

Commissioners' Special Board Meeting Minutes Monday, March 13, 2017

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in a special session on Monday, March 13, 2017, at 8:30 A.M. in the 1st Floor Conference Room at the Berks County Agriculture Center, Leesport, Pennsylvania, pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

Commissioner Chair Christian Y. Leinbach called the meeting to order with Commissioner Kevin S. Barnhardt in attendance. Also present on behalf of the County were Chief Administrative Officer Ronald R. Seaman, Chief Clerk Maryjo Gibson, Ryan Hunter, Director of Facilities & Operations, Doug Kenwood, Deputy Director of Facilities & Operations, Michael Michaels, Facilities Manager-North Campus and Tami Hildebrand, Executive Director of Berks County Agriculture Department. Representing the tenants and partners at the Agricultural Center were Greg Gnat, District Director, Penn State Extension Service; Joe Rosenbaum, member, Berks County Conservation Board of Directors; Terry Tracey, County Executive Director, USDA, Berks County Farm Service Agency; Tammy Bartsch, Secretary, Berks County Conservation District, Nicholas Ramsey, District Conservationist, NRCS ("Natural Resources Conservation Service"); Dean Druckenmiller, Chair, Berks County Conservation Board of Directors, and Jim McCarthy, Associate Member, Berks County Conservation District.

Agenda

Commissioner Leinbach announced the following three talking points:

1. Ryan Hunter will explain where we are in design and layout.
 2. What is important to our tenants and partners at the Ag Center in keeping everyone together.
 3. A discussion on where we need to be in terms and length of the agreement, and the square foot price.
-
1. Ryan Hunter presented a PowerPoint presentation of floor plans prepared by Muhlenberg Greene Architects displaying the latest reiteration of space requirements and building amenities discussed previously with the tenants. Ryan reported as these plans stand, there would be no changes to Penn State Extension, but there would be relocation and accessibility renovations of the first floor bathrooms and the Main Lobby area. Ryan mentioned the plan includes a Breakroom that has been requested by tenants, and it is proposed to move Tami Hildebrand to the 1st Floor, allocating approximately for 1,628 sq. feet for the Ag Department. On the 2nd Floor, Conservation District, Ryan stated this current plan keeps the interior corridor intact and will provide approximately 3,800 square feet for the Conservation District. In addition, Ryan provided details of the plans as it related to each tenant.
At the conclusion of Ryan's presentation, Commissioner Leinbach opened the floor to discussion, and asked the tenants if the proposed plans with additional space is where everyone needs to be. Terry Tracy and Nick Ramsey remarked the current square footage proposed is under their required space, but is in range and

it is livable. Dean Druckenmiller was concerned with losing storage space on the 1st Floor. Ryan assured Dean the caged storage space currently shared by Penn State Extension, the District and NCRS will remain.

2. Nick Ramsey had a prepared statement and shared some of his concerns with the Commissioners. One of Mr. Ramsey's main concerns was with security and safety at the Ag Center. Mr. Ramsey's report focused on the services they provide, and the benefits to the Berks County farming community and private landowners, and how that is a key component in keeping the partners together. A copy of Mr. Ramsey's report is attached.

Security and safety was also a big concern with all tenants.

Commissioner Barnhardt commented it seems to him that everyone is supportive of the plan, but should keep in mind this doesn't have to be the final version. On the issue of security and safety, Commissioner Barnhardt remarked this is more difficult than it appears due to the large flow of public access to the facility, and does not see making the Ag Center a totally secure facility.

Mr. Druckenmiller commented he doesn't expect the facility to be 100% secure, but would like to see a higher level of security.

Commissioner Leinbach noted security and safety will be included in the renovation project plans.

3. Commissioner Leinbach commented in order to move forward with this project, we need an agreement on the terms and square footage rate, and if we go forward, the County will need a minimum 10 year commitment from all the partners. All were agreeable to a 10 year term. Commissioner Leinbach commented the rate per square foot will be an all-in amount with no additional fees or charges. The parties discussed a fair square footage charge, with the majority of tenants agreeing \$14.00-\$14.50 is fair considering square footage and improvements affecting their particular office space.

Commissioner Leinbach stated the Board see the value in the Ag Center, having seen the numbers from Budget, and want all partners equal and suggested starting the first year at \$14.57, which is the current rate paid by USDA through 2018; then \$14.75 for the 2nd year, and after that raise it only the CPI/COLA for the 10 year period. Tenant's seemed to be agreeable, but must take the offer to their Boards for review and comment.

Commissioner Barnhardt agrees the building needs a refresh, but the County does not want to bear all the costs, and offered his thoughts on possibly reallocating or reducing the amount of funds the County provides to Ag Land Preservation each year and using that amount towards the renovation cost.

Tami Hildebrand asked the partners what they think about reducing Ag Land money to purchase easements to be used for renovation. Mr. Rosenbaum stated the farm community would strongly disagree. Mr. McCarthy replied that it sounded appealing to him.

Commissioner Barnhardt asked each tenant/partner take his proposal back to their respective Boards and ask if they would be interested in a \$250,000 per year Ag Land reduction over 10 years, which would assure no increase in rent and no COLA for 10 years.

Commissioner Leinbach does not support taking the money out of Ag Land.

Commissioner Leinbach asked if everyone was agreeable to the County sending a letter putting its offer for \$14.57 for year 1, \$14.75 year 2 and COLA for the remaining term in writing and sending the letter to all tenants for consideration.

All agreed and Commissioner Leinbach instructed Ron Seaman to prepare the letter.

There being no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 9:55 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk