

PENN TOWNSHIP AGRICULTURAL SECURITY AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
September 12, 2019 – 7:00 PM

ATTENDANCE:

Richard Landis, Chairman
Dale Hershey, Vice Chairperson
Dale Nolt
Glenn Sauder
Jared Bruckhart

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Andy Lehman, Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board
Noelle Fortna, Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board
Matt Knepper, Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board
Jennifer Brady, Township Planner

Call to Order

Mr. Landis called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Introductions

Mr. Landis asked for brief introductions of all present.

Discussion Items

Lancaster County Agricultural Preservation Program – Stoltzfus farm

Mr. Knepper presented the status of the Stoltzfus farm and a recap of how a farm goes through the Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board (APB) process. A farm may request to be preserved through an application, the Ag Preserve Board then goes through criteria and ranks it according to items such as acreage, soils, tillable percentage, and adjacency to other preserved farms, the maximum score for a farm is 27 points. The Stoltzfus farm ranked 25/27 on the ranking scale, see New Business below, and has progressed through the APB, and is at the state level. It is forecasted that by the end of the year, this farm will be on the record as preserved.

New Business

Lancaster County Agricultural Preservation Program

Committee members were presented with ranking criteria for farms to be preserved through the program by the APB. About 150 farms in Penn Township were ranked according to soils, tillable, acreage, and adjacent farms, points are given in a scale-fashion. The total maximum for a farm is 27 points, four farms in Penn Township reached the 27-point threshold and 23 farms were 25 to 26 points. Matt Knepper noted that farms for priority evaluation are currently zoned for agriculture, at least 20-acres, and not within the growth area.

The Township was presented with the option to apply funds to farms to move them to the top of the APB's list. By the ASA-AC allocating money, with a maximum of \$50,000 per farm (or about \$1000 per acre), the appraisal value of the farm increases, thus increasing the interest of preserving the farm. The ASA-AC noted that an exact value for amount of funds they have to work with is needed before moving forward with applying the funds to specific farms. This led to a discussion regarding Transfer of

Development Rights, (TDRs) including the legality of the process. Further discussion was had by the committee and Mr. Knepper explaining that if TDRs are not purchased before or during the farm preservation process, they become a lost opportunity when a farm is preserved and cannot be bought or sold after preservation occurs. The committee noted that in selling the TDRs, the preserved farms should not be restrained so harshly that a living cannot be made in agricultural uses.

The meeting came to a close with Mr. Landis and the committee asking for further research into the Township's ordinance with attention being given to: how many TDRs does Penn Township currently have, where the giving/receiving areas for Penn Township's TDRs are, what a TDR will sell for, and restrictions the Township has in place on deeds for preserved farms after TDRs are sold. Jennifer Brady will report on this at a later date.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 PM by Mr. Landis

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 14, 2017 at 7:00 PM.