

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
AD HOC PROPERTY COMMITTEE
MINUTES – NOVEMBER 17, 2022

A meeting of the Ad Hoc Property Committee of the Township of Lower Makefield was held remotely on November 17, 2022. Mr. Steadman called the meeting to order.

Those present:

Ad Hoc Property Committee:

Dennis Steadman, Chair
Fred Childs, Vice Chair
Bette Sovinee, Secretary
Joe Camaratta, Member
Sarah Daubert, Member
John Mohan, Member
Jim Scott, Member

Others:

Jim Majewski, Community Development Director
Jennifer Stark, Avison-Young
Candace Ly, Avison-Young
Kevin Gallen, Environmental Advisory Council Member

Absent:

James McCartney, Supervisor Liaison
Fredric K. Weiss, Supervisor Liaison

OBJECTIVES, BACKGROUND, AND INTRODUCTIONS: Mr. Steadman

Lower Makefield Township has owned Patterson Farm for approximately twenty-four years. It is approximately 220 acres and houses two farmsteads, fifteen buildings in all, including three houses and two large Pennsylvania bank barns. Township ownership has been without an organized vision or plan for the use of the farm, and there has been no agreed strategy to guide the decisions. Mr. Steadman stated without a real vision for the property, other than the fact that it was wisely purchased to prevent more suburban development, there has been very limited community utilization of the property resulting in very low community benefit. There has also been a deterioration of the important historical structures on the property because of lack of decision-making regarding resources, and there has also been community frustration. Mr. Steadman stated nothing has substantially changed over the last two decades despite meetings and discussions.

The current Board of Supervisors created an Ad Hoc Property Committee asking that the Committee make recommendations which were made in March, 2022. The Committee is comprised of Lower Makefield community members and was designed so that there would be at least one Real Estate expert, one financial analysis expert, one project management expert, and an agricultural expert; and the Committee is structured in that way.

In March, the Committee recommended that a Comprehensive Master Plan be developed for the entire property; and with such a Master Plan, the strategic, operational, and resource allocation decision-making could be guided. Mr. Steadman stated there is no way to intelligently invest the significant funds required into the structures unless there is a plan including knowing what will be done with the structures. The goal is to develop a Master Plan that will guide that kind of decision making for the intermediate and long-term.

In May of this year, the Board of Supervisors approved and earmarked up to \$300,000 to be spent on developing the Master Plan.

Mr. Steadman stated the Committee has indicated that there are three fundamental principles guiding the potential uses of Patterson Farm. The first is agriculture, and Patterson Farm needs to stay in agriculture. A majority of its acres are preserved and Deed Restricted as agricultural land, and it is being rented to a local farmer. The second principle is to preserve the historical buildings for Township and community benefit and for their use. The third principle is that each building has to have a purpose/a use. Mr. Steadman stated a building without a use is what we have had for much of the last twenty-four years, and identifying the proper and appropriate uses for the historic farm buildings is part of the mission.

The Committee indicated that they would exercise a balanced decision-making process to serve both the preservation of history and agriculture, to assure community use and community support recognizing that the community will be spending its funds and resources on it so they need to get some utility from that, and it has to be fiscally-responsible.

The Committee decided to utilize a professional, disciplined, staged process with stakeholder input to develop the Master Plan. The professional project management team of Avison-Young has been hired; and they are a large, well-respected Real Estate/Architectural/Planning company. That project management team will be supporting the Committee in developing a community-oriented Master Plan for the property.

Mr. Steadman introduced Jennifer Stark of Avison-Young who is a Certified Architect, VP of Project Management with Avison-Young, and a Lower Makefield Township resident who serves on the Lower Makefield Historical Architectural Review Board.

KICK-OFF OF A PATTERSON FARM MASTER PLAN: Ms. Stark, Avison-Young

Ms. Stark stated the Committee has met her already as well as Candace Ly who is also on the call and is an Assistant Project Manager with Avison-Young who will be working on this project.

Project Timeline/First Milestone

Ms. Stark stated they envision this project taking approximately nine months to complete. Avison-Young's role is to help facilitate the development of the Master Plan, but they are not writing the Master Plan. Ms. Stark stated they have put together a Request for Proposals, and they have a short list of qualified historic preservation architects who they have invited to propose on this project. Once the selected firm comes on board, they anticipate it will probably take about three months for the full process to roll out, and she expects a six to seven month period for them to do what they are being asked to do. She stated they have provided them with all of the directives and the goals that the Ad Hoc Property Committee has put together. She stated the goal of the Master Plan is to provide some scenarios about what could be done with the property and to give recommendations on next steps. The Master Plan should give an outline of possibilities with some early phasing timelines/pricing/overall order of magnitude and is meant to lay the foundation for decisions to be made in the future.

Ms. Stark stated the first deadline is the pre-proposal site visit which is very common when working with historic structures, and you prefer to have the people who are bidding on the project to be able to tour the site and facilities to better understand what they are going to be working with. There will then be a Q and A period, and any questions from the proposers will be submitted to Avison-Young; and in turn Avison-Young will provide those to the stakeholders that have the answers. The questions will be collected and the answers distributed to everyone who is proposing on the project. This is done in an effort to provide everyone with an even access to the bidding process. Ms. Stark stated the question

deadline will be November 23 so there is time to generate any questions after they have visited the property. The proposals themselves will be due on December 7.

Mr. Steadman asked Ms. Stark to comment on her selection criteria for the five potential bidders who received the RFP. Ms. Stark stated she has been involved in historic architecture for almost thirty years, and it is a tight community in the Tri-State area. She stated she selected the top historic preservation firms in the region who would be qualified to do a project of this caliber. She stated included in the mix are Fellows of the American Institute of Architects, people who have worked for the New Jersey Historic Trust, people who have consulted for PHMC, people who have Preservation Degrees with Masters in Architecture and Masters in Historic Preservation, and people who have demonstrated experience in historic projects. She stated she is very comfortable with the short list that was generated, and she feels we will get a wonderful product from whomever successfully gets the project.

Ms. Sovinee asked if Avison-Young will be making the selection or will it be brought to the Committee. Ms. Stark stated Avison-Young will not select the consultant, and they will bring the proposals to the Committee and will help the Committee evaluate the proposals. She stated if there is an interview period, they will also facilitate the interviews, and they will help the Committee level the proposals. She stated it is not always just the fee that makes the best proposal. Ms. Sovinee stated the Committee will have to come up with some criteria for the selection, and Mr. Steadman stated he agrees they will with Avison-Young's input and looking at the proposals.

Mr. Majewski asked if the requirement to have the questions in by next Wednesday is sufficient time or would a few extra days be beneficial.

Ms. Stark stated when they meet with everyone tomorrow, they will discuss the deadline with them as it might be too aggressive because of the holiday. She stated if that is the case, they will broadcast a new date for the deadline. Ms. Stark stated since the deadline for proposals is December 7, there is room to push the deadline for questions up a couple of days.

Ms. Sovinee stated the RFP that was circulated had "Draft" on it, and she asked if there is a finalization that needs to be done. Mr. Steadman stated the RFP is out. He stated there were minimal changes between what was

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labeled as "Draft" and the one that was sent, and Ms. Stark stated they did pick up a few comments and included them so there was a final version.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

ACTION ITEMS AND ASSIGNMENTS: Ms. Sovinee

1. All - Review proposals and leveling sheets provided by Ms. Stark at the next meeting on December 8

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Steadman introduced Kevin Gallen, a member of the Environmental Advisory Council, who has expressed interest in providing stakeholder input to the Ad Hoc Property Committee. Mr. Steadman stated Mr. Gallen has an engineering background which he feels would be productive to this undertaking. Mr. Gallen stated his background is in mechanical engineering, and he operates an HVAC company.

There being no further business, Ms. Sovinee moved, Mr. Mohan seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bette Sovinee, Secretary