

FARMAND PRESERVATION, INC.
MINUTES – JULY 15, 2021

The regular meeting of the Lower Makefield Preservation, Inc. (Farmland) Board of Directors (Board) was held remotely on July 15, 2021. Mr. Blank called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Those present:

Farmland Preservation, Inc.: Michael Blank, President
Dennis Steadman, Vice President and Acting Secretary
Daniel Bankoske, Treasurer

Absent: Sean Carney, Farmland Preservation, Inc. Member
James McCartney, Supervisor Liaison

APPROVAL OF MINUTES MAY 6, 2021 MEETING: Mr. Steadman

Mr. Blank stated there was not a quorum at the June meeting so a note was made on the LMT Website to that effect.

Mr. Bankoske moved, Mr. Blank seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of May 6, 2021 as written.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Mr. Bankoske

The Board had agreed to pay the entry fee of \$50 if any of the tenant farmers wanted to participate in the Township Community Day. Charlann Farms will participate and the \$50 was paid by Farmland to the Township.

The Board had agreed with Charlann Farms to pay one-half of the cost of the soil conservation work that was done at the Clearview and Stackhouse properties up to a limit of \$7,500. The total cost of the project was \$8,386.88. Charlann has already paid 100% of that, and Farmland will give them 50% of that as the Farmland share. This project came in under budget.

Mr. Blank stated Ms. Onuska from the Bucks County Conservation District is helping Charlann Farms apply for a tax credit against 50% of the cost. He stated her leadership and the involvement of the Bucks County Conservation District was of immeasurable help to Farmland and Charlann. Mr. Bankoske stated the guidance and the plans she put together for those properties were fantastic.

Mr. Blank stated Mr. Tim Stewart had stated that there was some miscommunication with the bulldozer operator at Stackhouse, and he did not feather the last part into a sufficient grade so

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that Mr. Stewart had to do some planting around that. Mr. Bankoske will check into this with Mr. Stewart to ascertain whether additional work is necessary.

INPUT ON FARMLAND BUFFER ORDINANCES: Mr. Blank

Mr. Majewski asked for preliminary input from Farmland on his drafted update to the Township Buffer Ordinance. The Section dealing with the farmland buffers called the Type 3 Buffer in the draft Ordinance was shown.

The opening sentence of the document provided states “All major Subdivisions and Land Development Plans shall contain a Landscape Plan approved before construction as part of approval process.” Thus, the Board thought this new Ordinance relates to new land development and what is needed for a Development Plan to be approved, but wants confirmation of this, or if it could be retroactive. There are currently no planned developments that would border Farmland. The Board also wondered if the Ordinance applies to any farmland or just to preserved farmland.

It was noted in Section D, page 10 of 17 the draft indicated that the buffer shall be 25’ of which a 10’ wide planted area is required on the residential side of the line. The Board wondered how such a feature could be enforced in the future.

The fencing specifications in the next paragraph D2 were questioned as differing from today’s practices. The text does state “or approved substitute” and this would also need to be discussed.

Mr. Blank stated we were asked to provide comments on Mr. Majewski’s draft. Given the number of questions raised, the Board feels they should have an information session with Mr. Majewski to allow a dialog on this draft to both ask clarifications, and provide input. Mr. Blank agreed to set this up with Mr. Majewski.

PROCESS FOR INTERVIEWING PROSPECTIVE FARMLAND BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Blank stated they had advised Mr. McCartney some time ago that they wanted to discuss the BOS process for interviewing prospective Farmland Board members at a meeting. Mr. Blank stated he would propose to send a letter on behalf of the Board to Ms. Blundi (cc Mr. Ferguson) after review by the Board. The Board decided this should be discussed with Mr. McCartney before sending any letter to Ms. Blundi.

POTENTIAL TREE WORK BEHIND 1636 BRENTWOOD RD (MAKEFIELD BROOK): Mr. Steadman

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Our neighbors, Mr. & Mrs. Fantin at 1636 Brentwood Road contacted the Township about a broken tree on Farmland property behind their property. A picture of the tree (~10" diameter) broken at a 90° angle at ~12-15 ft high was shown to the Board. It is about 25 yds behind the Fantin property line and there is no risk to property or fence. Nevertheless, the Fantins do not enjoy the view it created. Mr. Steadman told the neighbors that Farmland would not pay to take down the tree as it presents no harm to the neighbors, or their property. The neighbor then asked if they could pay to have it cut down. Mr. Steadman advised them that he would bring this matter up before the Board and Mr. Corcoran was asked for an estimate, which came in at \$200. Mr. & Mrs. Fantin asked if they could get an estimate from their tree service company, and they were told they could do that, but Farmland would need to approve any contractor before the contractor could go on the property.

Mr. Steadman asked if the Board would agree to allow the Fantins to pay to have the tree taken down and have it lay on the Farmland property. It was discussed that Farmland knows and trusts the work of Corcoran Landscaping and should our neighbors want to use a different contractor, it would need to be a legitimate organization with insurance. Thus, if they choose not to use Corcoran, the Board would need to approve their contractor, which would include seeing a certificate of insurance.

Mr. Blank moved, Mr. Steadman seconded and it was unanimously carried that Farmland is in favor of Matt Corcoran taking down this tree for the quoted amount; and if the neighbors insist on having someone else, since they are paying, they would be asked for proof of insurance and for the Board to approve the contractor that will take down the tree.

1449 HEATHER RIDGE TREE ISSUES: Mr. Bankoske

The homeowner at 1449 Heather Ridge reached out some time ago about trees that were down on the Farmland side as well as an 8"-10" diameter tree that has grown up against the fence and is hanging over the neighbor's property. The tree is not broken, but it is a "nuisance" tree that was not purposely planted there. Mr. Corcoran will provide an estimate, but no promises were made to our neighbors that the tree would be taken down. Mr. Tom McGowan had been asked if he would be interested in taking down the tree for a payment. He is not interested.

UPDATE ON HONEYBEE KEEPING: Mr. Steadman

Dr. Sven Strnad provided an update on hive #1 which had been struggling, but as of last week was doing better. Hive #2 is doing very well. Dr. Strnad has made it clear that he is very happy to show the hives to the Board members. Dr. Strnad purchased an extra suit to be worn by anyone who wishes to visit the hives. Pictures were shown of hive #2. Dr. Strnad feels he will be able to harvest honey in this first year, which is quite a success.

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Dr. Strnad has made a significant investment in this project, including marking the hives and plot of land. While no one should be on Farmland property without prior permission, if someone were there, the area is clearly marked and obvious that honeybee hives are there. While Mr. Steadman was on the property, he and Dr. Strnad installed a simple farm gate in the fence for access to the hives.

There was no one from the public wishing to speak on this or any of the prior matters.

FUTURE MEETINGS: Mr. Blank

The usual tradition is to cancel the August meeting, and this will be done this year with the Board's next meeting scheduled for in September.

OTHER BUSINESS: All

Ad Hoc Property Committee

The Township Board of Supervisors formed an Ad Hoc Committee to address some of the historical and other Township-owned properties. Mr. Steadman is one of four members on that Committee, and the Board of Supervisors will be interviewing a potential fifth member. The Committee had their first meeting on Tuesday, and there is good cooperation from the Board of Supervisors and Township staff.

Future Township Meetings

Mr. Ferguson has advised that the Board of Supervisors will be deciding how to handle future public meetings and whether they will continue to support them via Zoom. There may be a need for some of the meetings to have a physical location for the public to be able to attend. There may also be hybrid meetings. Mr. Steadman stated he feels the convenience of Zoom meetings has likely increased public participation as it is easier to observe and participate in that way. He stated that he hopes that Farmland will be able to continue having their meetings via Zoom although he is not opposed to having meetings in person. There is an expense to the Township in holding meetings via Zoom.

Mr. Blank stated he feels it would be good for the Board to meet in person, but also have it open to the public via Zoom. Mr. Bankoske stated neither he nor Mr. Steadman are physically in the Township this evening, and by having the Zoom capability they were able to attend this meeting that they would not be able to otherwise.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS: Mr. Blank

1. Mr. Bankoske – Follow-up with Mr. Stewart on Stackhouse soil conservation to see if more needs to be done.
2. Mr. Blank – Set up call with Mr. Majewski and the Board regarding Buffer Ordinances

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3. Mr. Blank – Speak with Mr. McCartney about letter to Ms. Blundi regarding interview process for new members.
4. Mr. Steadman – Advise Board of the outcome of tree removal at 1636 Brentwood.
5. Mr. Bankoske – Contact Matt Corcoran regarding the tree at 1449 Heather Ridge.

There was no one from the public wishing to speak on this or any of the prior matters at this time, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dennis F. Steadman, Acting Secretary