

OHIO FARMLAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING

Ohio Department of Agriculture
Reynoldsburg, Ohio

November 12, 2008
Minutes taken by Kristen Jensen

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

Mark Forni, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m. in Seminar Room A of ODA's Bromfield Administration Building.

Advisory Board members present: Mark Forni, Chair, Jill Clark, Vice-Chair, Glenn Myers, John Detrick, Thomas Mazur (joined meeting at 11:30 a.m.), Lucille L. Hastings, Harold Weihl, Roger Rhonemus, Kurt Updegraff, and Brian Williams.

Advisory Board members absent: Jay Rausch, Doug Givens, and Theresa Strickler

ODA Staff members present: Kristen Jensen and Jody Fife, Office of Farmland Preservation and Joel O'Connell, Assistant Attorney General

Materials Provided: Agenda, August 20, 2008 Advisory Board Draft Meeting Minutes, 2009 Discussion Points for the 2009 Clean Ohio AEPP, Draft Clean Ohio AEPP Fact Sheet, Draft Clean Ohio AEPP 2009 Guidelines and Policies, 2008 Technical Meeting Notes, 2008 Instructions & Guidelines and Sample AEPP Application, Clean Ohio 2008 Application, and 2008 Clean Ohio AEPP Final Results

*Mark welcomed the group and asked that the board members and those present to observe or provide public comment introduce themselves. Mileage forms were disbursed and lunch money was collected.

MOTION: Roger Rhonemus made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Harold Weihl, and passed by the board.

ORAL VOTE: PASSED

*Public Comment-

Krista Magaw- Representative of Tecumseh Land Trust, Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts, and Clark County Farmland Preservation Workgroup
Krista is excited about the Clean Ohio Fund's passage she sees more need for farmland preservation versus the other programs being funded within the Clean Ohio Bond package. She explains that she went along with the campaign group to "not make waves" before its passage because changes could occur later but feels more funds should be given to farmland preservation because of demand and the economics of the industry.

Farming and agriculture is considered conservation; farmers use conservation plans. Some ENRACs allow for farms to apply for open space funds for the riparian areas, yet other ENRACs do not. The Ohio Public Works currently administers the money for the conservation programs and perhaps from agency to agency, the administrators could communicate the need to one another regarding the need for consistent policies and uses of the fund across the state.

Tecumseh will be releasing a study in conjunction with OSU on January 13 that will say among other things that 75% of households in Clark County said that they would be willing to pay \$20 for farmland preservation.

*Amalie Lipstreu presented general information on the Food Policy Council, how it was initiated, formed and the current efforts and recommendations. Specifically she mentioned the work of the Agriculture Viability Subcommittee of the council that is beginning to review and examine the feasibility of creating a revolving loan fund or grant option for farmers who donate agricultural easements to the state farmland program (#8). The subcommittee wanted to get the advisory board's feedback before pushing it forward as a recommendation.

What is she asking the board to do? She is here to educate the board on the council and its work, as well as to gain their opinions and interest in whether the recommendation is a feasible option.

Having more options may be more appealing than dictating to farmers what to do with the funds. There is interest in considering the options and learning what legislation or rules would be needed in order to accomplish the drafted recommendation.

*There is \$2.5 million available for Clean Ohio AEPP funding in both 2009 and 2010 from the capital bill. In addition, with the Clean Ohio renewal fund, the program will gain \$25 million divided over 4 years. At this point in time, no one is aware of the date at which those renewal funds will become effective.

Mark will be meeting with the Director on the long-term committee recommendations tomorrow. As for the 2nd farmland preservation program, the Director remains interested and staff is waiting upon legal guidance as to whether or not the 2nd program can be enacted without legislation.

*Review of 2009 Clean Ohio AEPP Application and Discussion Points, Policies & Guidelines, and Fact Sheet:

Should we count out farms that have oil & gas well production? These farms cannot receive federal funding. Could we offer one well per so many acres? Does this fall into the independent energy efficiency category of the Governor's philosophy? Would this disturb a certain percentage of land and could that be used as a gauge? Could this mimic "impervious surface details of the current deed? Our main goal is that we don't want the landowner's easement to be violated with a superior interest... this could interfere with ag viability.

Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) or the county planning association could help evaluate currently used criteria.

Has anyone considered migrant labor housing within the deed? This is probably an area that should be looked into.

Each year has its different needs and with varying amounts of money to distribute through the program, it makes setting limitations difficult for the board. Setting one farm limit per county might make sense or perhaps setting \$500,000 limit per county might make sense. But if there was only \$2.5 million to distribute versus \$8.75, depending upon the various limitations, there could be varying outcomes. Would it be effective to have 5 farms of \$500,000 consume all available funds in one round? Perhaps we could state that because of the different scenarios that may play out with the funding, the board cannot predict what limitations will occur. Would this be fair for those who invest time and staff labor costs to put together applications?

*Glenn Myers, Lucille Hastings, and Roger Rhonemous's terms are up at the end of 2008 and ODA will be contacting the appropriate parties to ask for recommendations which can be the same individual.

*During announcements, John Detrick wanted to make the board aware of the ethanol bankruptcy issue. It is becoming a main point of concern for many communities.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.