

Susquehanna County Agricultural Land Preservation Board
Tentative Agenda August 12, 2026 @ 5:30 PM

I. Call to Order

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Approval of Minutes – see page 2

IV. Communications – none

V. Public Comment

VI. Old Business

A. Dobitsch Farm update – see page 5

VII. New Business

A. Chianese Farm – see page 6

B. Barbour Farm – see page 7

VIII. Other items of Discussion

A. Member concerns or questions

IX. Adjournment

Next Meeting November 11, 2026 @ 5:30 PM

Meeting Minutes May 13, 2026, 5:30 PM

- I. **Call to Order:** Chairman Leonard Wheatley called the meeting to order at 5:36 PM. Members present included: Commissioner David Darrow, Samantha Ellsworth, Matt Hollbrook, Gene Hubbard, John Benscoter, James Barbour, William Shay, Allen Scott. Also attending was Agricultural Easement Program Director Patti Peltz.
- II. **Pledge of Allegiance:** The pledge of allegiance was said.
- III. **Approval of Minutes:** A Scott made the motion, seconded by D Darrow to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2026, meeting.
- IV. **Communications:** none.
- V. **Public Comment:** There was no public comment.
- VI. **Old Business:**

- A. **Dobitsch Farm update:**

- To: Farmland Preservation Board

- From: Patti L. Peltz

- Date: 5/5/26

- Subject: Dobitsch Farm – Update

- Outstanding are a completed survey and an Agricultural Easement deed.

A survey is almost complete. The survey description will then be sent to Attorney Gathany for a deed completion.

A state review of the file was requested to see what is still outstanding in the requirements on the county end.

I have requested to have the easement on the agenda for the August 20 state board meeting. Requirements will need to be met by July 31 for final submission with the state.

Once the state approves to move forward, all adjoining landowners will need to be notified of the Agricultural Easement, and a settlement will be scheduled.

Nothing needs to be voted on at this time. We are moving forward as expected.

- VII. **New Business:**

- A. Rank applications received

- After reviewing the scoring sheets, Chianese Farm was ranked number one, and Barbour Farm was ranked number two.

- G Hubbard made a motion to accept the rankings, S Ellsworth seconded and so carried. J Barbour abstained.**

- B. Chianese Farm application received 4/2/2026

- To: Farmland Preservation Board

- From: Patti L. Peltz

- Date: 05/05/2026

- Subject: Chianese Farm

Edward & Gwen Chianese have submitted an application for Agricultural Preservation; it was received on 4/4/2026. The farm is located on Lakeview Road in Jackson Twp.

They are currently listed in the Ag Security Area for Jackson Twp.

Staff visited the farm and met with Ed to address any questions or concerns he would have with the program and explained the process. The farm is beautiful and well maintained. He is a first-generation farm owner and has been on this parcel since 1967. They do have beef cows on the property. There are no natural gas well pads or compressor stations on this parcel.

The landowner does have two parcels but is not including the .77-acre parcel that houses the original 160-year-old farmhouse. They will be preserving 92+ acres.

The Board can review their application and vote to conditionally accept the farm based on their ranking which is available.

The appraiser in the past for Farmland Preservation was VanFleet Appraisals, Clarks Summit, PA.

Staff Recommendation: After ranking, vote to accept the Chianese Farm to advance to the next steps in the Agricultural Easement Purchase Program. First would be an appraisal from Van Fleet Appraisals.

Followed by a title search, and a survey.

G Hubbard made the motion to start the process to preserve the Chianese Farm, J Benscoter seconded and so carried.

C. Barbour Farm application received 5/7/26

- **To:** Farmland Preservation Board

From: Patti L. Peltz

Date: 05/05/2026

Subject: Barbour Farm

Jim & Kim Barbour have submitted an application for Agricultural Preservation; it was received on 5/7/2026. The farm is located on Barbour Hill Road in Liberty Twp.

They are currently listed in the Ag Security Area for Liberty Twp.

Staff visited the farm earlier this year and met with Jim. The farm has quite a family history and is very well maintained. He is a multi-generation farm owner. They do have a specialty A2A2 raw milk. They sell their raw milk to the public along with fresh meats, and a variety of other products in a shoppe right on the family farm.

The landowner does have multiple parcels but will be preserving two parcels totaling 222+ acres.

The Board can review their application and vote to conditionally accept the farm based on their ranking which is available.

The appraiser in the past for Farmland Preservation was VanFleet Appraisals, Clarks Summit, PA.

Staff Recommendation: After ranking, vote to accept the Barbour Farm to advance to the next steps in the Agricultural Easement Purchase Program. First would be an appraisal from Van Fleet Appraisals.

Followed by a title search, and a survey.

W Shay made the motion to start the process to preserve the Barbour Farm, S Ellsworth seconded and so carried. J Barbour abstained.

VIII. Other items of Discussion

A. Vote on proposed changes to ALPEP Program guide – see page 7

To: Farmland Preservation Board
From: Patti L. Peltz
Date: 05/05/2026
Subject: Program updates

- Page 5, III. Purchase Procedure currently reads “**Submit Application between November 15-March 31 for consideration.**”

Update to “**Submit application for consideration.**”

Inspection and Enforcement Procedures reads “The Susquehanna County Agricultural Land Preservation Board will do a yearly inspection of the properties on which they hold a conservation easement according to subsection A. below.

A. A. (138e.202) Inspections.

- (1) The county board shall inspect all restricted land within the county at least annually to determine compliance with the applicable deed of easement.

The act was updated in 2013 to State of Pennsylvania Act 914.1(b)(xvii) on page 23:

(xvii) To inspect all agricultural conservation easements within the county on at least a **biennial** basis to determine compliance with the applicable deed of easement. The following shall apply to inspections:

(A) The first inspection shall be completed within one year of the date of easement sale.

- Update our guide to inspect on **biennial basis**, with the exception of newly preserved farms.

J Barbour made a motion to change the Susquehanna County Ag Preservation Guide to biennial inspections, with the exception of newly preserved farms, and remove the date restrictions for submitting applications. S Ellsworth seconded and so carried.

B. Member concerns or questions

IX. Adjournment: M Hollbrook made a motion to adjourn at 5:36 PM, J Barbour seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,

Leonard Wheatley, Chairman
Susquehanna County Agricultural Land Preservation Board

Dobitsch Farm

To: Farmland Preservation Board
From: Patti L. Peltz
Date: 08/05/2026
Subject: Dobitsch Farm – Update

The state is requiring concrete monuments be set at two of the survey points. Once the monuments are set, Attorney Gathany can then complete the deed description.

Once the state approves, the neighbors will be notified in writing of their intent to bring the property into preservation.

This farm is now set to be on the state meeting agenda for October 8, 2026.

Nothing needs to be voted on at this time. We are moving forward as expected.

Chianese Farm

To: Farmland Preservation Board

From: Patti L. Peltz

Date: 08/05/2026

Subject: Chianese Farm

Chianese Farm has been appraised by Don VanFleet. It has been appraised well enough to make an offer for Agricultural Preservation.

Ed & Gwen have both signed their W-9's and signed a release for a copy of their Conservation Plan from NRCS.

We have received their \$2,200 check to continue in the preservation process.

The next steps in the process are to make an offer, and the landowner will have 30 days to accept the offer or withdraw their application. If accepted, we would then do a title search and order a survey of the property.

Staff Recommendation: Vote to make an offer to Ed & Gwen Chianese in the amount of \$1500 per acre, Attorney Gathany to do a title search, and a survey to be performed if the Agricultural Board offer is accepted.

Barbour Farm

To: Farmland Preservation Board

From: Patti L. Peltz

Date: 08/05/2026

Subject: Barbour Farm

Barbour Farm has been appraised by Don VanFleet. It has appraised well enough to make an offer for Agricultural Preservation.

We are currently awaiting their \$2,200 deposit, signed W-9's and a signed NRCS conservation plan release to receive a copy of their plan.

If steps above are met and an offer is made, the landowner will have 30 days to accept the offer or withdraw their application. If accepted, we would then do a title search and order a survey of the property.

Staff Recommendation: Conditionally vote to make an offer of \$1500 per acre provided the outstanding requirements of a \$2200 deposit, signed W-9's, and a NRCS conservation plan, are received. A title search and survey to be conducted if the Agricultural Board offer is accepted.