



# BERKS COUNTY *agricultural land* PRESERVATION BOARD

Berks County Agricultural Center  
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www.countyofberks.com/dept/deptofag

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**County Commissioners:**

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

**Board Members:**

David L. Phillips, Chair  
James R. Coker, Vice Chair  
Robert E. Kopfer

Robert B. Ludgate, Sr., PE, PLS  
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.

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## Minutes from the January 27, 2021 Meeting

The Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Board (Board) held a regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, January 27, 2021 at 7:34 PM via virtual platform “**Microsoft Teams.**” David Phillips, Chair, called the meeting to order. Board members present included James Coker, Robert Kopfer, Robert Ludgate, Kimberly McGrath, Steve Mohn, Clyde Myers, and David Phillips. Also, in attendance were Mark Sprow, Esq. Special Counsel for the Board; Amanda Burkard-Sell and Kimberly Fies, Staff and Tami Hildebrand, Executive Director.

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

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion:** A motion was made to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2020 meeting, as drafted. (C. Myers, R. Kopfer)

**Discussion:** None

**Vote:** Motion approved.

**III. STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION UPDATES**

- T. Hildebrand reported that there were no changes since the report was distributed.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Update: 2020 LESA Ranking Results**

- T. Hildebrand distributed an updated and final list of the 2020 LESA Ranking scores:
  - 117 applications totaling 8,198 acres were ranked;
  - 31 applications totaling 2,097.08 acres were selected;
  - 19 applications totaling 1,187.30 acres are moving forward;
  - 11 selected applications totaling 909.78 acres opted to withdraw from the 2020 selection and indicated their interest in having their applications re-ranked in 2021;
  - 1 application totaling 57.23 acres was withdrawn.

**B. Update: Subcommittee Meeting Schedule**

- T. Hildebrand reported that the Subcommittee met on January 15, 2021 via **Microsoft Teams**. The Subcommittee reviewed and discussed:
  - Three informational handouts listing steps for ACE Program participants to follow when modifying the easement;
  - The possibility of requiring a legal description for the 2-acre additional residential structure and the 2-acre subdivision; staff will contact the State Bureau about this.
  - The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 5<sup>th</sup> @ 10:00 AM.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Conveyance Report**

- Transferred – In Compliance: Settlement #123.0 has transferred correctly.
- Transferred – Concerns Noted: Settlement #152.0 – Amanda Burkard-Sell reported that the Attorney has submitted the corrective deed to the Recorder of Deeds, but it has not been recorded yet.
- Outstanding Violations: None to report.
- Transfers - Resolved: None to report.

B. Setting of 2021 Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Cap

- Hildebrand reviewed a summary of appraisal values from 2020, as well as similar statistics collected by the State and adjacent counties.
- The Board determined that the cap will remain at \$2,500 per acre for agricultural conservation easement purchases in 2021.

**Motion: A motion was made to set the cap at \$2,500 per acre for agricultural conservation easement purchases in 2021. (J. Coker, R. Kopfer)**

**Discussion: None.**

**Vote: Motion approved.**

C. Setting of 2021 Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Interest

- T. Hildebrand reminded the Board that the County funds being used for easement purchases in 2021 do not earn interest and therefore, interest should not be paid with installment payments.

**Motion: A motion was made to set the interest rate at \$0.00 for installment payment purchases in 2021. (J. Coker, R. Kopfer)**

**Discussion: None.**

**Vote: Motion approved.**

## VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Update of the 2021 Certification of County Funds

- Hildebrand reported that the Commissioners will vote on these funds tomorrow at its Board meeting. The funds requested totaled \$1,068,664 which included \$1,000,000 from the General Fund, \$675 contributed in memory of Cassandra Evans, and \$67,989 Collected Interest from Rollback Penalties of Clean & Green in 2020.
- The Funds must be submitted to the State Bureau of Farmland Preservation by midnight, January 31, 2021.
- 2021 Allocation of Funds will be distributed at the February 18<sup>th</sup> State Board Meeting.
- Hildebrand extended her appreciation to Pam Shupp, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, who negotiated with the Commissioners on the Board's and Department's behalf in directing the 2020 Collected Interest from Rollback Penalties of Clean & Green to hire another ACE Program Technician.

B. Statement of Financial Interest 2020 forms

- Hildebrand stated that Board Members and Attorney Sprow should have received the 2020 Statement of Financial Interest forms in the mail by now and reminded them to utilize the self-addressed stamped envelope to return the forms to Chief Clerk, Maryjo Gibson, by May 1<sup>st</sup>.

## VII. CITIZEN COMMENT / BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

- James Coker reported that he will not be available for the February 24, 2021 meeting.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Motion: A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 PM.  
(R. Kopfer, J. Coker)**

Respectfully submitted,

Tami S. Hildebrand  
Executive Director