

**Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board
Meeting Minutes**

Present: Mr. Andrew Lehman
Mr. Edward Goodhart
Mr. Roger Rohrer
Commissioner D' Agostino
Mr. Jered Hess
Mr. Jeffrey Frey, Secretary

Absent with Regret: Mr. Daniel Zimmerman, Vice Chairman
Mr. Daniel Fox
Mr. Matthew Young

Staff: Mr. Matt Knepper Director
Mr. Kevin Baer, Farmland Preservation Specialist
Mr. Garland Treese, Farmland Preservation Specialist
Ms. June Mengel, Farmland Preservation Specialist
Ms. Noelle Fortna, Farmland Preservation Specialist
Mrs. Denise Alvarez, Administrative Assistant

Guests: Jeff Swineheart President & CEO, Lancaster Farmland Trust
Jeb Musser VP of Land Protection, Lancaster Farmland Trust
Amy Baumann VP of Strategic Priorities, Lancaster Farmland Trust
Jere Swarr- Rapho Township

- I. **Call to Order-** Mr. Andrew Lehman called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.
- II. **Review of Mission Statement-** Mr. Edward Goodhart read the Mission Statement: "To forever preserve the beautiful farmland and productive soils of Lancaster County and its rich agricultural heritage; and to create a healthy environment for the long-term sustainability of the agricultural economy and farming as a way of life."
- III. **Announcements-** No executive session will be held after the public meeting.

Staff will not be inspecting poultry farms given the Avian Flu situation. Instead, aerial photos can be used, public records and/or check in with landowners.

IV. Approval of January 22, 2026, Meeting Minutes- Motion to approve January 22, 2026, meeting minutes made by Mr. Edward Goodhart and seconded by Mr. Jeffrey Frey. **Minutes approved.**

V. Business From Guests- None

VI. Business

A. Subdivision and Land Development

1. 0088, Meadow Vista Properties, LLC. Amended Subdivision Request for agricultural subdivision. The Agricultural Preserve Board approved this subdivision at their January meeting. A modified approval is requested to clarify that no additional residential structure is permitted. The conditions of approval presented at today's meeting reflect this clarification. **Motion to approve the application as submitted and further detailed in the Board Summary with attachments, inclusive of all Conditions of Approval made by Mr. Jeffrey Frey and seconded by Mr. Edward Goodhart. Motion Approved.**

2. 0551, P. Kenneth and Douglas Rohrer. Construction Request for Federal Agricultural Conservation Easement. Proposed Construction for new dairy barn, milkhouse and manure pit. The manure pit is not considered an impervious surface by NRCS. Staff have confirmed that the additional impervious created by this construction fits within the threshold of allowable impervious area. **Motion to approve made by Mr. Roger Rohrer and seconded by Mr. Jeffrey Frey. Motion Approved.**

B. 2026 Funding- Discussion. Commissioners allocated 1.5 million new funds; add to that county match, township funds, clean and green roll back tax interest and it totals \$1,744,686. State allocation to county were announced at the February meeting of the State Board and Lancaster County will receive \$3.3. That is a \$200,000 increase from last year. 7.4% of the total slightly less than Chester County. We are one of the top counties for allocating funds.

C. 2025 Ranking- Staff provided an overview of the 2025 Ranking Results, with a detailed PowerPoint presentation on the top-ranking farms. The Board was able to see details on the first 24 farms. The Board will likely review appraisals and approve offers for preservation later this year on the top ranking farms and more as we proceed further down the list. **Motion to approve the 2025 Ranking as presented was made by Mr. Jered Hess and seconded by Mr. Edward Goodhart. Motion Approved.**

D. Purchase Price Cap Discussion Plan- Mr. Knepper explained to the Board that the discussion on the easement purchase price cap will be evaluated throughout the

year and presented a concept outline of how the discussion might unfold at future meetings.

Gerald Eberly, Eberly Appraisal Services will attend the March meeting. Mr. Eberly has produced a report for the County with some farm sale details that will be helpful for the Board's discussion. Mr. Eberly will share some insights with the Board on how easement values are derived through the appraisal process.

The second part of the discussion at a future meeting will ask and attempt to answer the question of: are we preserving the best farms? Aspects evaluated will include but not be limited to: the rank of farms and the number and rank of farms that pass on preservation opportunities.

The third component, which will be on-going, will be a farm owner survey. Mr. Knepper and representatives from the Lancaster Farmland Trust will spend some time meeting with farm owners to determine the awareness of preservation programs, reasons for not applying and the impact of the price cap.

The goal of this process is to take necessary time to gather data so that the Board is able to make an informed decision on whether or not to raise the per-acre easement cap and if so, by how much.

- VII.** Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at _____ a.m. The next meeting will be held on March 26, 2026 at the Lancaster County Public Safety Training Center, 101 Champ Blvd Manheim PA 17545