

OHIO FARMLAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING

Ohio Department of Agriculture
Reynoldsburg, Ohio

August 19, 2009

Minutes taken by Cindy Shy

*Disclaimer: Many individual opinions have been captured by the recorder but do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the entire Advisory Board.

Advisory Board members present: Mark A. Forni, John Detrick, Jay Rausch, Doug Givens, Glenn Myers, Roger Rhonemus, Harold Weihl, Brian Williams, Lucille Hastings, and Kurt Updegraff

ODA Staff members present: Kristen Jensen, Joel O'Connell and Gary Taylor of the Ohio Attorney General's Office, Jody Fife, and Cindy Shy

Visitor: Jonathon Ferbrache, Fairfield County Soil and Water Conservation District

1) Opening Remarks

- Mark Forni, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. in Conference Room 308 of ODA's Bromfield Administration Building.
- MOTION: Brian Williams moved to accept the June 17, 2009 Advisory Board minutes. Harold Weihl seconded; motion carried.
- Mark Forni discussed transitions within the department. He has informally accepted the position of Deputy Director; Kristen Jensen will serve as interim-Executive Director of Farmland Preservation until the positions are formalized per the Governor's office.

2) Public Comments

- None were given.

3) Farmland Preservation Updates

- A new infusion of federal funds will focus on the Great Lakes region, with \$3.9 million targeted for FRPP. These new funds will be in addition to the FRPP funds that the department uses for AEPP. The department is working with ODNR to determine specifics, including possible changes to the AEPP program to focus on the region to compete for this funding.
- Director Boggs would like to see quicker action on the inception of a second AEPP program, which would target smaller farms. Legislation would need to be introduced to allow for the new program development.
- Two donation easements have closed; several are in the process.

- The new Farmland Preservation annual report is available online; copies were distributed to board members. New program brochures are also available online; copies were made available to board members.
- Staff will attend each day of the Farm Science Review.
- Shared a draft copy of the Clean Ohio Report. Expected print date is beginning of September 2009. An interesting fact brought to light is that Hardin County is the only county in the state that has yet to receive Clean Ohio funds. This is an opportunity to share information with county leaders to encourage participation.
- The Summit is Nov. 5. This will be the 10th anniversary. If anyone cares to sponsor, the form is available online. Results of the AEPP survey that the office is working on in conjunction with OSU will be shared at the Summit.
- One 2007 AEPP is still not closed. The office is waiting on word from NRCS to proceed. No files are yet closed for 2008 AEPP. One of the 2008 AEPP applications will be a state deed; the rest will be federal deeds. All of the 2008 federal files have been forwarded to NRCS for review. Possible issues with 2008 include a gas injection site on one property. The office will go to the controlling board soon; goal is to close 2008 AEPP by end of this year to meet IRS tax deduction deadlines.
- Discussion involved possible formation of an informal group comprised of the board and staff to visit NRCS to discuss ways to improve time between offering and closing.

2009 AEPP

- Map is now online, with list of farms and scores.
- The NW, SW, and SE quadrants are closed with all offers accepted; the NE quadrant is unfinished while the office waits for response on an offer.
- Results were discussed and considered as good overall demographics, close to what the legislature asked of the program thus far.
- For the 2010 applications, only whole numbers should be used when scoring Tier II.

2009 Technical Meeting

- Notes were distributed to board members and are also available online.
- Added a powerpoint to give hints for more successful application; also available online.
- One particular issue discussed was farms that encompass more than one county. Need to come up with a way to work with multi-county applications.

2010 AEPP

- To accommodate NRCS deadlines, the next AEPP application period will be moved up, from one-to-three months if possible.
- The CCAO map, used for 2009 AEPP, will be used for 2010 as it stands. Board will need to decide how to split the funds between the quads. For the next three years, \$6.25 million in Clean Ohio funds are available each year.

- At next board meeting, decisions are needed on several issues – injection sites and oil/gas wells, wind turbines, subdivision, and recreation – in the current deed. The issue of subdivision concerns generational succession, or transfer of the farm if the next generation can not build a home on the home. When the farmer doesn't live where the central operation exists, there can be a disconnect with the next generation; subsequent generations may not understand the dedication of the prior generations. It was felt that this is a policy issue. The question may go back to what is "viable" agriculture land. The meaning of viable varies from county to county. The issue may be more complicated than on its surface. A possible solution is educating the landowner about estate planning prior to application.

Board members were asked to give ideas before the next meeting. A "one size fits all" philosophy may not work in these areas.

Next Board Meeting

Next meeting is set for Nov. 18, 2009, at 10 a.m. at the department.

Motion for adjournment by Harold Wehl; seconded by Roger Rhonemus. Motion carried.