***Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Association***

2015 Spring Business Meeting

**Wyndham Hotel, Gettysburg, PA**

**Adams County Hosts**

May 7, 2015

**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**

Russell Redding, Pennsylvania 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

Sherri Clayton, Director of Planning, Adams County

Randy Phiel, Chairman, Adams County Commissioners

Jim Baird, American Farmland Trust

Neal Fogle, Penn State Extension

John Truack, Penn State Extension

Jeff Marshall, The Heritage Conservancy

**County Administrators and County Staff**

Cindy Sanderson, Adams County

Joe Petrella, Beaver County

Tami Hildebrand, Berks County

Rich Huether, Blair County

Emily Dekar, Bradford County

Brian Zeidnar, Bradford County

Richard Harvey, Bucks County

Suzanne Foust, Clinton County

Tracey Crawford, Crawford County

Dick Deiss, Crawford County - proxy

Stephanie Williams, Cumberland County

Rochelle Barvinchack, Franklin County - proxy

Angie Foltz, Lebanon County - proxy

Jeff Zehr, Lehigh County

Diane Matthews-Gehringer, Lehigh County

Elizabeth Emlen, Montgomery County

Maria Bentzoni, Northampton County

Mary Davis, Potter County - proxy

Caroline Sinchar, Washington County

Patty McCandless, York County

Dave Boose, York County

Eric Naylor, York County

**Other Contributing Members**

Sally McMurray, Former Professor of History, Penn State University

John Akers, Beford County Conservation District Board

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

President Knepper welcomed everyone and thanked the Conference Committee, Ellen Dayhoff, and staff for their efforts to organize the Spring Meeting and bonfire. President Knepper lead introductions around the room. Patty McCandless announced that York County has preserved over 40,000 acres including four easement donations. Ellen Dayhoff announced that Adams County has reached the 20,000 acre milestone which coincides with the Adam’s County Program’s 25th anniversary, and a celebration is being planned for Fall, likely to coincide with a State Board meeting.

Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding welcomed the group with special thanks, and a reflection on agriculture as both an economic and natural resource, as well as the importance of ensuring that future landowners can honor their easements.

Randy Phiel, Chairman of the Adams County Board of Commissioners, welcomed the group to Adams County and thanked Russell Redding for attending. Commissioner Phiel emphasized the importance of maintaining a balance between development and agriculture throughout PA municipalities.

Sherri Clayton welcomed the group and discussed new mapping initiatives within Adams County to target agricultural preservation.

**OPENING**

President Kneppercalled the meeting to order at 10:08 AM.

Membership Roll Call was read by Secretary Walter. 23 voting members were present determining a quorum.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The October 1, 2014 business meeting minutes were distributed in the conference packets. ***Ellen/Adams moved to approve the October 1, 2014 minutes. Joe/Beaver seconded the motion. No objections. Motion carried.***

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

Treasurer Kahley distributed and discussed the Treasureer’s Report with the balance on hand May 7, 2015 as $5,210.79. ***Joe/Beaver moved to accept the Treasurer’s Report. Tami/Berks seconded. No objections. Motion carried.***

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

Cindy Sanderson presented the Membership Report. Out of 67 Counties, 57 have an Ag Land Preservation Program. 27 Counties have paid for voting membership, leaving 30 non-member Counties. There are three outside contributing memberships, and two sponsors. ***Jeff/Lehigh moved to accept the Membership report. Joe/Beaver 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. A job openings page has been added to the website as well.

Cindy Kahley reported that the PFPA Ag Progress Days (APD) booth was staffed by 11 administrators. Individuals from 39 counties and 9 states visited the booth for a total of 159 visitors. There was a request for a laptop with access to the county websites and programs for 2015. The cost for a booth for APD 2015 (August 18-20) will be $350. A discussion of the mileage reimbursement rate followed as mileage reimbursement was a major expense in 2014 (~$800). Elizabeth Emlen suggested that PFPA use a reduced mileage reimbursement rate of $0.25 per mile

***Maria/Northampton moved to approve a reduced mileage reimbursement rate for APD of $0.25 per mile, to be requested only by counties that cannot afford the travel expense in their own budget. Ellen/Adams seconded. No objections. Motion carried.***

**Conference Committee –**Ellen thanked Cindy Sanderson and Mark Clowney for all of their assistance with planning the meeting. A discussion regarding the location of the Fall 2015 PFPA meeting was followed by an informal vote between Lancaster or other areas of the State. The group indicated that a meeting in Lancaster County would be preferred, to be followed up by a doodle poll to confirm that the location is convenient for members who were not present. The Spring 2016 meeting will be held in State College, PA (Centre County), again in conjunction with the PALTA conference. The Fall 2016 meeting will be held in Somerset.

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

* HB458: there were questions regarding the definition of a utility and why wind generation is not considered a utility.

***Cindy/Union moved to that PFPA take a supporting position on SB 859. Rich/Bucks seconded. No objections. Motion carried.***

President Knepper stated that corrected policy positions from the Fall 2014 PFPA meeting are available on the PFPA website.

**OLD BUSINESS –** None

**NEW BUSINESS –** None

**PA Department of Ag Update** - President Knepper introduced PDA Bureau of Agricultural Preservation staff Doug Wolfgang. Doug thanked PFPA for the invitation. Doug 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. Governor Wolf’s proposal to switch from an impact fee to a severance tax should have no net impact on ag preservation funding. Doug reported that the Wolf Administration feels strongly about farm transition and that the Centre for Farm Transitions will likely be expanded with emphasis on preserved farmland and young farmers. The Bureau of Farmland Preservation is exploring a tax credit in lieu of easement purchase as well as Growing Greener III and new mapping initiatives. Sheryl Cook is assisting the Department in implementing a financial tracking segment to the PAFarmland website. Regarding the ACEP (formerly FRPP) program, the Bureau is waiting for final rule on draft language for a cooperative agreement, with questions focused primarily on impervious surface allotments, building envelope restrictions, and oil and gas rights. Doug invited new admins to trainings being held throughout the State. The PA Department of Agriculture has partnered with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission for the Year of the Pennsylvania Barn. Doug informed the group that the Bureau of Farmland Preservation is advising the pipeline infrastructure task force regarding the weighting of the agricultural resource as future pipelines are sited. Clean and Green proposed regulations should be released by July 2015. There was also a discussion of easement ID numbering systems and a proposed policy to allow easement landowners to subdivide off two acres for a residence.

**Lunch –** 11:50 AM ***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 1:06 PM and introduced Jim Baird (AFT), who introduced Kevin Case of the Land Trust Alliance for a discussion of issues related to funding and support for opportunities related to water quality on preserved land.

Maria Bentzonie welcomed the group to the afternoon workshop session titled “Planning for Conserving PA Agriculture,” and introduced Neal Fogle and John Truack (both from PSU), who summarized the municipal tools available to protect farmland and methods for integrating planning and agricultural preservation.

President Knepper introduced Maria Bentzoni, Angie Foltz, Rich Harvey, and Jeff Marshall (Heritage Conservancy) for the second afternoon session, “Municipal Involvement in Preservation.” The panel shared their personal experience with partnership programs designed to leverage municipal dollars in order to receive a greater proportion of State matching funds for preservation. Cost of community Services (COCS) studies and their relevance to agricultural preservation were also discussed.

***Maria/Northampton moved to support Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture requests for PSU to update COCS studies. Tami/Berks seconded. No objections. Motions carried.***

**ADJOURNMENT & DOOR PRIZES -** Matt Knepper presented door prizes.

***Joe/Beaver moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:30 PM. Maria/Northampton seconded. No objections. Motions carried.***