

**Susquehanna County Agricultural Land Preservation Board
Tentative Meeting Agenda May 14, 2025**

5:30 PM

I. Call to Order

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Approval of Minutes – see attached

IV. Communications

V. Public Comment

VI. Old Business

- A. Susquehanna County ALPEP Guide updates.
- B. Dobitsch Farm – Received the \$100 application fee. They are in the process of getting their farm registered in the Agricultural Security Area with Clifford Township. Nothing needs to be voted on at this time. They remain in status quo.

VII. New Business

- A. Adopt the attached map to be added to our County Guide, as a requirement by the State of Pennsylvania regulation 138e.17.
- B. Vote on proposed changes to Susquehanna County ALPEP Program – see attached narrative of changes.
- C. Accept and approve the Agricultural Preservation Easement Purchase Program Susquehanna County Guide and send to Pennsylvania State Bureau of Farmland Preservation for our 7-year recertification.
- D. Vitale farm application was received on 03/25/25 – see attached.

VIII. Other items of Discussion

- A. Stephanie Zimmerman, Director of Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Farmland Preservation, will briefly discuss the process of bringing a farm into preservation.
- B. Discussion for state-certified general real estate appraiser, qualified to appraise for easement purchases.
- C. Discussion for surveyors.

- D. Staff are in the process of contacting all townships and municipalities and talking with them about Agricultural Preservation and the Agricultural Security Areas.
- E. Two federal farms will need to be inspected by June 30, 2025. I will be inspecting those Friday May 23, with a rain date of Friday June 6. Landowners were contacted via certified mail.
- F. Staff will be attending the Harford Fair. The Susquehanna County Farmland Preservation booth will be in with Susquehanna County Promotion and Tourism. Board members are welcome to staff as available. I will be emailing a schedule in the coming months, and we can create a schedule.
- G. Any other questions or concerns from the Board.

IX. Adjournment

Next Meeting Wednesday August 13, 2025

**Susquehanna County Agricultural Land
Preservation Board**

Minutes February 12, 2025

5:30 PM

- I. Call to Order:** Commissioner Darrow called the meeting to order at 5:27 PM. Members present included: Commissioner David Darrow, Samantha Ellsworth, Matt Holbrook, Gene Hubbard, Allen Scott, William Shay, Doug Sivers, and Leonard Wheatley. Also attending was Agricultural Easement Program Director Patti Peltz.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance** The pledge of allegiance was said.
- III. Reorganization Meeting** The reorganization meeting was held with Leonard Wheatley nominated and elected as Chairman, William Shay as Vice Chairman, and Agricultural Land Preservation Staff Patti Peltz, as Secretary. G Hubbard made a motion to accept the nominations and elections as presented, Commissioner Darrow seconded and so carried.
- IV. Approval of Minutes** - No Minutes to approve.
- V. Communications** – No Communications.
- VI. Public Comment:** There was no public comment.
- VII. Old Business**
 - A. DePue Farm Closed 1/23/2025.
- VIII. New Business**
 - A. Vote on proposed changes to Susquehanna County ALPEP Program
 - a. Effective Date for changes below. – 2/12/2025.
 - b. Page 3 - Increase Appraisal Deposit Fee from \$1200 to \$2200.
 - c. Page 2 - Change Application period to run November 1 - March 31 each year.
 - d. Page 2 – Update the application, and the page 2 wording of “the application is a two-page form” Change wording to “4-page form” – see attached.
 - e. Add Table of Contents page between cover and page 1 – per state recommendation.
 - f. Add Act 33 language per state recommendation. – see attached.
 - g. Add Resolution from Commissioners per state recommendation.
 - h. Remove social security numbers from the initial applications with the County.
 - i. Next meeting date/future meeting dates – see attached.

G Hubbard made a motion to approve all changes above, effective 2/12/2025, W Shay seconded and so carried.

- B. Edith & Francis Dobitsch Farm application received in Planning 1/30/2025 – Board unanimously requested the non-refundable \$100 check be received before any further discussion.

X. Other items of Discussion

- H. Second farm in the process of submitting an application.
- I. Board members contact information.
- J. Any other questions or concerns by the Board – The Board discussed per acre increase from \$1,500 per acre to \$2,400 per acre - G Hubbard made a motion and M Holbrook seconded and so carried.
- K. P Peltz discussed having a Farmland Preservation table at the upcoming Ag Days March 2, 2025, at Montrose High School.
- L. Commissioner Darrow thanked everyone for their willingness to be a part of the team and welcomed them to the Farmland Preservation Board.
- M. Board members discussed different ways to get the public informed that the Farmland Preservation is back with Susquehanna County Courthouse.
- N. Board members would like letters sent out to all townships regarding their Agricultural Security Areas registration with the Susquehanna County.
- O. The Board would like a basic paper typed up for the landowner stating the process for Farmland Preservation.
- P. Board would like Farmland Preservation to get on the agenda for Township officials' meeting in October.

XI. Adjournment

Next Meeting Wednesday May 14, 2025 @ 5:30 pm

Minutes Prepared by:

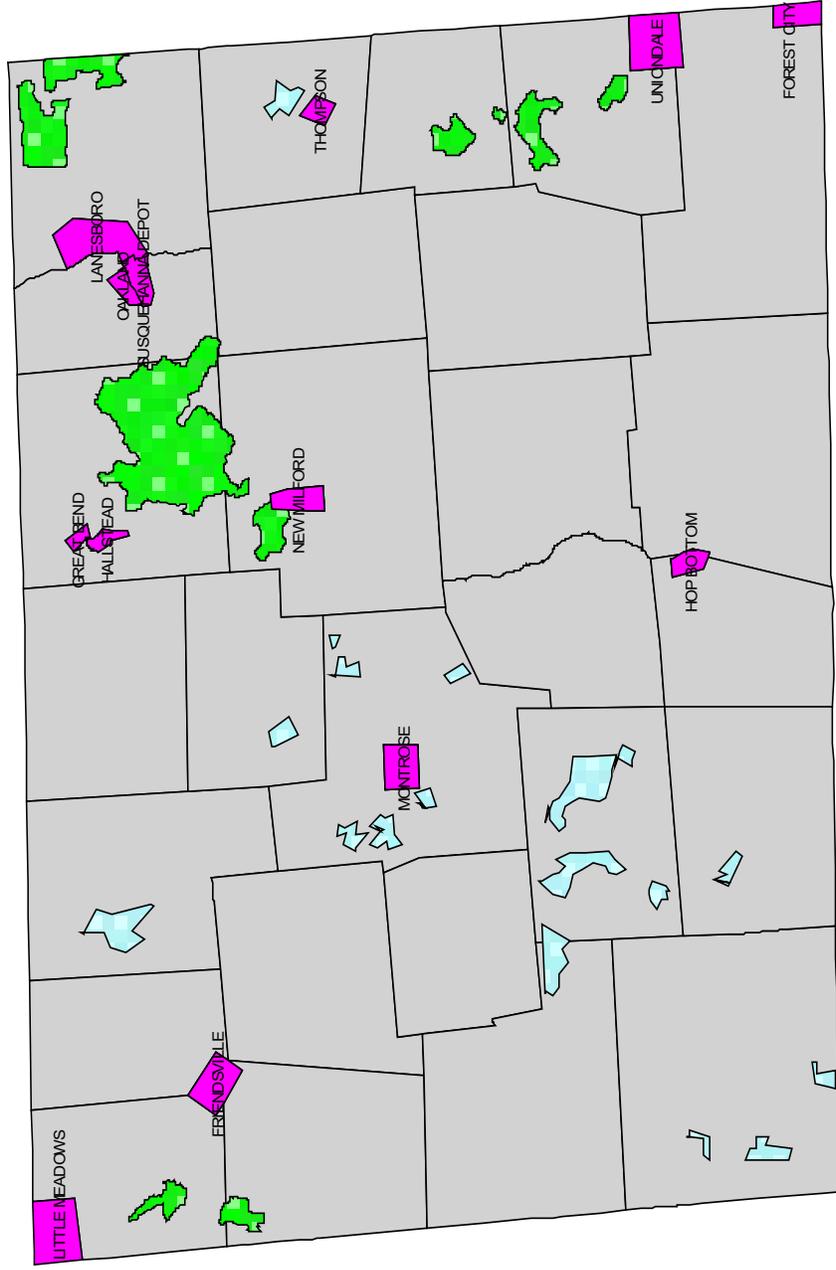
Patti L. Peltz,
Agricultural Easement Program Director

Certified to be a true and correct copy of the minutes of the regular meeting of the Susquehanna County Agricultural Land Preservation Board held on February 12, 2025.

Respectfully Submitted,

Leonard Wheatley, Chairman
Susquehanna Count Agricultural Land Preservation Board.

Important Agricultural Areas of Susquehanna County



- Population/Commercial Centers
- State Game Lands
- Ag. Easement Areas
- Rural Resource Area

05/12/25 Narrative of changes in Susquehanna County Agricultural Land Preservation Easement Purchase Program Guide

The full guide was reformatted, and typos were corrected as found.

Cover page – Changed the picture and font.

Added last line “Recertified December 2018...”

P2 Added most current resolution

P3 Added table of contents

P5 Board extended application period November 15-March 31
Application is 4 pages, not 2

P6&7 Board increased the deposit fee from \$1200 to \$2200

P8 Changed wording per Chris’/state recommendation

P12&13 Changed wording per Chris’/state recommendation

P21 Moved from another section to the correct section.

P22&23 Changed wording per Chris’/state recommendation

P26 Added the most current application being used.

P30 Readopted date for current Resolution & Updated members from 7-9

P32 Updated the quorum

P34 Added current Board Members

P38 Added Rural Enterprises

P40 Added Commercial Equine Activities Amendment

P41 Added “Appendix I” A map of Susquehanna County showing the important agricultural areas. Including Agricultural Security Areas and Rural Resource Areas.

***SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY
FARMLAND PRESERVATION***

**To: Susquehanna County Agricultural Land Preservation Board
From: Patti L. Peltz
Date: May 5, 2025
Subject: Vitale Farm**

Vitale Farm on Darrow Hill Road, Montrose, has submitted an application to Farmland Preservation. The following items are called to your attention:

1. Application and \$100 fee were received on March 25, 2025.
2. The farm was registered with the Bridgewater Agricultural Security Area in September 1991. Satisfying the first requirement in State Agricultural Easement Purchase process.
3. The farm is 158.07 acres total. Of which, 108.81 acres are open farmland, and 48.26 acres are wooded. 1.0 acre was excepted out for the structures. Satisfying the 50% minimum for pasture, cropland, or grazing area.
4. The Vitale parcel is within feet from the Hawley Family Farm, which was accepted into Farmland Preservation in 2007.
5. I am working with the landowner to get a site visit scheduled.
6. The landowner is currently working with NRCS to establish a conservation plan.
7. Once the conservation plan is in place, I can move to completing the LESA Score sheet.
8. LESA score sheet is expected to score in an acceptable range.
9. The Board will need a vote to rank the farm as number one, and to continue the process of moving forward.

Staff Recommendation: Vote to rank the Vitale Farm as number one to continue the process of Agricultural Preservation. Pending a favorable Conservation Plan and LESA score, order a title search and an appraisal by deed description.