

CONNOQUENESSING TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
SPECIAL HEARING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 18, 2014

A special hearing was held on Tuesday, February 18, 2014 to consider the Agricultural Security Area Proposal of Lawrence and David Spangler. Present were Chairman, Terry Steinheiser, Vice-Chairman, Scott Longdon and Supervisor Ray Kroll. Solicitor Andrew Menchyk, Jr. was present to conduct the hearing and Lee Kradel was present to take the minutes and Mr. Larry Spangler was present to represent the applicants. The special hearing was called to order by Chairman, Terry Steinheiser at 8:10 am. The hearing opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Andrew Menchyk, Jr. presided over the public hearing to consider the Agricultural Security Area proposal of Lawrence & David Spangler. Mr. Lawrence Spangler was sworn in by Mr. Menchyk.

Mr. Menchyk stated that the format for the hearing will be as follows: he will review the history of the postings and the notes and go over the provisions with Lee, then he will ask Mr. Spangler some questions and if the supervisors have any questions for Mr. Spangler, then the supervisors will vote.

Mr. Menchyk stated “we are here this morning for the hearing that we are required to convene on the David Spangler and Lawrence Spangler Agricultural Security Proposal”.

Andrew verified with Lee that the proposal was posted, the date it was posted (mid-November), the advertisement of the proposal, the date it was advertised (11/22/13). Andrew verified that the copy in the packet is a copy of the proposal that was received. Mr. Menchyk asked if any comments were received on the original proposal. Lee Kradel stated “no”.

Mr. Menchyk asked when the proposal was submitted to the Township Planning Commission, the County Planning Commission and the Township Agricultural Security Advisory Committee to which Lee stated “yes” to all and they were all notified on the 18th of December, 2013. Mr. Menchyk asked if any comments had been received from either the Township Planning Commission, the Butler County Planning Commission or the Advisory Board. Lee stated yes there were comments received from a member of the advisory board and that copies were in the packets. Mr. Menchyk verified the two sets of comments were from Evelyn Hockenberry and asked Ms. Kradel if she was speaking on behalf of the committee or her own personal comments? Ms. Kradel stated yes, they were personal. The comments were marked as Exhibit “C” Mr. Menchyk asked if today’s hearing was advertised. Ms. Kradel stated it was advertised on February 14th. He asked if the notice of the public hearing was posted. Ms. Kradel said “yes”, 4 were posted on the Spangler property and 1 here at the township. Mr. Menchyk marked the notice as Exhibit “D”. Mr. Menchyk asked if there were any comments or objections received by the township in regard to today’s hearing? Ms. Kradel stated “no”. Mr. Menchyk stated there were no public in attendance except the applicant, Mr. Spangler.

Mr. Menchyk proceeded to ask questions of the applicant, Lawrence Spangler. Mr. Menchyk asked if he was the owner of the property that is the subject of this proposal. Mr. Spangler stated that he owns the property with his brother, David Spangler. Mr. Menchyk asked Mr. Spangler what the current use of the property is. Mr. Spangler showed the aerial view of the property that he brought with him and said it is currently residential with some sheds and barns. He pointed out the area that was used by the previous owners as a green house for their florist business. He

said they have torn down the green house and are trying to clean up the brush, etc. He said he is potentially going to plant an apple orchard and maybe raise some beef cattle. He stated he currently has some vegetable gardens as well. Mr. Menchyk asked if he had tested the soil quality and Mr. Spangler said yes he did and it is conducive to agriculture. He stated the barns are currently used for storage. He also stated that he had a forester come in to check the trees and there is some improvements needed to the types of trees he has.

Mr. Menchyk stated that if the supervisors approve the proposal and the use of the property or buildings ever changes and is no longer used for agricultural purposes, he would need to get the proper occupancy and/or building permits.

Mr. Menchyk asked if the supervisors had any questions. Mr. Steinheiser stated that he was invited to visit the property. He stated that there had been some modifications made to the property and that Mr. Spangler had made an effort to clean up the property and he feels they have good intentions to maintain the property as a farm. Mr. Kroll asked for clarification as to what the Ag Security program was. Mr. Menchyk stated it was a conservation type program that provides for preservation of property as agricultural, therefore providing certain benefits on buildings when you're in the Agricultural Security Area. Mr. Longdon asked Mr. Spangler what is currently being stored in the existing buildings. Mr. Spangler said they were used for storage for fifty years by his father-in-law who previously owned the property. He has permitted his father-in-law to continue to store various wood working equipment and other old equipment as well as their new tractor and log splitter. Mr. Longdon confirmed with Mr. Spangler that the future use of the property would be for an apple orchard and other agricultural uses. Mr. Spangler stated that he and his brother have been around agriculture all their lives. Mr. Longdon commented that it may seem like the township is making Mr. Spangler "jump through hoops", however, the township has not been following the proper procedure for Ag Security in the past. He said he feels Ag Security is very important to the community and this wasn't anything directed personally at Mr. Spangler but he felt it was very important to follow proper procedure. Mr. Spangler said he understood. Mr. Menchyk explained that the law is very specific on the proper procedure the township has to follow.

Steinheiser made a motion to approve Mr. Spangler's application for Ag Security, seconded by Mr. Longdon. Roll call, yes, unanimous. Mr. Menchyk told Mr. Spangler that he would receive a letter from him within 10 days confirming the supervisors' approval of his Agricultural Security Area Proposal.