



# **BERKS COUNTY** *agricultural land* **PRESERVATION BOARD**

Berks County Agricultural Center  
1238 County Welfare Road, Suite #260  
Leesport, PA 19533  
(610) 378-1844 Fax (610) 378-7983  
www.countyofberks.com/dept/deptofag

---

**County Commissioners:**

Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair  
Kevin S. Barnhardt  
Michael S. Rivera

**Board Members:**

David L. Phillips, Chair  
James R. Coker, Vice Chair  
Gregg Eshelman

Morgan A. Firestine  
Kimberly J. McGrath  
Jeremy R. Meck

Steven C. Mohn  
Clyde A. B. Myers  
Louise A. Swartley

**Ex Officio:**

Robert C. Ziegenfus, Ph.D.

**Solicitor:**

Mark R. Sprow, Esq.

---

## **Minutes from the November 30, 2022 Meeting**

The Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Board (Board) held a regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, November 30, 2022, at 7:00 PM via virtual platform “**Microsoft Teams.**” David Phillips, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM. Board members present included James Coker, Gregg Eshelman, Kimberly McGrath, Jeremy Meck, Steven Mohn, Clyde Myers, David Phillips, and Louise Swartley. Also, in attendance were Mark Sprow, Esq. Special Counsel for the Board; Staff: Amanda Burkard-Sell and Kimberly Fies; Emily Wangolo, Executive Director; Tami Hildebrand, Executive Director, and Heather Berger, Application Support Manager, Berks County IS Department.

### **I. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS – None.**

### **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion:** A motion was made to approve the minutes of the October 26, 2022, meeting, as drafted. (K. McGrath, L. Swartley)

**Discussion:** None

**Vote:** Motion carried unanimously.

### **III. STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION UPDATES**

- A. Burkard-Sell highlighted several items on the Status of Recommendations: the subordinations for Docket #0336 are anticipated shortly and this farm could possibly be recommended at a future State Bureau of Farmland Preservation meeting; settlements were held for Dockets #2015 and #2010; Docket’s #0804 and #1912 will go to settlement on Friday.

### **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

#### **A. Update Soil Health Education Grant Workshop**

- E. Wangolo reported that the final documents and request for reimbursement for the Soil Health Grant had been submitted to and were received by the State and the reimbursement is in process.

#### **C. No Update: Settlement #432.0 Swinsinski – ACE Program Violation**

- K. Fies reported that communication had been received and that the matter would hopefully be resolved by the next Board meeting.

### **V. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **A. Conveyance Report**

- A. Burkard-Sell reported on the transfers of ownership:
  - Section A: Transferred in Compliance – Settlement #65.1
  - Section B: Transferred with Concerns Noted – Settlement #10.0 Burkard-Sell added that the corrective deed had already been recorded and that the transfer will be marked as resolved on the next report
  - Section C: Outstanding Violations - None to report.
  - Section D: Transfers Resolved – Settlement #413.0 with a corrective deed recorded.

B. Discussion Regarding 2023 Board Meeting Calendar

- The Board and staff discussed the location of meetings for 2023 and whether to support a hybrid option and how that would be accomplished. D. Phillips noted that the majority of the Board supported in-person meetings, while the staff preferred the virtual option. Heather Berger from IS weighed in on the necessary involvement from the County for the hybrid option, including the Owl camera and how content would be displayed. Staff clarified that at least one staff member would need to be present, along with the IS representative. The Board discussed changing to all-virtual in the event of inclement weather. M. Sprow explained that any changes to the formatting would require at least a 24-hour notice. A. Burkard-Sell noted that the December meeting was already scheduled as a virtual meeting.

**Motion: A motion was made to hold the meetings in 2023 in a hybrid format. (C. Myers, G. Eshelman)**

**Discussion:** The Board further discussed what the hybrid option would entail and that shifting the meeting to all-virtual due to inclement weather would require 24-hour notice.

**Vote: Motion carried unanimously.**

- D. Phillips stressed the importance of RSVPing to the meetings, whether attending or not.

**VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- K. Fies presented the following requests for modification of the easement:
  - Settlement #80.0 (Zimmerman) in Marion Township – a request had been received regarding the construction of a robotic dairy facility. This request to construct an ag structure is permitted under the deed of easement.
  - Settlement #700 (Wenger) in Upper Bern Township – a request had been submitted to construct a hoop house to store hay. This request to construct an ag building is permitted under the deed of easement.
- E. Wangolo provided an update on staffing for the office. Wangolo noted that she will be replacing Tami Hildebrand as the Executive Director and that there were offers out to fill other key positions. Wangolo added that the additional ACE Technician position had been approved and would utilize County general funds, rather than the Clean and Green rollback funds; the Clean and Green funds would now be available for easement purchases. Wangolo clarified that the position would first be posted internally for the County and then externally if no qualified candidates applied.

**VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None**

**RESUMPTION OF REGULAR MEETING**

- T. Hildebrand thanked the Board and staff for a wonderful 25 years of working with farmland preservation.

**VIII. CITIZEN COMMENT / BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR – None.**

**Motion:** A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 PM. (J. Coker, J. Meck)

**Discussion:** None.

**Vote:** Motion approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda K. Burkard-Sell  
ACE Program Coordinator