***Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Association***

2014 Fall Business Meeting

**Riverside Inn, Cambridge Springs, PA**

**Crawford County Hosts**

October 1, 2014

**ATTENDANCE**

**Executive Committee**

Ellen Dayhoff, Adams County **-** Vice President

Cindy Kahley, Union County **-** Treasurer

Donna Fisher, Blair County **-** Member-at-Large

**Guests**

Bob Hopkins, Crawford County Ag Land Preservation Board

Scott Preston, Crawford County Ag Land Preservation Board

John Tautin, Crawford County Ag Land Preservation Board

Arlene Rodriguez, Crawford County Planning Commission

Amy Schmidt, Crawford County Planning Commission

Doug Wolfgang, Director, PA Bureau of Farmland Preservation

Sally McMurray, Professor of History, Penn State University

Victoria Michaels, Independence Conservancy

Peggy Mogush, French Creek Valley Conservancy

Erica Bartlett, Crawford County Citizen

**County Administrators and County Staff**

Cindy Sanderson and Mark Clowney, Adams County

Chris Goswick, Allegheny County

Jessica Schaub, Armstrong

Joe Petrella, Beaver County

Richard Harvey, Bucks County

Ronal Fodor, Butler County

Bill Gladden (Proxy), Chester County

Tracey Crawford, Crawford County

Dick Deiss (proxy), Crawford County

Stephanie Williams, Cumberland County

Laurel Rush (proxy), Greene County

Kevin Baer (proxy), Lancaster County

Elizabeth Emlen, Montgomery County

Mary Davis (proxy), Potter County

Susan Moon, Somerset

Caroline Sinchar, Washington County

Betty Reefer, Westmoreland County

Eric Naylor (proxy), York County

**WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, RECOGNITIONS, AND MILESTONES**

Vice President Dayhoff welcomed everyone and thanked the Crawford County Board for their efforts to organize the Fall Meeting and Tours. Vice President Dayhoff led introductions around the room. Ellen Dayhoff announced that Adams County plans to host a 20,000 acre celebration next year in conjunction with their 25 year anniversary. It was also noted that the Department plans to hold a 500,000 acre ceremony and State Board Meeting October 16th in York County.

**OPENING**

Vice President Dayhoffcalled the meeting to order at 9:48 AM.

Membership Roll Call was read by Cindy Sanderson. Nineteen voting members were present determining a quorum.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The May 1, 20143 business meeting minutes were distributed in the conference packets. ***Cindy Kahley/Union moved to approve the May 1, 2014 minutes. Dick Deiss/Crawford seconded the motion. No objections. Motion carried.***

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

Treasurer Kahley distributed and discussed the Treasurer’s Report with the balance on hand September 23, 2014 as $4,236.50. ***Dick Diess/Crawford moved to accept the Treasurer’s Report. Donna Fisher/Blair 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 four outside contributing memberships and 1 Sponsor. ***Laurel Rush/Greene moved to accept the Membership report. Elizabeth Emlen/Montgomery seconded. No Objections. Motion carried.***

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Executive Committee** – Ellen Dayhoff reported that there were no reasons for the committee to convene since the last PFPA meeting. A Moment of Silence was requested to honor the passing of Alan Mussleman, a leader in national, state and local Farmland Preservation efforts.

**Public Relations Committee –** Cindy Kahley reported that Ag Progress Days (APD) was held August 12-14, 2014. She thanked all that participated in the event as staff for the exhibit. Everything went well. It was noted that the PFPA table cover/banner needs to be utilized as much as possible for events.

Donna Fisher gave an update on the PFPA website and highlighted changes/additions to the site. Changes include the addition of a “Meeting Materials” section and a “State Summaries” section. She again encouraged Counties to submit photographs of preserved farms to post (17 counties now have photos submitted) and items of interest for the “News and Notes” section. Still looking into the possibility of a member’s only sign in or chat area. Dayhoff suggested that Donna provide an email through the PFPA Coordinators List serve when she adds items to the site or makes significant changes. Reefer suggested that a press release could be developed for individual counties to utilize for the promotion of the site as public information and outreach. Emlen suggested that the site could potentially hold an historical archive of PFPA meeting minutes.

**Conference Committee –**Ellen Dayhoff/Adams reported that the Spring 2015 PFPA/PALTA Conference will be held in Gettysburg at the Wyndham Hotel, May 7-9, 2015. May 6th will be a tour day; May 7th will be the PFPA Business Meeting.

Fall 2015 – Potential exists to have an afternoon session following a State Board meeting. Travel is sometimes a limiting factor for attendance.

Susan Moon/Somerset County suggested that Somerset County could potentially host the Fall 2015 Conference with tours of the Elephant Farm and Flight 93 Memorial.

Spring 2016 – Discussion was held to continue partnership with the PALTA conference planned for State College.

Vice President Dayhoff reported that PFPA may call for special meetings to discuss “hot topics” between scheduled conferences. Members may call the President to suggest a meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS –** None

**NEW BUSINESS** - None

**Policy Committee Report and Policy Priority List** – Elizabeth Emlen/Montgomery and Betty Reefer/Westmoreland gave a report on legislation of interest. Act 83 passage protecting landowners related to hunting accidents and Act 130 declaring that high tunnels are not characterized as permanent structures were discussed. The 2014 Policy Position Document was distributed as well as a survey summary as prepared by President Knepper following the Spring 2014 meeting.

Reefer led discussion related to PA Act 13 of 2012 and differences between an “Impact Fee” and “Severance Tax”. As written, PA Act 13’s Impact Fee assures that a percentage of funds are distributed to impacted entities locally and environmental interests. A Severance Tax could potentially go to the General Fund with little assurance that local or environmental interests are considered.

***Motion by Betty Reefer/Westmoreland for PFPA to remove “Severance Tax” language from any priority statements; to support the continuance of PA Act 13 of 2012; and to support a dedication of a portion of PA Act 13 of 2012 funds specifically to easement purchases where programs exist. Second by Donna Fisher/Blair. Motion Carried.***

***Motion by Betty Reefer/Westmoreland to change Priority #4 to read “We support amendments to PA Act 13 of 2012, Marcellus Shale Legacy Funds, to provide a dedicated portion of funding to Farmland Preservation”. Seconded by Laurel Rush/Greene. Motion carried.***

Reefer led discussion related to proposed deletion of several policy positions that have been addressed through State actions, thereby negating the need as a position. Discussion was held relative to item by item importance of existing policy positions.

***Motion by Betty Reefer/Westmoreland to remove items 4, 6, 7, 12, 13, 15, 16 and 17 from the policy position document under the title of Act 43 and Regulations. Seconded by Rich Harvey/Bucks. Motion to amend by Betty Reefer/Westmoreland to remove items 4, 6, 12, 13, 15 and 16 from the policy position document under title of Act 43 and Regulations. Seconded by Rich Harvey/Bucks. Motion carried.***

***Motion by Betty Reefer/Westmoreland to change item #2 under the title of Tax Incentives to include the word “Federal” related to estate taxes. Seconded by Rich Harvey/Bucks. Motion carried.***

***Motion by Betty Reefer/Westmoreland to change Item #1 under title of Other to add the words “and streamline” and to change reference to FRPP to ALE. Seconded by Laurel Rush/Greene. Motion to amend by Betty Reefer/ Westmoreland to also suggest a third item under the title of Other to state “We support Farmland Transition Education Efforts.” Seconded by Laurel Rush/Greene. Motion carried.***

***Motion by Donna Fisher/Blair to approve a Top Four Policy Priority List by survey response to read as follows:***

1. ***We oppose any proposal that would transfer funds from cigarette tax collections, which are currently dedicated to farmland preservation, to be used for any other purpose.***
2. ***We support amendment to PA Act 13 of 2012, Marcellus Shale Legacy Funds to provide a dedicated portion of funding to Farmland Preservation.***
3. ***We support the option for counties to charge reasonable fees for administrative services associated with the acquisition, monitoring and enforcement of agricultural conservation easements.***
4. ***We support the option for the owner of a preserved farm or farm proposed for preservation to voluntarily relinquish their right to construct an additional residential structure and/or their right for subdivision.***

***Seconded by Elizabeth Emlen/ Montgomery. Motion Carried.***

The members present acknowledged that the Policy Positions Document should be dynamic and reviewed for future Policy Positions as needed. The Policy Document should serve as a guide for organizational decisions and may not be all inclusive.

**PFPA Roundtable** – None

**Lunch –** Opening remarks by Crawford County Commissioner and informational presentation by French Creek Valley Conservancy.

***The Official Meeting remains open until the end of the day to permit action on any issues.***

Vice President Dayhoff welcomed the group back from lunch.

**PA Department of Ag Update** - Vice President Dayhoff introduced PDA Bureau of Agricultural Preservation staff Doug Wolfgang. Doug thanked PFPA for the invitation. PDA is approaching the 500,000 acre milestone. A ceremony is planned on October 16th at the Flinchbaugh Farm Market in York County. The Governor is scheduled to attend. A selection of PA products (mostly PA Preferred labeled) will be sampled. He stated that PA ranks 3rd in the nation in Direct Farm Marketing/Sales of products. 60 farms are under review for State Board consideration in October.

Doug also discussed the review and suggested changes to Chapter 138e regulations related to Conservation Easement Purchase. Doug met with President Knepper and Vice President Dayhoff to discuss changes. A comment period will be advertised once published in the PA Bulletin. Significant changes include: Additions to the Definition section; changes to Appraisal section allowing electronic submittal and stating that comparable sales should be within the last 5 years; Removal of the 25 year provision; changes related to Act 61; changes related to the PA Farmland online system and elimination of hard copy requirements of all but the Sales Agreement; discussion of Conveyance of tracts versus Subdivision and consideration of reimbursements in case of imminent domain proceedings.

Doug discussed PDA’s participation in the Federal Ag Land Easement (ALE) Purchase Program. The department hopes to have PA become a “certified entity”. Pennsylvania’s program does not meet all the federal criteria. Stumbling blocks include Subdivision; Impervious Surface; Building Envelope identified at the time of easement and Oil and Gas restrictions still limits 2/3 of PA. Pennsylvania has utilized over 36 million in Federal Funds since 1996. GIS mapping is still a priority for PDA and a contract has been prepared with Rick Day at PSU to link County GIS data (where developed) with the state system. Reminder that year end encumbrances are needed by 12/31/2014. Approximately 12.8 million is outstanding state wide. Doug will be attending the American Farmland Trust Conference representing PA in KY. Doug also thanked Crawford County for the Hospitality and Conference Organization.

**Preservation Priority Mapping-**

Vice President Dayhoff introduced Stephanie Williams, Cumberland County and Mark Clowney from Adams County. Stephanie and Mark gave an overview of their use of priority mapping in their respective counties and county farmland programs. Both are run through the County Planning Departments. Efficient use of mapping and GIS can have a positive result in farmland application ranking and targeting. Handouts provided.

**Utilizing Pictometry**

Vice President Dayhoff introduced Arlene Rodriguez, Assistant Planning Director from Crawford County Planning Commission. Ms. Rodriguez explained the use of Pictometry as a computer based analytical tool that enhances County GIS applications. Aerial flights have both ortho and oblique projections allowing for better measurement tools and visual representations. Buffer criteria within LESA rankings can be easily determined. Elevation tools related to items such as Floodplains can be utilized. Program allows for web based access.

**Committee List** – Vice President Dayhoff reviewed the existing Committee and Subcommittee List. No changes were noted.

Adjournment and Door Prizes – Ellen Dayhoff presented door prizes.

***Cindy Kahley/Union moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:30 PM. Joe Petrella/Beaver County seconded. No objections. Motions carried.***