

MEETING MINUTES

JEFFERSON COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

July 27, 2017

Members Present: Doug Shelmidine, Chairperson, John Peck, Michael Bourcy, Dan McBride, Steve Watson, Jan Martusewicz

Others Present: John Marnell, Jen Eager, Anthony Avalos

1. Chairperson Shelmidine opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m.
2. John Peck made a motion to approve the August 3, 2016 meeting minutes and Jan Martusewicz seconded. Motion carried.
3. Alexandra Beck stated there were four landowner inclusion requests for the Agricultural Districts in Jefferson County. There were a total of 4 parcels and 286 acres. They were listed as follows:
 - James Babcock; LeRay (T) (75.00-1-48.2)
 - Sarah Kingery; Chaumont (V) (61.34-1-3.2)
 - John Marnell; LeRay (T) (55.00-1-62)
 - Richard J. Edsall; Cape Vincent (T) (50.00-1-49)

Each property was reviewed with no concerns mentioned other than the Village of Chaumont parcel. The property owner in the Village of Chaumont states it will have 27 chicken and 7 ducks for egg production and sale. They will also have a horse & mule in pasture and a future barn. John Peck asked if there was objections in the zoning law for farm animals within the Village limits. A motion was put on hold while staff reviewed the Village of Chaumont Zoning Law.

4. Sara Freda presented the results of the Southwest District Review. The Southwest Ag District was formed in 2002; it includes land within the Towns of Adams, Ellisburg, Henderson, Hounsfield, Lorraine and Watertown. It was last reviewed in 2009 and recertified in 2010 to include 74,560 acres. Annual inclusions over the past 7 years have added 2,237 acres to the District bringing the total to 76,797. In 2017, there were 265 farm surveys mailed to current landowners in the District and 141 were returned, a response rate of 53%. There are 22 parcels equaling 864 acres proposing to be added and 4 parcels totaling 21 acres requesting to be removed. Sara reviewed each of the 22 new parcels with the Board using google photos and/or site photos. The District, as modified, will consist of 77,640 acres.

John Peck made a motion to recommend the Southwest Agricultural District be modified as request. A second was made by Dan McBride. Motion carried.

5. Alexandra Beck read a section of the Village of Chaumont Zoning Law to the Board stating that more than eight domestic fowl are prohibited within that District, but other sections of the zoning law made it appear that livestock and farm operations were allowed. It was decided that it would be up to interpretation if a zoning issue were brought forth because the law is unclear. It was also unclear to the Board if a zoning violation arose would Ag & Markets consider this a hobby farm or

a true agricultural operation and provide them protection under the Ag & Market Law.

Chairman Shelmidine posed the question if the zoning law was in place prior to a parcel being approved for an Agricultural District would local zoning or Ag and Markets Law take precedence. Michael Bourcy said this exact question was asked to Bob Somers in a recent training and it was stated that if a parcel makes it through the entire review process and approved by all for inclusion in an Ag District, then Ag and Markets Law has authority regardless of the timeline.

The Board agreed that further review should be done with Ag & Markets on the inclusion of this parcel, as this Board does not want to circumvent local zoning laws. It was agreed that this Board would approve it pending further review and the Board of Legislators can deny it later if the research proves it should not be included. With that in mind, John Peck made a motion to approve all inclusion requests. A second was made by Steve Watson. Motion carried.

6. Michael Bourcy stated that Chairman Shelmidine, Al Gerhke, and Kevin Jordan are all up for reappointment and they have all agreed to a new term. There are currently no vacant Board openings.
7. Jan Martusewicz made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Dan McBride and carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 pm.

DRAFT