1. **Call to Order:**
Chairman Melba Matthews called the August 24, 2021 meeting of the Agricultural Land Preservation Board (ALPB) to order at 2:00 p.m.

The following Board Members were in attendance: Chairman Melba Matthews, Vice-Chairman Donald Cairns and Members Duane Hershey, Bill Covaleski, Richard Abbott, Amy McKenna and Nelson Beam.

Absent were Members Eli Silberman and John Diament.

Staff Present: Dave Stauffer, Geoffrey Shellington, Sue Goughary and Evan Martin.

Visitors: Mark Gruber from Old Stone Cider

2. **Public Comment:** Mr. Gruber attended the ALPB to present the Board with questions regarding the expansion of the cidery. He is hoping to purchase a local property to open a second location, and part of the property of interest is encumbered by an agricultural conservation easement. The property sits along PA Route 896 at or near the intersection of Strickersville Road, and the 1800’s farmhouse that would serve as the cidery (which sits within an exception area to the easement) has an existing driveway with severe visibility issues making ingress and egress to the proposed cidery very dangerous. Mr. Gruber’s mains questions revolved around expanding the existing driveway onto and along the eased portion of the property and connecting to a different stretch of PA Route 896 where visibility is much better. Under the terms of the easement, any portion or tract of land that is encumbered by the easement must remain agricultural in nature and used only for crops, grazing, or pasture land, but can contain agricultural buildings which are used solely to support the farm operation. The members of the Board were supportive of Mr. Gruber’s endeavor and suggested he review the Rural Enterprise regulations to see whether his proposed operation meets the requirements. Geoff Shellington took Mr. Gruber’s contact information and plans to continue the conversation.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** A motion was made by Bill Covaleski, seconded by Amy McKenna to approve the meeting minutes from June 22, 2021 as written. Motion carried. (There was no July 2021 meeting held due to lack of quorum).

4. **State Ag. Easement Program – Status Report:**

   ***2016 Round***
   - McElhenny, David – Settled Easement – Honey Brook
     - Newswanger, Larry – Offer Accepted – Sadsbury

   ***2018 Round***
   - Angelo J. Zunino Limited Partnership – Settled Easement – New Garden
     - Hendricks, Louise – Offer Extended – East Marlborough
     - Kelsall, Virginia – Settled Easement - Newlin
   - Martin, Thomas, Helen & Barbara – Offer Accepted - West Marlborough
   - Morelli, Thomas – Settled Easement – East Nantmeal
     - Petersheim, Christ & Martha – Settled Easement – West Caln
     - Smullen et al. – Offer Accepted – Lower Oxford Township

   ***2019 Round***
   - Beiler, Elam & Lydia – Offer Accepted – West Sadsbury
     - Buchanan, John S. – Settled Easement – Elk
     - Brown Partnership – Offer Extended – Penn
     - Cole, Mark & Claudia – Settled Easement - Penn
     - DiPierro, Joseph & Sonia/Schofield, Michelle – Settled Easement - West Fallowfield
     - Donze, George & Jane – Offer Accepted – East Marlborough
     - High, Corrine – Offer Rejected – North Coventry
     - King, Daniel & Rachel #2 – Offer Accepted – Lower & Upper Oxford
     - King, David & Katie – Settled Easement – Lower Oxford
     - Martin, Phillip – Offer Extended – Lower Oxford
     - Miller, Benuel & Hannah – Offer Accepted – E. Nantmeal
     - Ramsey, Stewart & Wendy – Settled Easement - Upper Oxford
   - Stauffer, Terry & Nancy – Settled Easement – West Fallowfield
     - Stoltzfus, Daniel F. & Sadie – Offer Accepted – Honey Brook
   - Stoltzfus, Emanuel & Fannie – Settled Easement – West Nantmeal
     - Stoltzfus, Jonas & Deborah #2 – Settled Easement – Honey Brook
     - Stoltzfus, Jonas & Annie – Settled Easement – West Nottingham
     - Wickersham, Earle – Settled Easement – Newlin & East Marlborough
     - Wickersham, George – Settled Easement - Pocopson
     - Wickersham, Sam – Settled Easement – Newlin & Pocopson

   ***2020 Round***
   - Anderson, Kathleen – Board Review – Elk Township
     - Estate of Barbara A. Althouse – Offer Accepted - West Fallowfield Township
   - Engle, Doug and Jessica – Offer Accepted – Londonderry & Upper Oxford Twps.
   - Healy, James Jr. – Offer Accepted - New London Township
5. Challenge Grant Program – Status Report:

CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM – STATUS REPORT

*2019 Round*

Lukas, Gregory & Patricia – Offer Accepted – Honey Brook
Nugent, Theodore and Timothy – Offer Accepted – Elk
Sheppard, Jonathan – Offer Accepted – London Grove
Springsteen, Susan – Offer Accepted – West Nantmeal and Honey Brook
Spring Hope Family, LP – Offer Accepted – East Nottingham

6. Subdivision (3)

Evan Martin presented 3 subdivision requests.

The first request is that of Michael Frantz and Ephraim Stoltzfus. The land is located along Birdell Road in Honey Brook Township and was initially preserved in 1997 and consists of 98 +/- acres. There was a subdivision request approved in 2017 and separated the parcel into two Lots. Lot 1 is owned by Karen Jones and Michael France, consists of 38 +/- acres and contains an exception area to the easement. Lot 2 is owned by Ephraim and Sadie Stoltzfus, consists of 60 +/- acres and retains the additional house-right allowed under the terms of the easement. The Lots were configured in 2017 when Mr. Stoltzfus had limited road access for his farming equipment. However, Mr. Stoltzfus now has Township approval to access his property for farming purposes from an alternative road and is no longer considered landlocked. Therefore, the landowners now wish to adjust the lot lines by doing a land swap of approximately 15 +/- acres each so that each parcel is configured more conducive for farming. The Lots will ultimately remain the same acreages. The Board agreed that the new configuration does seem to flow better for the agricultural activities, and that all three Lots are individually viable farms. A motion was made by Richard Abbott, seconded by Duane Hershey, to approve the proposed lot line change as presented, provided, however, that each landowner consolidate the swapped acreage with their existing deeds to avoid creating new 15+/- acre parcels or individual tracts of land. Motion carried.

The second subdivision request is for land preserved in 2018 by Dean Pearson. The original easement acreage is 63.39 acres in West Nottingham Township. The proposal is to subdivide the property into three lots. Lot 1 would consist of 31.97 (more or less) including the 2.6 acre exception area and located on the northeastern part of the existing parcel. Lot 2 would contain 21.69 (more or less) with the 2 acre house-right and be on the south end of the existing parcel. And to the north on the western side of the parcel would be Lot 3. Lot 3 would have 12.35 (more or less), and Mr. Pearson’s hope is ultimately to
sell Lot 3 to the owner of an adjacent parcel, Samuel & Malinda Stoltzfus, Jr., to consolidate with the Stoltzfus’ existing land, which was originally an exception area to Mr. Pearson’s original easement that was subdivided off. There was discussion as to the proposed lines and if they could be adjusted but if the lines were changed from the proposed configuration than the 3 individual Lots would not meet program criteria. Amy McKenna asked for clarification as to any costs associated and it was made clear that any and all costs are paid by the landowner/applicant. A motion was made by Richard Abbott, seconded by Don Cairns, on the condition that Lot 3 is consolidated and merged with the neighboring parcel currently owned by Samuel Stoltzfus once purchased. Motion carried.

The third and final subdivision request of the meeting is that of Christ Kauffman for property along Center Hall Road in West Fallowfield Township. The farm was preserved in 2014 by Christ’s father John Kauffman, et al and consists of 48.3 acres (more or less), 44 acres of which are eased. The proposal is to subdivide the property into two lots. Lot 1 would be approximately 38 acres including the 3.8 acre (more or less) exception area that was kept out of the original easement and would remain owned by the Kauffman family to continue operating their dairy farm. Lot 2 would be compromised of the remaining 12 acres and would get the 2 acre house-right. Christ Kauffman will own and operate Lot 2 to grow and sell produce. Evan explained that the proposed boundary lines are designed to keep both parcels viable farmland and meet all program requirements, though the landowner is open to suggested boundary line changes to what is currently proposed. The Board discussed the proposal, and while subdividing large parcels into much smaller parcels is not ideal in their opinion, it does meet the program requirements. Richard Abbott notes that the smaller parcelled farms will likely continue due to the rise of home grown produce. It was also noted that the ownership of both parcels will stay retained by the Kauffman family. Don Cairns noted that with the property also being adjacent to preserved farmland owned by the Walton family, at least the surrounding area will remain productive agriculture, regardless of the farm/parcel size. A motion was made by Bill Covaleski, seconded by Nelson Beam, to approve the proposed subdivision as presented. Motion carried.

7. Executive Session

   a. Real Estate Appraisals (6)

8. Updates and Other Business
Geoff Shellington gave the Board an update on the application turnout and ranking of farms. The department will be ranking approximately 90 applications for the 2021 application year.

Chairman Melba Matthews attended the Chester County Agricultural Economic Development Council’s recent meeting and gave an update on the findings of its latest research efforts; and found that there may be grant money available through the federal government which can be applied for in order to implement the findings, and the funds would be available for Chester County’s local businesses and manufacturers as well as for agricultural purposes.
The Director of Parks + Preservation, Dave Stauffer briefly mentioned that the department is currently looking to fill a Stewardship Coordinator position and the details are posted on the County website for anyone interested.

9. Adjournment
ALPB Meeting adjourned at 3:29 p.m. A motion to adjourn was made by Richard Abbott, seconded by Nelson Beam. Motion carried.

10. Next Meeting – September 28, 2021 at 2:00 PM – GSC Suite 390 (no September Meeting was held)