

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD**

January 12, 2021 – 3:30 P.M.

[Zoom Teleconference](#)

Meeting ID#: 915 8113 3671

Meeting Password: 707986 (267 831 0333 from phones)

BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDING: Jonathan Rinde; Brett Altman; John Corkum; Stephen Quigley; Marla Hexter

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF ATTENDING: Scott France; Anne Leavitt-Gruberger; Yvonne Montgomery; Stephen Zbyszinski, Ann Marie Meehan

PRESS: None

GUESTS: Elizabeth Emlen; Terry Bird, Dulcie Flaharty, Abby Reiter

1. Call to Order

The public meeting was called to order at 3:31 p.m. by Anne Leavitt-Gruberger. Roll was called; as all five board members were virtually present, it was determined that a quorum was achieved. There was no public comment.

2. Reorganization of the Farm Board

ACTION

Ms. Leavitt-Gruberger explained that it is time to nominate and elect the members to hold board positions for 2021. After a brief discussion, board members agreed to put forward Mr. Rinde, Chair, and Mr. Corkum, Vice Chair to serve once again in their current positions for 2021. Mr. Rinde recommended Ms. Hexter for Secretary. He requested that the Board take a vote on the three nominations.

A motion was made by Mr. Quigley and seconded by Mr. Corkum to approve the nomination of Mr. Rinde as Board Chair. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Mr. Altman and seconded by Mr. Quigley to approve the nomination of Mr. Corkum as Vice Chair. The motion was approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Altman and seconded by Mr. Quigley to approve the nomination of Ms. Hexter as Secretary. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. Minutes of the December 8, 2020 Meeting

ACTION

Mr. Jonathan Rinde called for comments on the minutes of the December 8, 2020 meeting.

A motion was made by Ms. Hexter and seconded by Mr. Corkum to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2020 Farm Board Meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Status of Farmland Preservation Program

Ms. Leavitt-Gruberger said that staff is compiling documents for the five applications submitted in 2020 for the farm program and they will soon be sent to Harrisburg. She reported that although no 2021 applications have been received yet, she anticipates submissions shortly and said the Board should be prepared for a substantial February meeting to consider applications. Mr. Zbyszinski and Mr. Woodyard (MCPC staff graphic designer) compiled a video and she presented it to the Board. The video will be presented at the January 21, 2021 county commissioner's meeting to mark the milestone of 10,000 acres of preserved land and certifying the county's funding of the farmland program for 2021.

5. Offer-Scott and Sharon Melanson Farm #2

ACTION

Mr. Rinde explained that the public offer to Scott and Sharon Melanson's Farm #2 was before the Board for consideration. The Melansons accepted the county's revised offer of \$336,802.00 for 24.43 acres (appraised value).

A motion was made by Mr. Altman and seconded by Mr. Corkum Quigley to approve the offer of \$336,802.00 to Scott and Sharon Melanson for Farm #2. The motion was approved unanimously.

6. Other

Ms. Leavitt-Gruberger announced that because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 Pennsylvania Farm Show would be held virtually via Facebook. She encouraged board members to attend.

Mr. Rinde asked Ms. Leavitt-Gruberger what the status was of the county farm preservation program's funds. She said that \$2 million dollars has been carried over, comprised of a combination of state and county funds. For 2021, the program will have a little over \$3 million dollars.

Mr. Zbyszinski reported that he has received inquiries for those interested in submitting 2021 applications.

Ms. Hexter inquired if staff would allow applications if they were postmarked on time and received after, as the mail has been curtailed due to the pandemic.

Ms. Leavitt-Gruberger assured the Board that staff will make every effort to check on mailed applications and added that applicants can also submit applications via email.

Ms. Flaharty asked if there was anything that could be done with current county partners to increase interest and applications for the program.

Ms. Emlen stated that there are municipalities that have application forms for those interested.

Ms. Hexter commented that municipalities have ways of getting word out, and could the county work on doing that.

Ms. Leavitt-Gruberger thanked attendees for their suggestions and said staff would act upon them.

7. Next Farm Board Meeting Date: February 9, 2021

Ms. Leavitt-Gruberger announced that the next Farm Board meeting will be held on February 9, 2021

8. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Corkum and seconded by Ms. Hexter to adjourn the public meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Marie Meehan