

Rail-To-Trail Study Leaves Landowners In A Quandary

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Lancaster Farming Staff
LITITZ (Lancaster Co.) — In March, as part of a \$15,400 feasibility study funded half by the state and half by township developers, Dan Zimmerman, township director, met in the fields with five farmers from Warwick Township. The purpose of the meeting: field questions and record concerns that farm landowners may have regarding a proposed rail-to-trail made up of an old railroad track once owned by the Reading Railroad.

On Monday evening a meeting of the Warwick Township Recreation Advisory Committee was held in the Warwick Township municipal building. The ongoing study may have reached a new head when a majority of landowners, disgruntled by their thoughts and issues regarding the proposed rail-to-trail system between Clay Road and Newport Road east of Lititz in Warwick Township, told the advisory committee that they'd heard enough. Noah B. Hurst, whose property borders the proposed trail system to the north, told the directors that

there was "no use studying anymore — I think we studied long enough." Another landowner asked the committee, "Why spend \$15,000 if you know people don't want it?" One of the most critical opponents of the proposed rail-to-trail system is Gerald R. Pfautz, whose farm borders to the north of the trail. He pointed out an article from Lancaster Farmland Trust that appeared in last week's issue of Lancaster Farming that noted preserved farms can never be developed for nonagricultural purposes and using preserved farm-

land, a substantial portion of land making up the proposed system, cannot be allowed. Farms that potentially make up the proposed rail-to-trail system include Robert C. Wenger, on whose tract the proposed system crosses through. Also included are Noah B. and Mabel H. Hurst, to the north; Gerald R. and Rachel A. Pfautz, also to the north; Marvin K. and Patricia A. Witmer; and Isaac S. and Ada L. Zimmerman. This was the second meeting of the committee. The purpose of the meeting, Zimmerman noted, was to clear up misunderstanding of the

intent of study — it was merely a fact-gathering effort. No legal proceedings were under way to acquire any land and turn any land into a rails-to-trails system. The study was funded in half by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the other half through developers in the township. The study's purpose is to take into account issues of land and homeowners that live in the Oak Street area of Lititz Borough and extending all the way from Clay Road to Newport Road in Warwick Township.

The purpose of the recent meeting in the fields, publicly advertised to the landowners, was to inform them of the study and to involve them in the process, according to Dan Zimmerman, township manager.

Zimmerman mentioned that there was a list of approximately 26 issues addressed at the farm meeting. He noted to the landowners that the township "cannot purchase the right of way from a preserved farm." However, after the feasibility study is complete and if the landowners show interest in proceeding with the proposed rails-to-trails in the township, then the township can request an "access easement" for a 30-foot wide strip, formerly occupied by the Reading Railroad, that includes land owned by the five farm landowners.

In 1989, the Reading Railroad sold its vested interest in the rails and the right of way resorted back, by law, to property owners. Now it is simply a 10-foot dust lane. However, Richard Hughes from Wilkes-Barre purchased a deed to lay claim for a 60-foot right of way on the property — an issue that also

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TOOLS		
LS1013	Dual Slide Compound 10" Miter Saw, Makita w/free Taskmaster Table!!	\$599.95
11105	Bench Vise HD 5-1/2" Columbian "Super Special"	\$59.95
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MISC.		
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TOP 12 QUESTIONS



Dairymen Should Ask His Milk Market.

1. No Equity Deductions?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes!
2. No Co-op Dues?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes!
3. Farmer Owned—Farmer Controlled?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes!
4. No Bull Talk—Straight Answers?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes!
5. Secure Milk Market?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes!
6. No Gimmick Milk Prices?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes!
7. Top Competitive Milk Price?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes!
8. Fewest Deductions?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes!
9. Top Notch Trucking?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes!
10. Milk Check Never Late?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes!
11. Member Services?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes!
12. Fair Treatment to all Members?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes!

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