



Guilford Township officials seek match of \$100,000 to protect farmland

By **JIM HOOK** Senior writer

Guilford Township Supervisors have put \$100,000 into the Franklin County farmland preservation program this year in expectation of getting a state match.

By putting the money into the county pool, supervisors have surrendered their control over the money.

There's no guarantee the money will be spent in Guilford Township, according to Franklin County Commissioner Bob Ziobrowski.

"The money will be spent on a Guilford Township farm," Guilford Supervisor Greg Cook said. "I did my homework, and we're good with this."

The Franklin County Agricultural Land Preservation Board has approved the purchase of development rights on 15 farms, including three in Guilford Township. The board awaits funding. Cook sits on the board.

A farmer is paid a lump sum in exchange for the promise that his farm will never be developed.

This is the first year that Guilford Township has

set aside money for farmland preservation.

"We thought it would be a good year to get into it," Cook said. "The number of applications across the state would be lower. The more applications, the more competition. We're all competing for the same till of money."

There's "no blanket of approval or guarantee" that the Guilford money will end up in Guilford, according to Phil Tarquino, chief of the county planning department.

"It will work out that way," Tarquino said. "We have farms in Guilford that are on the active list. In essence, the money will be spent in Guilford."

Applicants have been scored and ranked by a variety of criteria, including soil type and the potential to be developed. Once money is available, applicants will decide whether to accept the county's offer for their development rights.

"We are going through a list that's been ranked," Tarquino said. "We do not have sufficient funding to complete the transaction, and some farms are in Guilford. This funding will allow us to do that. We'll probably be able to purchase another farm with the state money that will come with it."

Greene, Washington and Antrim townships have invested money in farmland preservation, but without joining the county pool to leverage a state match.

Advertisement

Creating Wealth with Real Estate

Learn How to Generate a Lifetime of Wealth!
Let Robert G. Allen, NY Times Best Seller, show you how.

RealEstateWealthSecret.com

The advertisement features a portrait of Robert G. Allen on the left. On the right, a hand holds a small model of a house. The background is a light green gradient.

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™



Some county preservation plans allow for purchasing development rights out of order, if local or federal contributions complete the financing of the deal, according to Doug Wolfgang, director of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Farmland Preservation. Those contributions are not matched by state dollars.

issue. With \$5 million from bonds issued in 2005, the county had purchased 4,678 acres of easements on 35 farms by 2009.

Wolfgang said he could not answer questions directly about Franklin County's farmland preservation plan.

Jim Hook can be reached at 262-4759 and jhook@publicopinionnews.com.

Preserving farmland

Franklin County is notifying the state that it has \$235,000 available for matching funds to preserve farmland. The amount includes \$100,000 from Guilford Township.

Last year the county spent \$135,000 in county tax dollars as part of a \$486,472 effort to preserve local farmland.

The state is expected to have less matching cash this year. The amounts available to counties are to be announced Feb. 19.

Since 1992 the development rights to 15,360 acres on 115 farms in the county have been purchased for \$28 million. The county has spent nearly \$9 million, the bulk of it from a bond

Advertisement

PROTECT YOUR HOME
FREE Home Security System!
\$850 Value!

CALL NOW and receive a **FREE** wireless remote control with **PANIC BUTTON!**

1-877-246-7519
Mon-Fri 9am - 10pm - Sat 9am-7pm - Sun 11am - 6pm EST

At no cost to you for parts and activation with only a \$99 installation fee and the purchase of alarm monitoring services. Terms & Conditions apply.

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™