

## **East Vincent Open Space Committee Minutes – January 20, 2026**

**Present:** Christine McNeil, Bill Fields, Jon Bauer, Michele Adams

**Not Present:** Nicole Keegan

**BOS Liaison:** Mark Brancato

**Guest Speakers:**

- Charles Walker, Farmer, Spring Ridge Farm
- Sarah Turner, Land Protection Manager, Natural Lands Trust

**Visitors:** One

### **2026 Reorganization of Officers**

The following officers were unanimously approved:

- Christine McNeil, Chair
- Bill Fields, Vice Chair
- Nicole Keegan, Secretary

### **Spring Ridge Farm Preservation**

The Committee welcomed Charles Walker of Spring Ridge Farm, located at 131 Keene Road, as East Vincent Township's newest preserved farm, protected through Open Space Bond funds in December. Owners Charles and Trisha Walker are already doing wonderful work restoring the property and producing high-quality local products, including eggs, chickens, pork, and beef.

The Committee was impressed by the Walkers' vision, commitment to farming, and strong stewardship ethic. Contact: [springridgefarm2016@gmail.com](mailto:springridgefarm2016@gmail.com).

Sarah Turner is coordinating with the Walkers to complete all remaining agricultural easement components of the project, and her contributions to the discussion were appreciated.

### **Agricultural Security Area (ASA) Discussion**

The Committee discussed reactivating the Township's Agricultural Security Area (ASA) Program. Haley Baer provided a map of existing Agricultural Security Areas, and informational links were included in the agenda to support the discussion.

Christine McNeil reviewed the Township's previous active Ag Security Committee in the early 2000s, which enabled local farmers to qualify for state and county grant programs. Through this effort, the Township secured approximately \$4 million from the Northern Chester County Agricultural Initiative. It was suggested that the Open Space Committee could handle review and recommendations for future ASA additions.

Charles Walker expressed interest in participating in the ASA.

Bill Fields explained that ASA participation provides protections for farmers from nuisance complaints related to farm operations, including noise from late day harvesting or animal operations, and offers protection from condemnation by government entities.

Mark Brancato asked whether there are any potential downsides to ASA participation, including issues related to Residual Processed Food (RPFs). Bill Fields will contact the County to gather additional information and prepare a more detailed briefing document with recommendations for the Board of Supervisors.

**Other Business**

- The Committee discussed the need to follow up on the greenhouse/hoophouse issue at Violet Rose Farm.
- Mark Brancato suggested planning another Landowner Outreach Meeting, with the ASA program included as a discussion topic. The Committee agreed this would be a worthwhile effort.

Christine McNeil, Chair