

**CHESTER COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD
MINUTES**

May 22, 2018 at 2:00 PM - GSC – Room 250

1. Call to Order

Chairwoman Melba Matthews called the May 22, 2018 meeting of the Agricultural Land Preservation Board (ALPB) to order at 2:01 pm, in room 250, Chester County Government Services Center.

The following Board Members were in attendance: Melba Matthews, Eli Silberman, Richard Abbott, Bill Covaleski, and Don Cairns.

Staff: William Gladden, Geoff Shellington, Mason Gilbert, and Linda Williams.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes

The Board meeting minutes from April 24, 2018 were approved. Motioned by Bill Covaleski, Eli Silberman seconds. Motion Carries.

4. State Ag Easement Status

2015 Round

Hawthorne, Judson & Stayce – Offer Accepted – West Fallowfield Township
Pearson, Dean – Settled Easement – West Nottingham Township

2016 Round

Esch, John – Settled Easement – West Caln Township

Fisher, Christian – Settled Easement – Elk Township

Handy, William – Offer Accepted – Valley Township

Hutchison Farms – Offer Accepted – Penn Township

McElhenny, David – Offer Accepted – Honey Brook Township

Meister, Carl – Offer Accepted – West Bradford Township

Neal, Frank – Settled Easement – West Caln Township

Newswanger, Larry – Offer Accepted – Sadsbury Township

Schulz, Robert – Offer Accepted – Franklin Township

Stoltzfus, Christian – Settled Easement – Honey Brook Township

Umble, Ken – Offer Accepted – West Sadsbury Township

Walton Farms – Offer Accepted – West Fallowfield Township

Westlake Land Company – Settled Easement – Honey Brook Township

2017 Round

Astle, Arthur – Offer Accepted – Lower Oxford Township

Buchanan, Sherry – Settled Easement – Elk Township

Glenroy & Glenknockie – Offer Extended – Lower Oxford, East and West Nottingham Townships

L & T Landholdings – Offer Accepted – Penn Township

Helfferich, William – Offer Accepted – Warwick Township

Martin, Christina – Board Review – West Caln Township

Moore, James – Settled Easement – East Nantmeal Township

Reyburn, Holly #1 – Offer Accepted – Upper Oxford Township

Reyburn, Holly #2 – Offer Accepted – Upper Oxford Township

Roberts, Ken – Offer Accepted – London Britain Township

Rohrer, Gerald – Offer Accepted – Upper Oxford Township

Stoltzfus, Benuel – Offer Accepted – West Caln Township

Stoltzfus, Henry & Sadie – Offer Extended – Honey Brook Township

Stoltzfus, John et al. – Offer Accepted – Franklin Township

Stoltzfus, Jonas & Lizzie – Offer Accepted – Honey Brook Township

Trzcinski/Camphill – Offer Extended – West Vincent Township

Tupitza, James – Offer Extended – Newlin Township

Waltz, David – Offer Accepted – West Fallowfield Township

Werner, John – Offer Accepted – West Nantmeal Township

5. Challenge Grant Program – Status Report

None

6. Executive Session

Real Estate: Appraisals (1)

7. Updates and Other Business

Bill Gladden shared some feedback regarding increased competition for agriculture land – specifically that there are some members of the public who blame open space preservation for the loss of agricultural land and the main cause of problems in the agricultural economy. While not true – unfortunately such claims are a distraction from addressing the issue. One specific complaint was Bryn Coed Farm. Unfortunately, keeping the 1,500 acre farm permanently in agriculture was never an option. The two choices were 1) a Toll Brothers Development; or 2) a private nonprofit conservancy. The owners (the Dietrich Family) were not willing to sell off any pieces – it was all or nothing and the sale price was between \$20 and \$30 million. There was not a farmland organization who was available to put together that level of financing, but fortunately Natural Lands was. Natural Lands will only own and manage 500 or so of those acres and the remaining 1,000 will be owned by private landowners who may or may not decide to allow farming to continue.

We all recognize farming is a very challenging business, especially with the challenging financial situation of dairy and uncertainty of commodity prices as well as international trade. While it might make a person feel good to blame a conservancy for their situation, solutions that help address the actual problem would be much more helpful.

8. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 2:31 pm. Rick Abbott motions, Bill Covaleski seconds the motion. Motion carries.

9. Next Meeting – June 26, 2018 at 2:00 PM in Room 175 – GSC