

PENNSYLVANIA FARMLAND PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION
2007 SPRING BUSINESS MEETING
Penn Stater Conference Center
State College, PA
May 10, 2007

ATTENDANCE

Executive Committee:

Frank Burggraf, Bedford County - President
Elizabeth Emlen, Montgomery County - Vice-President & Acting Secretary
Pat McCandless, York County – Treasurer
Ellen Dayhoff, Adams County - Member at Large

Guests:

Jim Baird, American Farmland Trust
John Akers, Bureau of Farmland Preservation
Brooke Duer, Bureau of Farmland Preservation
Wayne Grube, Bureau of Farmland Preservation
Dawn Patrick, Bureau of Farmland Preservation
Doug Wolfgang, Bureau of Farmland Preservation
Jackie Kramer, Farm & Natural Lands Trust
Barry Frantz, NRCS
Martha Joseph, NRCS
Kerry Golden, PA Agricultural & Rural Affairs Committee, House
Kristin Ebersole, PA Agricultural & Rural Affairs Committee, Senate
Bill Wehry, PA Department of Agriculture Deputy Secretary
Andy Loza, PA Land Trust Association
Mike Anderson

County Administrators and County Staff:

Mark Clowney, Adams County
Cindy Sanderson, Adams County
Jessica Schaub, Armstrong County
Spurgeon Shilling, Armstrong County
Joe Petrella, Beaver County
John Hudack, Beaver County
Donna Fisher, Blair County
Rich Huether, Blair County
Audrey Gray, Cambria County (proxy for Mark Stockley)
Norm Lathbury, Centre County
Kim Gordon, Chester County
Santina Devine, Chester County
Sue Foust, Clinton County
Kevin McCaslin, Crawford County
Dick Deiss, Crawford County
Stephanie Williams, Cumberland County
Rebecca Weiser, Cumberland County
Matt Elwell, Erie County
Ross Metz, Huntington County
Jim Resh, Indiana County
Ron Taverno, Juniata / Mifflin Counties
Nancy Ambler, Lancaster County

Kevin Baer, Lancaster County
Bill Jones, Lancaster County
Brett Lentz, Lebanon County
Jeff Zehr, Lehigh County
Lucy Berilla, Perry County
Jay Bagley, Sullivan County
Lynn Ottabiani, Sullivan County
Cindy Kahley, Union County
Heather Wilcox, Warren County
Jack Angove, Warren County
Betty Reefer, Westmoreland County

OPENING

Frank Burggraf opened the meeting at 9:30 by welcoming new administrators Matthew Elwell of Erie County, Heather Wilcox of Warren County, and new member Betty Reefer of Westmoreland County. Westmoreland had been a member in previous years, and has now re-joined PFPA.

The member poll determined that 22 voting members were present.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

In reviewing the minutes of the Fall 2006 meeting, It was noted that Betty Reefer, Sue Foust, John Akers, Diana Hoopes, and Kim Gordon were all present at the meeting, but not listed. The minutes should list Mr. Akers as a guest, and Ms. Reefer, Ms. Foust, Ms. Hoopes, and Ms. Gordon as county administrators / staff. Additionally, Kevin Baer should have been listed in Lancaster County, not Chester.

A motion was made by Patty McCandless to accept the minutes as corrected, and was seconded by Norm Lathbury. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Patty McCandless reported that she had a letter confirming the tax-exempt status of PFPA as a 501.c.3 organization. She also presented the Treasurer's Report. The balance on May 9, 2007 was \$3534.04.

A motion was made by Norm Lathbury to approve the Treasurer's Report, and was seconded by Joe Petrella. Motion carried.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership

Ellen Dayhoff reported that there are currently 29 voting members and 14 contributing members of PFPA. Frank Burggraf encouraged each member present to encourage his or her neighboring counties to join if they have not already. A list of current members will be distributed by Cindy Sanderson within ten days.

Display

Patty McCandless reported that York County presently has the display. It will be used for Ag Progress Days (APD), August 14 to 16, 2007. The cost to PFPA for the APD booth would be \$200.

A motion was made by Patty McCandless to approve expenditure of \$200 for the PFPA booth at Ag Progress Days this year, and was seconded by Brett Lentz. Motion carried.

Norm Lathbury asked for volunteers to staff the booth for a few hours each during that time. He said that the booth would have a list of each county's farmland preservation representative with contact information.

Website

Sherri Clayton will no longer be the web designer, but Sue Foust will take over. She is part of a local internet business, KCNet (Keystone Community Network). PFPA currently pays \$108 per year for its site. Norm Lathbury suggested trying Sue's services for a year. The information would be sent to Information Coordinator Cindy Sanderson, the executive board would approve it, then Cindy would send it to Sue to post on the PFPA website. Sue mentioned that voting members could have a password, in order to review not-yet-approved minutes on the website.

A motion was made by Betty Reefer to approve up to \$200 for KCNet to maintain the PFPA website, and was seconded by Jeff Zehr. Motion carried.

Other – Logo contest

Ellen Dayhoff informed the members that the logo contest would have a deadline of two weeks before the next meeting (Fall 2007). The winner will be announced then. Then a banner will be made with the new logo. The cost to produce the banner will be around \$600. A vote to approve that expenditure may be requested at the next meeting. Each county Farm Board will have the task of notifying art classes of the logo contest within their counties, and submit the winning entry to PFPA. Seniors graduating in 2007 would not be eligible. Ellen would like to order more PFPA shirts, but may wait until after a new logo is approved, so that the shirts would be available at the Spring 2008 meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

1. By-Laws Amendments – Ellen Dayhoff distributed proposed changes to the PFPA bylaws. Each voting member present got a copy. She asked for any comments to be returned to her by the end of June. Voting members not present today will get a copy of the proposed changes via e-mail.
2. Insurance – Liability insurance may still be an issue. There was discussion about whether the appointment of an administrator to PFPA by the County Commissioners would place that administrator under a county insurance policy. Members were encouraged to ask their legal advisors.

NEW BUSINESS

1. American Farmland Trust (AFT) Conference Scholarship – Rebecca Wiser, Cumberland County, attended the 2006 conference on a PFPA scholarship. She gave a brief update on the conference, held in Newark, Delaware. A written description of Rebecca's experience was included in the registration folder.
2. AFT 2008 conference -- The next conference, scheduled for 2008 is planned for Colorado. Ellen Dayhoff will provide more information at later meetings.
3. Distribution of workshop materials to members only. There was discussion on distributing materials to members who are unable to attend meetings. Use of a password would be a way to allow materials to be distributed to all members.

4. Fall 2007 Workshop – Norm Lathbury informed the members that the next workshop will be held in Lehigh and Northampton Counties in the fall. So far, the date is not certain, but the organizers will try to avoid holidays and State Farm Board meeting dates.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. PA Land Trust Association (PALTA) director Andy Loza spoke about proposed legislation on land taking by federal eminent domain, now being considered by Congress. Such a taking could negatively impact preserved farmland in Pennsylvania, partly because the state could lose control of condemnation review. Information is available on the PALTA website www.conserveland.org.

A motion was made by Betty Reefer that PFFPA support PALTA's position on this topic. It was seconded by Patty McCandless. Motion carried.

2. Coal bed methane (CBM) extraction -- Betty Reefer described a situation in some western PA counties, in which mined coal sites contain a type of gas, coal bed methane. The ownership of the gas rights and the subsequent extraction of the gas may have a negative impact on preserved farms. One possible solution would be for the Agricultural Conservation Easement (ACE) deed holder to be named as a "surface owner" in the deed. Frank Burggraf will discuss this idea with Agriculture Secretary Dennis Wolff. It was suggested that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) be asked to support PFFPA in this issue.

A motion was made by Betty Reefer to support Westmoreland County's comments and to support making the easement holder a surface owner, and mail letters to appropriate legislators like the Energy Committee. The motion was seconded by Patty McCandless. Motion carried

A motion was made by Ellen Dayhoff that Frank Burggraf send a letter to Secretary Wolff asking DEP to review more thoroughly their gas exploration permit question of whether a farm is preserved. Seconded by Lucy Berilla, motion carried.

3. Kerry Golden and Kristen Ebersole provided members with an legislation update. There was discussion on bills relevant to farm preservation: SB533 (affordable housing), SB708 (Act 319), proposed House bills regarding allowing trails on preserved farms, wind power on Act 319 land, and House Bills 132, 297, 414, and 61 on mineral rights.
4. The new American Farmland Trust representative for the Northeast, Jim Baird, spoke briefly

A motion was made by Norm Lathbury to adjourn the meeting, and was seconded by Joe Petrella. Motion carried.

The business meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Emlen, Acting Secretary