FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC.

MINUTES – APRIL 18, 2023

The regular meeting of the Lower Makefield Farmland Preservation, Inc. (Farmland) Board

of Directors (Board) was held remotely on April 18, 2023. Mr. Steadman called the meeting

to order at 6:00 p.m.

Those present:

Farmland Preservation, Inc.: Dennis Steadman, Vice President

George Heinze, Secretary

Dan Bankoske, Treasurer

Sean Carney, Member

Others: John B. Lewis, Supervisor Liaison

Absent: Michael Blank, Farmland Preservation, Inc. President

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Heinze

Mr. Steadman moved, Mr. Bankoske seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve

the Minutes of March 21, 2023 as written.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Mr. Bankoske

One invoice is pending for Corcoran Landscaping in the amount of $500 which is the last

invoice for the winter work, using up all of the remaining hours. The check will be mailed

out shortly. The Tax Returns have been extended, but hopefully they will not need to be extended as late as they have been in the past.

In May the Board should consider a thorough review of the investments going through

the specific asset allocation and performance of the investment portfolio as this was

last done about six months ago.

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY ISSUES: All

Mr. Carney stated a winter project was to have work done at Leedom’s Farm at the

end of Farmview at 2084 Farmview down to the corner lot which was 2092 Farmview

1

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC.

MINUTES – APRIL 18, 2023

which was about a 150 yard stretch which involved clearing the fence and removing dead

trees. After that was completed the Township advised that the resident from 2080 Farm-

view had contacted them about work being done at their property. Mr. Carney stated what

is happening is that once an area is worked on, something that was not a priority looks like

it should have been a priority as that area looks untouched. Mr. Carney stated he met with

the residents at 2080 Farmview, and they indicated what they would like to have done.

Mr. Carney stated there was time left with Corcoran Landscaping who came out and

cleared it out and took care of a tree as well. Mr. Carney stated the residents were

satisfied with the work that was done. Mr. Carney stated there are no other issues at

Leedom’s Farm.

Mr. Carney stated he walked the Stackhouse Farm and 1578 Brookfield had a large

mature tree that had a “y” in it which had snapped and part of it had fallen into our buffer

area and part was being held up by another tree. Pictures were taken which were sent

to the Board and Corcoran Landscaping. The last half day of winter work was used to

take this tree down along with removing a large amount of debris at our expense which

had been thrown over the fence line by the neighbor at 1574 Brookfield. The resident

at 1578 Brookfield subsequently contacted Mr. Carney who asked him to look at their

property, and when he was there they expressed concerns about trees that were

growing over from the Farmland property onto their property, dropping limbs, etc.

Mr. Carney advised that they could limb off anything that was hanging over the fence

onto their side. Mr. Carney stated he has included that area as an area we may want

to consider as a winter project. Mr. Heinze stated he and Mr. Carney discussed this, and

agreed that they would go to the area in the near future so he would be up to date on

the issues.

Mr. Bankoske noted 1777 Greenbriar Court, Farmview I, where there was debris thrown

over the fence. He asked Mr. Carney if that had been removed, and Mr. Carney stated

he was not able to remove it because it was more than he had time to accomplish and

he also did not want to potentially damage his own vehicle with this amount of debris.

Mr. Carney stated he does have pictures of it, and it may be something that Corcoran Landscaping would be better equipped to remove. Mr. Bankoske stated it is clear that

the neighbor cut branches that were hanging over onto their property from a tree that

was on the Farmland property, and then threw those branches over the fence onto the Farmland property. There have not been discussions what that neighbor at this time.

Mr. Bankoske stated the neighbor at 1775 Greenbriar Court had been spoken to, but no

action has come out of that discussion other than he was looking for some clean-up and

2

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC.

MINUTES – APRIL 18, 2023

that neighbor will be working on trimming up some branches and trees that are

over-hanging onto his property from the Farmland property; and if something more

is needed, they can discuss that in the future.

Mr. Carney stated it seems that the letter that the Board has been sending out is

getting to certain neighbors, although some neighbors have indicated that they have

not received the letter. He stated the neighbor he and Mr. Bankoske met at 1775

Greenbriar mentioned the letter and was pleased to know about the Board and that

there is someone in charge of the buffer area. He stated there are a number of neigh-

bors who would like to see the back of the property line cleaner than it is currently;

however, they also acknowledged that it looks a lot better than it used to. Mr. Carney

stated he feels the Board should discuss speaking to neighbors who are interested in

making the property cleaner, but that the neighbors should be advised that they should

not be going onto the Farmland property or hiring someone to go onto the property

and cutting things down. Mr. Carney stated he feels that this is a product of the letters

that are being sent out and we should continue to do that.

Mr. Steadman stated he agrees that he has met neighbors when he walks the

properties who are familiar with the letter and understand the circumstances, but

there are others who have no idea that letters were sent. Mr. Steadman stated he

was contacted by Gary Ledonne of 1201 Bridle Estates, and he will turn over this

matter to Mr. Heinze. Mr. Steadman stated there was an issue in November, 2021

of deer damaging the fence as his property is on the deer trail between properties.

The deer were jumping the fence and young deer were getting caught in the fence.

At that time Mr. Steadman removed an 8’ section of fence with the property owners

agreement as it was felt that this might result in less of an issue. Mr. Ledonne has

indicated that it has now become a thoroughfare for a large number of deer, and they

need to discuss another potential solution. Mr. Steadman will provide the contact

information to Mr. Heinze so he can visit the site and see what might make sense.

Mr. Bankoske stated Mr. Lewis provided a picture of a sign in honor of Mr. Haupt

that is in a poor condition at Longshore near the corner of Woodside and Merrick

Roads. Mr. Steadman stated this type of sign is not on any of the other properties.

Mr. Bankoske stated he believes this was one of the original signs; and when

Mr. Blank joined the Board he went through the process of coming up with a

better design for signage and what would be appropriate, and that developed

into the current signage that is used. Mr. Steadman stated the sign was in

dedication for service to a specific individual so it is different from the other signs

which just say “Preserved Farmland.” Mr. Steadman stated he is not sure how

3

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC.

MINUTES – APRIL 18, 2023

much time or money we want to spend repairing/replacing this wooden sign unless we

know if it is necessary to have this type of sign at this specific location. Mr. Bankoske

stated it appears that in 2004, the Farmland Board voted to name this farm in his honor.

Mr. Steadman suggested that this matter be tabled until we can speak to Mr. Blank as

he may have first-hand knowledge about this. Mr. Heinze stated in 2004 people felt it

was important to honor this individual, and he would not want to change that piece of

it. He stated we should discuss whether we should go to a different style sign that is

more in line with our current signage with better longevity, but that still recognizes this

person. He stated the question would be the cost to refurbish the sign versus getting a

new sign that is more in line with our current standards. This will be put on a future

Agenda once Mr. Blank is available.

POLICY/PLANNING DISCUSSIONS: All

a. Potential New Approach to Fencing – Mr. Carney

While this item was on the Agenda, it was felt to be premature for discussion at this

time; and it will be considered at a future meeting.

b. Potential New Approach to Address Dumping by Neighbors – Mr. Steadman

There are instances where neighbors are cleaning up their yards, and dumping the yard

waste – tree limbs, grass clippings, old flowerpots, dirt, etc. over the fence onto the

Farmland property. This costs the Board money over the years, and it also interferes

with the Board’s program of cleaning up and managing the buffers. He stated Board

members have to pick up this material or the Board has to hire someone to clear it.

The Board has discussed that sending out an occasional letter does not seem to reach

everyone or stop this dumping, and the Board needs to discuss some potential

approaches to address this. A document related to this had been circulated to the

Board.

Mr. Steadman stated a suggestion is to draft a letter/post card that could be put in

the mailbox at the property behind which yard waste dumping can be seen advising

them that dumping onto the Farmland property is not allowed. As there is no tress-

passing we would not want neighbors to go onto the property and clean it up them-

selves as that could be a potential liability. The property owner could be sent a bill

for the clean-up.

4

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC.

MINUTES – APRIL 18, 2023

Mr. Carney stated he is concerned when he sees that this has occurred since he has spent

a lot of his time on the Board trying to help clean up the buffers to make it better behind

the residents’ homes. Mr. Carney stated it may be being done by hired landscapers who

see this as an area where they can toss things rather than taking it away because they do

not have the ability to dump somewhere. He stated previously dumping was free or

inexpensive, and landscapers were more likely to take it away; but now that fees are being

charged, we are seeing more dumping on the Farmland properties.

Mr. Carney stated the Board could purchase a few, “No Dumping” signs that are unattractive

in color and size which could be placed on the Farmland property facing the property where

this is taking place. He questions how much teeth we have about charging the property

owners or imposing a fine for dumping. He stated removal of the debris is a cost to Farm-

land Preservation, and he would be in favor of having the debris picked up and a bill sent

to the resident where dumping is observed as well as placement of the signs. He stated

he has noted that there are a number of places where they are repeat offenders, and

we are paying to have it picked up at the same areas. He stated it was indicated in our

most recent letter, that nothing is to be thrown over the fence. He stated dealing with

this is taking away from our progress with the fence lines and the buffer areas.

Mr. Heinze stated he agrees that this is taking place but feels that each residence that

borders our property should have a sign centered on the fence facing the residence with wording about no dumping allowed. He stated that way no one can argue that they did

not get a letter or did not know that it was private property and could not dump. He stated

it could be an 8” by 6” sign affixed to the fence in the middle of the yard facing the

residence. Mr. Carney stated he believes this would involve about 270 residences, and it

could be costly compared to putting signs on about twenty to twenty-five known offenders.

Mr. Carney stated as a neighbor who borders the farmland, he would not want that sign

facing his property since he is not throwing anything over the fence. Mr. Heinze stated

he understands the rationale behind that, but we will then have to accept that we will

always be in a reactive mode, as there will probably always be a certain number of

residents causing a problem that we will have to address, and we will need to put in

place a procedural policy. Mr. Carney stated he would be in favor of that.

Mr. Carney stated he also feels strongly about getting in touch with some of the larger

lawn-care businesses in the area so that they know that it is private property on the

other side of the fence, and they need to remove any debris from the property and

not throw it over the fence onto the Farmland property.

5

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC.

MINUTES – APRIL 18, 2023

Mr. Bankoske stated he would be in favor of an unattractive sign going up on a property

when there is a known issue but that it not go up behind every property. He stated the

sign could be removed once the dumping stops. He stated we could purchase a dozen

signs with posts and move them around as needed. Mr. Carney stated he agrees that the

signs could be rotated to problem properties. He stated he also feels we can get support

from the Township as Mr. Kirk has been advised of dumping on some of our properties in

the past.

Mr. Bankoske stated he did not know the outcome of any of the discussions with the

Township with regard to dumping although there was help from the Township with

regard to bamboo. Mr. Steadman stated in the case of bamboo there is a Township

Ordinance, and Mr. Kirk is enforcing the Ordinance and can levy fines. He stated in the

case of someone dumping onto non-Township/private property, he does not feel

Mr. Kirk is able to cite an Ordinance and impose a fine. Mr. Steadman stated he is in

favor of the sign, but he is not in favor of an “obnoxious” sign for a first offense or

until there has been a dialogue. He noted an instance at Makefield Brook where not

only did someone dump things over the fence, but they also went into the buffer and

dug up the top 8” of topsoil in a 10’ radius for their garden. He stated when he

approached the homeowner and explained the situation which the homeowner had

not previously understood, he felt so bad he put the dirt back and cleaned up his side

of the fence. Mr. Steadman stated he has since become a very good neighbor. He stated

a repeat offender would be a different circumstance, and the sign would be installed.

Mr. Lewis stated he would suggest that there be a prompt, corrective action where

there are multiple stages. He stated for the first offence, a letter could be sent to

advise that they have 72 hours to rectify the situation and clean it up or it will be

turned over to Code Enforcement. He stated there is a Township Code (Section 200-77)

that suggests that open lands must be kept free of litter and debris. He stated if it

has not been cleaned up by the homeowner within a certain period of time, it will be

cleaned up and the homeowner sent a bill. They could be given a certain period of

time to pay the bill; and if it is not paid, the sign could then be installed. If they

want the sign removed, they would need to pay the bill and pay for the cost of the

sign. He stated there are some people who will just not abide by the Law, and in

some cases we have had to go to District Court; however, if you let those people

get away with this, it sets a bad precedence. Mr. Steadman stated he is in favor of

the tiered approach, but does not feel the residents should be asked to clean it up

since we do not want them on our property as it could be a liability issue.

6

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC.

MINUTES – APRIL 18, 2023

Mr. Heinze suggested that some of the Board members discuss this further off-line and

come up with an action plan that could be presented at a future meeting. Mr. Steadman

stated the goal for tonight was just to start the discussion. Mr. Carney stated he wants everyone’s input on this since it is dealt with by all Board members at different farms.

He stated buffers and bamboo have been dealt with for the most part, and he feels

dumping onto our properties and the fence line are the next two big issues that we face.

Mr. Steadman stated there can be an off-line working session on this matter, and the

Board will decide via e-mail on times when Board members are available.

OTHER BUSINESS: All

Mr. Steadman stated he forwarded to the Board a proposal submitted by the Environ-

mental Advisory Council to plant trees on some of our property along Woodside and

Dolington. A representative from the Environmental Advisory Council will be present

at the meeting next month to present that. Mr. Bankoske stated that proposal does

not seem to address some of the issues that were raised on the site visit that he and

Mr. Majewski were at with the EAC.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no one from the public wishing to speak at this time.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS: Mr. Heinze

1. Mr. Bankoske/Mr. Steadman – Asset Allocation/Configuration portfolio review to be targeted for the May or June Agenda.

2. Mr. Heinze – Follow up with Mr. Steadman regarding the neighbor at 1201 Bridle

Estates and consider what can be done to try to address the deer and the fence.

3. Mr. Blank/All – Discuss the Haupt sign on Longshore to understand the history and

decide what to do moving forward to either refurbish or replace the sign with some-

thing more appropriate that still captures the essence in the wording.

4. Mr. Steadman – Send out an e-mail on dates when the Board can meet to discuss

options for the dumping issue that we have on the properties.

7

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC.

MINUTES – APRIL 18, 2023

Mr. Steadman stated he knows that the buffers have improved, and our neighbors’

standards are rising in terms of what they expect. He thanked Mr. Carney for his

leadership in this regard. He added that it is still a farm, and they cannot have the

farm side of the fence look like the suburban side of the fence. He stated we do not

want it to be an eyesore, but there is a balance to be struck.

There being no further business, Mr. Bankoske moved, Mr. Heinze seconded and it was

unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

George Heinze, Secretary

8