

Solebury Township Farm Committee  
July 28, 2020  
Virtual Meeting

**MINUTES**

Attendance: Kaitlin Farbotnik, Graham Phillips, Josh Perlsweig, Craig Haney, Gary Manoff, Kevin Morrissey (Supervisor Liaison) and Nicole Slack (Township Administration) Absent: Tim Luccaro

**I. Call to Order**

Kaitlin Farbotnik called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

**II. Approval of Minutes**

On a motion by Mr. Gary Manoff seconded by Mr. Buz Teacher, the minutes of the June 23, 2020 Farm Committee meeting unanimously approved.

**III. Announcements**

**IV. New Business**

**V. Discussion Items**

Farmer Match Program

Farm Committee provides update to various tasks they have worked on since last meeting. Buz Teacher had reached out to local realtors in relation to the farmer match program, there was not much feedback in that avenue. Kaitlin Farbotnik spoke with the Conservation District, at this time they were not interested in partnering to help with the program, their suggestion was to reach out to DelVal. The committee has already explored the option of partnering with DelVal with no success. If and when the program is up and running, the Conservation District offered to help write the Conservation Agreements.

Gary Manoff touched base with Jeff Marshall from Heritage. It did not seem as those Heritage would be interested in replacing experienced farmers to bring in new farmers on land already being farmed. Another difficulty, Heritage indicated there are approximately 1000 acres of eased land. Gary Manoff stated that there are possibly two properties that could be utilized, owned by Heritage.

Josh Perlsweig provided insight on how he and his family connected with farmers. His wife, Natalie's family hosts farms on land that is preserved in some way. The generation before them paved the way, making farming a priority. Education and conversations need to be had to help people understand why this is beneficial. As the local food movement grows, interest may increase along with property changing hands.

Helen Tai was part of an incoming class of county commissioners, that advise on issues relating to energy and environment. There was subcommittee that had a piece on agriculture. A report was submitted and is a living document, the subcommittee is

looking for input. Farm committee could recommend county commissioners be part of an initiative to develop a farm land owner match program. Items that would need to be addressed are farm work housing, short term housing and multi family housing. This type of housing included tiny houses, campers and campsites. This may be worth putting on their radar and draft example model ordinances that would be helpful.

Kevin Morrissey asked if the Farmer Match Program is feasible. Is there a saturation point of traditional farms? Whether the committee wants to start looking at the type of farms and if certain farms are more profitable. Idea is to build a food community, dairy (milk, ice cream, butter). Livestock is under served in the Township. It would be beneficial to increase diversity of local farms that serve the community. The committee responded markets are always in need of vegetable people and it is costly to begin in the dairy industry and develop an operation. It is a barrier financially for those just starting out.

There are properties that are viable and have smaller acreage. Properties that have large acreage do not typically lease it all, only a fraction. There is a misconception on how much acreage is needed to farm.

The goal for the end of the year is to produce a proposal/guideline to be provided to the Township on ways to move forward with the Land Owner Match Program. Navigate what are the best approaches to attract land owners and how do you attract new farmers. The committee will continue to explore avenues on how to best achieve this goal.

The next Farm Committee meeting is scheduled for August 25<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm via Zoom.

**VI. Public Comment**

**VII. Adjournment**

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 pm.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole Slack  
Farm Committee Administrator