

MEETING MINUTES
BUTLER COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD

Farm Service Agency, 625 Evans City Road, Butler 16001

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 THURSDAY, JULY 22, 2021 – 7:00PM

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chairman Ken Moniot on Thursday, July 22, 2021. A quorum was present.

1. Public Comment

- There was no public comment.

2. Commissioner’s Report

- Commissioner Geyer reported as follows:

- The Board of Commissioners is working with young agricultural professionals on mental health and first aid workshops to be held at Butler County Community College.
- Commissioner Geyer attended a Penn State webinar regarding solar panels and the Board of Commissioners is working on guidance / regulations for municipalities to consider.
- The Board of Commissioners continues to have very successful monthly online video calls with municipalities to keep them updated on a wide variety of topics.
- The Conservation District meeting was held earlier in the day. The work load has continued to grow making it necessary to hire more technicians.

- Some of the courthouse high traffic offices have all been moved to the first floor of the County Government Center for ease of access to the public.
- The Commissioner's Office has received a call from Crawford County who is looking to give away an industrial composter.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Chairman Moniot asked for a motion to approve the April meeting minutes. (There were no meetings in May and June.) There was a motion by John Allen with a second made by Treasurer Larry Baumgartel. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

4. Old Business

- **2019 #1 Thurber Farm** – Sheryl reported that the Thurber will be on the state's Ag Land Preservation Board agenda for approval in August. We should know in the next few days if it has been approved by NRCS for federal funding. The self-contained appraisal corrections have been accepted and approved.

- **2020 #1 Taggart Farm** – Closing on this approved farm took place on June 15.

- **2020 #2 Foertsch Farm** – Closing on this approved farm took place on July 14.

- **2020 #3 Riddle Farm** – This farm was approved by the State Board at their meeting on June 17. Depending on the receipt of the state check, closing on this farm might take place in the end of September.

- **2021 #1 Maple Shade Farm** – The pertinent pages of this farm's appraisal were received by Sheryl on July 22 (the final copy of the full appraisal was not yet complete). Copies were distributed to Board members for review. There was a motion made by Vice-Chairman Bill Duncan to make the offer of the per acre easement value in the appraisal conditional upon acceptance / approval of the appraisal by the State Office of Farmland Preservation. There was a second by Treasurer Larry Baumgartel. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

- **2021 #2 Pizor Farm** – Sheryl reported that we should know very soon if this farm has been approved for the leftover NRCS federal funding from 2021. Mr. Pizor has been extremely helpful in getting paperwork they needed to complete for NRCS very quickly.

- An appraisal firm has been found that is qualified to complete self-contained appraisals and they are interested in working for the Ag Board. Chairman Moniot asked for a motion to approve the use of Sammartino, Stout and Lo Presti, Inc. of Erie, PA for self-contained appraisals when needed. There was a second from Rick Stuchal. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

- Treasurer Larry Baumgartel made a motion to also use Sammartino, Stout and Lo Presti as a backup for normal state appraisals when needed. There was a second from Vice-Chairman Bill Duncan. All were in favor and the motion was approved. These appraisals are for farms that are not interested or do not qualify for federal funding.

- Clinton Township Ag Preservation Farms-

- Allen (2021 #1) – Sheryl sent program information to the owners and they are reviewing this prior to making a commitment to proceed.
- Allen (2021 #2) – The Board reviewed the pertinent pages of the appraisal that were delivered on July 22 (the final copy of the full appraisal was not yet complete). Vice-Chairman Bill Duncan made a motion to table this vote. There was a second by Rick Stuchal. All were in favor and the motion was approved. Board member John Allen abstained from this vote.

- Follow Up on Western Pa. Conservancy Meeting – The meeting was held virtually on May 26 at 10:00am. WPA can serve to introduce the Butler County Ag Preservation Board to other nonprofits that might be able to help with funding. Sheryl will also keep WPA updated on current project farms in case there is interest in cooperative projects. There was discussion on the possibility of the Butler County Ag Preservation Board approaching other entities working in the county who may be interested in cooperative projects. There was a motion made by Vice-Chairman Bill Duncan with a second made by Rick Stuchal to approach other entities, meet with and make presentations where applicable. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

- Parcel Modification Form – Sheryl developed a draft form for review based on the Board’s previous discussion to have a form that any preserved farm owner can use when proposing a rural enterprise, subdivision, etc. The Board make a few suggested changes which will be made. A final version will be distributed for a final review and approval by the Butler County Ag Land Preservation Board.

- Powell Farm – Sheryl received guidance from the state which was previously sent out to the Board for review. Sheryl will send a letter to Mr. Powell regarding this information.

- Connoquenessing Sewer Treatment Plant – Sheryl previously sent out proposed sewer line placement information received from the engineer for review by the Board. She explained to the engineer that to place lines across a preserved farm would require approaching the state’s Ag Lands Condemnation Approval Board (ALCAB) for approval. She is waiting for information from the state requested by the engineer on the procedures required to approach ALCAB.

5. New Business

- **Deed Violations** – There were five deed violations made in the last couple of years, found during state required inspections of preserved farms. These were simple omissions when new deeds were recorded and very easy to fix with a corrective deed. State law requires that the entire Deed of Easement be included verbatim in the any new property deed. Three have already been corrected and one owner was in touch with Sheryl to discuss the correction. The other owner has not responded. Sheryl will reach out to these final two to make sure this is being taken care of since the new deeds have to be submitted to the state.

6. Adjourn

Chairman Moniot called for a motion to adjourn. There was a motion made by Vice-Chairman Bill Duncan with a second by Treasurer Larry Baumgartel. All were in favor and the motion was approved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, August 26 at the

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

Respectfully submitted by Sheryl Kelly for Board Secretary Rob Burr.