

# 'Land Swap' Plan Affects Preserved Acres

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*Special To Lancaster Farming*  
 Editor's note: This story originally appeared in a slightly different form in the Aug. 27 issue of Ephrata Review newspaper.

EPHRATA (Lancaster Co.) — The Ephrata Area School District was still presenting its case for an ag preserve land swap before the Lancaster Board of Commissioners as The Ephrata Review went to press.

The hearing began at 9:15 a.m. Wednesday morning in Room 502 of the Lancaster County Courthouse. By 10:15 a.m., the district was still making its presentation and building its case for why it needs to have the land swap approved for a secondary access road to the proposed new Lincoln Elementary School.

"We are chomping at the bit to go out today and bid this project," Roger Brubaker, business manager for the school district, said at the hearing Wednesday morning. Brubaker then went into detail on the history of the project and the reasons the district was compelled to take this direction. Brubaker explained to the commissioners why time is crucial for this project which administrators say is already one year behind schedule.

"The Ephrata Area School District has an urgency," Brubaker said, alluding to the number of housing developments going up around the Lincoln area.

Recognizing that representatives from not only the school board, but also Ephrata Borough and Ephrata Township were in attendance, school district attorney Ken Notturmo commented on the partnerships of the project.

"This is evidence of a communitywide planning process," Notturmo expressed to commissioners.

Lancaster County Planning Commission's Ronald Bailey took the commissioners through their process in giving approval to the land swap earlier this year.

"We are here today trying to find a solution to a very difficult situation," Bailey said.

The land swap is crucial in that it gives the school district the area it needs to run a direct secondary access from Meadow Valley Road to the proposed new \$18.1 million, 850-student Lincoln Elementary School within the 78 acres adjacent to the current middle school property. Both Ephrata Township and Borough recommended Meadow Valley as a secondary access after other alternatives were nixed for a host of reasons. South Market Street was actually the district's first choice for secondary access but was knocked out because of safety and traffic concerns.

However, the district thought it had the clearance it needed for Meadow Valley way back in October of 2002 when the Agricultural Preservation Board by a vote of 3-1 agreed to the swap of

receiving two parcels of preserved farm land in exchange for taking one out. Later it was revealed to them that neither the county or state preservation boards had jurisdiction over the easement on the affected land on the David Z. Lauver farm but in fact it would be the commissioners who would determine the fate of the parcel.

And while Ephrata School Board President Dr. William Funk said Monday that Wednesday's hearing did make him a little nervous, Superintendent Gerald Rosati said the key is for all the information and history to be brought out that morning.

"I'm not worried," Rosati said. "I feel that when the facts come out and when the commissioners ask their questions that get clarification on what this district has done to show that we exhausted all of the questions we've been asked by the (leaders) of the townships and boroughs. We've partnered with engineers of the township and borough and we are coming up with the safest and probably the least negative option for that road.

"We hope to get the support of the commissioners — we have the support of all other agencies up to this point, even the farm preserve. We will follow the conditions they give us." Either way, both Dr. Funk and Rosati said Monday the district is committed to the project.

The district already has a ten-

tative agreement in place that would allow the school to obtain the Lauver land in ag preserve by acquiring another parcel from the Nelson and Miriam Nolt farm and combining it with land the district already owns to make the swap.

Once they had the land swap approval, the district was able to apply for a conditional use from Ephrata Township to construct the school, which they received.

Administrators told The Ephrata Review back in October that the direct access onto Meadow Valley would not only be more cost effective, but safer. Indirect access would have involved two roads (Hammon being one) and the relocation of several athletic fields at the middle school complex.

"It's not only money, but the time to recoup our fields for the community," Superintendent Rosati said last fall. "I truly believe that when the preserve people saw that this was a community operation (with the fields) — if we had to move all those fields up to our new property it would take even more (land).

"We think it is much safer and it is short," said President Dr. Funk, also last fall.

School officials said Monday at the regular board meeting that the project is about one year behind schedule. The district had hoped to break ground on the project this fall in hopes that the 18- to 24-month construction period would conclude before the arrival of students from several new housing developments at an already full Lincoln Elementary on Apple Street.

Resident Bob Good came forward Monday night to ask several questions regarding the land swap, including the costs that are involved in the land swap which involves purchasing an additional 2.6 acres.

Business Manager Roger Brubaker indicated that the purchase price for the land would be approximately \$25,000 per acre. The total cost of the elementary school project is estimated to be approximately \$23,782,708 (less anticipated interest, the total would be \$20,665,000).

## Weekly Dairy Market Outlook

(Continued from Page A16)

pecting a big rise in the advanced price were very disappointed. But the advanced price is simply the lower of the Class III or IV price from the previous month. Recall that the July Class IV price didn't rise very much. Thus the advanced payment is a poor predictor of future milk prices.

What really counts is the final payment on your milk check (sorry, I know this is an obvious statement). This is the sum of the component values on your milk check plus the PPD. There may be slight delays in the PPD relative to the cash market, but it will eventually catch up.

For example, the August Class


III price is expected to be \$13.80 per CWT, a rise of about \$2 per CWT from the month before. Also, the August Class I price has already been announced — it rose \$1.20 per CWT from the month before. Thus the bottom line price on the August milk check will show significant improvement. Producers will receive this check on or about September 15, 2003.

For more information on how your milk check is calculated, see the Penn State bulletin "Understanding Your Milk Check." You can find this online at <http://pubs.cas.psu.edu/FreePubs/pdfs/ua341.pdf>. Or you can order this publication by calling the Penn State Publications Distribution Center. The telephone number is (814) 865-6713. The fax number is (814) 863-5560. Ask for publication number UA341.

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