

MEETING MINUTES
BUTLER COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD

MEETING HELD VIA TELEPHONE CONFERENCE

~~Farm Service Agency, 625 Evans City Road, Butler 16001~~

THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2021 – 7:00PM

Members In Attendance	Members Absent	Visitors in Attendance
Ken Moniot	Rob Burr	
Bill Duncan	Commissioner Kimberly D. Geyer, Ex-Officio	
John Allen		
Luke Fritz		
Rick Stuchal		
Larry Baumgartel		
Alvin Vogel		
Eugene Bergbigler		
		Staff in Attendance
		Sheryl Kelly

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm by Chairman Ken Moniot on Thursday, January 28, 2021. A quorum was present.

1. Election of 2021 Officers

- Chairman Moniot reported that he has been contacted by the Commissioner’s office and asked if would like to remain as the Chairman for 2021. He has agreed and will be appointed by the Chairman of the Board of Butler County Commissioners at their February 3rd public meeting.
- Chairman Moniot asked for a motion to either keep the same officers for 2021 or to have nominations to change. Eugene Bergbigler made the motion to keep the same officers for 2021 with a second by Alvin Vogel. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

2. Public Comment

- There was no public comment.

3. Commissioner’s Report

- Commissioner Geyer was not able to attend but relayed a message through Sheryl Kelly to say hello to everyone and thank all board members for their continued service on the Ag Land Preservation Board.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Chairman Moniot asked for a motion to approve the December meeting minutes. There was a motion by Eugene Bergbigler with a second made by Vice-Chairman Bill Duncan. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

5. Old Business

- **2019 #1 Thurber Farm** – Sheryl reported that appraiser Jim Kelly finished the self-contained appraisal and it has been sent to the state and NRCS for review and hopeful acceptance. The board members discussed and will try to meet at the regular meeting location in February in order to review the two appraisals for this farm.

- **2020 #1 Taggart Farm** – This farm was approved by the state board on December 10th.

- **2020 #2 Foertsch Farm** – All information has been submitted and accepted by the state. It will appear on the state board's February meeting agenda for hopeful approval.

- **2020 #3 Riddle Farm** – Mr. Riddle accepted the board's revised offer and this farm has been placed on the schedule for Land Surveyors for survey.

- **2021 Application Round** – Sheryl reported that there were four new applications for 2021 although one does not qualify because of the amount of soil types that don't meet minimum criteria to apply.

- The county has certified \$339,679 in local matching funds for the 2021 program - \$150,000 + \$39,679 in Legacy Funds, plus Clinton Township has certified \$150,000 for their new ag preservation program. Vice-Chairman Bill Duncan reported that \$66,350 was from development fees paid to the township. There was discussion on the great amount of work that Clinton Township officials conducted to try and get farms to apply for the Clinton Township program, including a public program conducted in 2020 and attended by Doug Wolfgang, Director of the state's Preservation Office. Many farms are interested but are not yet in the position to apply because of estate planning and speaking to attorneys. To date, there are two applications on the county list from Clinton Township and unless an application is received before the deadline on January 31st, the township will proceed with those applications.

- Board member John Allen discussed the two applications from Clinton Township and that it had never been the intention of the township to proceed with those two specific applications. But since no other applicants could be found this year the township must move forward. He will abstain from voting on any issues regarding either of those farms.

6. New Business

- **2021 Farm Visits** – the board discussed and it was decided that Sheryl will call all board members in early February to schedule visits to new applicant farms before the February board meeting.

- **Ambrose Farm Application** – Sheryl was contacted by a daughter from the Ambrose Farm whose father and mother had been applicants for many years. With the death of their mother, they weren't sure if they could stay enrolled as an applicant while the estate is being settled. Sheryl spoke with Doug Wolfgang who said it is fine to leave them in the program as an applicant, but at any point where the farm might be chosen for preservation, all owners of record will need to sign a new application form. Sheryl will relay that information to the daughter.

- **Misera Preserved Farm Lot Line Revision** – the owner of the Misera Farm contacted Sheryl to ask if he could do a lot line revision adding property to his currently-preserved farm, then apply for preservation for that additional acreage. Sheryl told him she would confirm with the county board and state office, but believed that he must submit an entire parcel as defined by the tax assessment office when applying for the parcel. There was discussion among board members and it was agreed that this new property must remain as a separate parcel in order to apply. Chairman Moniot believes that the additional property, if chosen for preservation, could eventually be added to the existing property after payment, but that we would need to check with the state on this procedure.

7. Adjourn

Chairman Moniot called for a motion to adjourn. There was a motion made by Eugene Bergbigler with a second by Rick Stuchal. All were in favor and the motion was approved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, February 25 at the

Farm Service Agency Building, 625 Evans City Road, Butler, PA 16001

Respectfully submitted by Sheryl Kelly for Board Secretary Rob Burr.