thistlewaite, Treasurer; Richard Belding, Director; Jim Willis, Director; Corbly Orndorff, Township Supervisor; Charlie Day, Contractor; and Archie Trader, Greene County Commissioner.

Staff

Lisa Snider, District Manager, Greene County Conservation District (GCCD); and Karlie Wright, Agricultural Technician, GCCD.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Dave Shipman to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2015 meeting. Richard Belding seconded. (Motion Passed)

IV. TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Thistlewaite read the Treasurer's report as follows:

FLP Board Fundraising Account - \$5,628.77

Easement Funds – \$121,903.54

Dept. of Agriculture – \$100,665.54

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

County of Greene - \$21,238.00

State Funds required to be encumbered by 12/31/15 - \$15,379.54

Ms. Wright commented that she reviewed and updated the financial records and the previous amount was about \$4,000 more than what was available to the GCFLP board through state and county funds. Of the state funds, \$15,379.54 remaining from 2014 allocation should be encumbered by the end of this year. Ms. Wright explained that the \$15,379.54 can be encumbered towards a farm even if more funds are needed to preserve the farm. This means that these funds can be encumbered as a partial payment towards a farm that has been chosen as the next highest rank farm. Then future funds can be utilized over the next few years and set aside for the easement purchase. Future application rounds must be frozen for this to happen.

Mr. Orndorff did not realize that we could save money and stated that if we can save money then we do not always need to offer someone less of their easement value. He also said that it can be hard to encourage people to sell their easements for less value and that it at least needs to be close. Mr. Cree said that while we can suspend applications and save money, it is nice if we do not have to because we are a small program and we can preserve more farms.

A motion was made by Jim Willis to accept the treasurer's report as read. Corbly Orndorff seconded. (Motion Passed)

V. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

a. Richard Phillips Easement

Ms. Wright stated that an updated addendum had to be completed for the Phillips' application because of a difference in acreage and how it was calculated. This changed the amount that the county was paying for the easement and official action by the County Commissioners was needed. This was on the agenda for the July 16th Greene County Commissioners meeting and it is intended that it would be approved.

b. Bylaw Updates – Committee Members: Dave Shipman and Richard Belding.

Ms. Wright is currently working on going through the bylaws so that when the committee meets there is a more clear indication of what needs to be changed. She borrowed a set of guidelines from another county to help her compare programs and look for potential problems and ideas that would assist with the update.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

a. Request for a Nine Member to include a County Commissioner

Mr. Orndorff thought that this was a very good idea because it would help encourage county involvement, communication and participation in the program even if the county had 3 commissioners who are not involved in agriculture. Mr. Trader also thought that it is important to keep the commissioners involved so they understood what the county's role is in the program and would promote a good relationship between the GCFLP board members and GC Commissioners. Ms. Wright explained that the County Commissioners would need to write a resolution that adds 2 board members to the GCFLP Board and then the bylaws are to be updated and forwarded to the PA Bureau of Farmland Preservation for their approval.

A motion was made by Richard Belding to start the process of adding 2 board members to the GCFLP Board. Corbly Orndorff seconded. (Motion Passed)

b. A request was made to Change the Program Administrator from Lisa Snider to Karlie Wright.

A motion was made to change the program administrator from Lisa Snider to Karlie Wright. Richard Belding seconded. (Motion Passed)

c. Change Application Period in Bylaws (Action)

Ms. Wright stated that when she spoke with other program administrators and the PA Bureau of Farmland Preservation it was realized that the application period can be open for the entire year, January 1st to December 31st. At the following January of the next year the LESA scores and rankings would be presented and easement application would be chosen. This would allow an entire year to encumber funds and prepare the easement package. If the board so chooses to move forward with this amendment to the bylaws now, Ms. Wright update Board's bylaws now and have them approved in time open the application period as of January 1, 2016. Several members commented that we have always been up against the clock and this might be a good time to do this.

A motion was made by Jim Willis to change the application period to January 1st to December 31st each year. Dave Shipman seconded. (Motion Passed)

d. 2015 GCFLP Agricultural Easements: Jim Willis withdrawal parcels and Ranking Amendment (Action)

Mr. Willis indicated that he would like to withdraw his applications because he does not believe that he will have a clear title in time. The GCFLP Board requested that Mr. Willis send a formal letter withdrawing both parcels from this year's ranking.

A motion was made by Corbly Orndorff to ask Mr. Willis if he could send the GCFLP a formal letter stating that he would like to withdraw his applications. Charlie Day seconded. (Motion Passed, Jim Willis abstained)

Updated Ranking:

- a. Jim Willis (53ac), Cumberland Township – LESA Score: 70.74 – Withdrawn
- b. Jim Willis (30ac), Cumberland Township – LESA Score: 64.45 – Withdrawn
- c. Tom Willis (169ac), Cumberland Township – LESA Score: 31.45 – Pending
- d. Celesta Hegedis (99.43ac), Cumberland Township – LESA Score: 28.11

Ms. Wright stated that since this farm parcel is 169 acres, it may be appraised for a higher value than the amount we have in funds. This is a case where we may have to save some money. Ms. Wright also stated that the \$121,903.54 that we have is using all of our county funds. So if we use everything we have right now towards this, then we are not going to have any county funds left over. Mr. Trader asked if we can use funds from next year to help pay for this year's easement purchase and Ms. Wright told him yes. Ms. Wright stated that since Mr. Jim Willis withdrew, the next step in our ranking is Mr. Tom Willis.

A motion was made by Richard Belding to send Tom Willis correspondence indicating that his application is being considered as the 2015 high ranking farm and the GCFLP Board would like to move forward and purchase an easement of his 169 acre property. Dave Shipman seconded. (Motion Passed)

VIII. OUTREACH

Greene County Fair – Karlie will set up a display there for FLP and ASAs.

Mr. Belding wanted Ms. Wright to take the displays to Whiteley and/or Perry township meetings to let them know about the programs. Mr. Cree commented that the board members were welcome to come in and see Ms. Wright or help her answer questions.

Karlie is working to set up meetings with Whiteley and Perry township to encourage them to create Agricultural Security Areas.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

Karlie Wright discussed her staff report that was sent to the board members.

X. Next Meeting August 19, 2015 at 1:00PM. Destination to be determined.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Dave Shipman to adjourn the meeting. Charlie Day seconded. (Motion Passed)

Immediately following the meeting, the board was polled to change the meeting from August 19, 2015 to August 20, 2015 at 1PM due to the potential conflict with the Pennsylvania State Ag Progress Days.