

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD  
AD HOC PROPERTY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES – DECEMBER 8, 2022

The regular meeting of the Ad Hoc Property Committee of the Township of Lower Makefield was held remotely on December 8, 2022. Mr. Steadman called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and noted that the assignment of the Committee is to develop a long-term Patterson Farm Master Plan that will guide Township decisions on use and investments in both the near and far term.

Those present:

Ad Hoc Property Committee: Dennis Steadman, Chair  
Fred Childs, Vice Chair  
Bette Sovinee, Secretary  
Joe Camaratta, Member  
John Mohan, Member

Others: Jim Majewski, Community Development Director  
Jennifer Stark, Avison-Young  
Candace Ly, Avison-Young  
Fredric K. Weiss, Supervisor Liaison  
Kevin Gallen, Environmental Advisory Council Member  
Stephen Heinz, Historical Architectural Review Board Member  
Jeff Hirko, Patterson Farm Preservation, Inc.

Absent: Jim Scott, Ad Hoc Property Committee Member  
James McCartney, Supervisor Liaison

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 17, 2022: Ms. Sovinee

Mr. Camaratta moved, Mr. Steadman seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of November 17, 2022 as written.

INTRODUCTION OF “INVITED STAKEHOLDERS”: Mr. Steadman

The Township-owned Patterson Farm is a wonderful, historic and agricultural resource, and anyone can be viewed as a stakeholder. Public input and public participation is fundamental to the success of the project, and we need to hear from the

community which is why the meetings are held in public. It is hoped that there will be active public input.

The Ad Hoc Property Committee was appointed by the Board of Supervisors to represent the public voice, and they have asked the Committee to develop the Plan/recommendations. The Committee identified a new category which is called "Invited Stakeholders." While all stakeholders are expected to be heard from, the sub-group of stakeholders will be allowed to participate more directly in the meetings. They can ask questions and the Ad Hoc Property Committee can also ask them questions about their area of concern directly as opposed to simply calling in during the Public Comment period. The invited stakeholders are invited to all of the meetings directly, but they are not members of the Ad Hoc Property Committee which was created by a Township Resolution in 2021, with its members appointed by the Board of Supervisors. Participation by invited stakeholders does not affect whether there is quorum to make Motions or vote on Resolutions, but they are active participants in the meeting.

The Committee wants to hear from all stakeholders whether they are dialing in during the Public Comment period or whether they are part of the Zoom meeting itself. The Committee is trying to strike a balance, and wants public input and stakeholder involvement, but we need to balance Committee responsibilities and Township decision-making with what is a practical, manageable meeting size. By selecting the sub-group of stakeholders, we are trying to enrich that input; but by choosing them, we are not trying to exclude any other stakeholders, and all stakeholders are expected to listen, participate, and make comments as they can.

The invited stakeholders who have been identified include the property owner Lower Makefield Township, and Jim Majewski is participating as that stakeholder. He is responsible for Planning and Zoning at the Township, and he has a wealth of experience and knowledge with the property and a variety of Township issues that will ultimately influence the Plan. Steve Heinz, Chair of the Township's Historical Architectural Review Board, has also been invited. He is very active in the community. From the Lower Makefield Environmental Advisory Council we have invited Kevin Gallen. The 220 acre Patterson Farm is an important environmental resource for the community, and with the wetlands, streams, springs, and ponds we want to be sure that the environmental voice is heard. Representing Patterson Farm Preservation, their President, Jeff Hirko, is an invited stakeholder. He has been active in that organization for a long time, and he has also done carpentry work and restoration at the Patterson Farm.

The farming tenant at the Patterson Farm is Charlann Farms, and Sam and Tim Stewart are invited stakeholders. While they are not able to join the meeting tonight, their input is welcome at any time. They are the stewards of the Farm, and their agricultural and production decisions are important input. A member of the Ad Hoc Property Committee, Bette Sovinee, is representing the art community, and she is the AOY Coordinator and has been a tenant of the Patterson Farm property for a long time. Joe Camaratta is the newest member of the Ad Hoc Property Committee and is the Chair of the Historical Commission for Lower Makefield, and he has a wealth of experience in historical preservation and restoration.

All stakeholders are welcome to speak during the Public Comment period as well as through calls and e-mails outside of the meeting.

Jennifer Stark and Candace Ly of Avison-Young were introduced. Avison-Young has been hired to help in the development of the Master Plan, and they are providing project management services to help coordinate scheduling, communications, dialogue, and analysis with contractors and bidding.

UPDATE, CONTRACTOR BIDDING PROCESS: Jennifer Stark, Avison-Young

At the last meeting they discussed mobilization, and since then they wrote the Request for Proposals and put it out to the qualified short list of professionals. A site visit was conducted with those who could attend, and they were able to walk through all of the buildings and see the property first hand. The Bids were due on December 7; however, there was a request from one Bidder for an extension, and that was granted so all of the Bids are now due December 14.

Once the Bids are received, Ms. Stark and Ms. Ly will level them creating a spreadsheet with the comparables so that it is easy to compare proposal to proposal. There will then be a meeting with the Committee to review the proposals.

The overall time schedule is still intact. The first three months are to on-board the professional team, and we are on track. The next period of time will be the development of the Master Plan itself, and that is where the Committee, invited stakeholders, and stakeholders at large will have input.

The last phase is to wrap up the Plan and have it accepted by the Township. We may be able to have some efficiencies built in; and once the professional team is selected, they will be provided the schedule and they will be asked to put their own take on it as the process will be turned over to them.

Mr. Heinz stated he understood that there would be a presentation by each of the Bidders, and he asked if that will take place at a meeting. Ms. Stark stated they had not discussed how the Committee would proceed with that. Mr. Steadman agreed they had not discussed that. Mr. Steadman asked Ms. Stark when the Committee should expect to get the Bids on a leveled basis once they are received by Ms. Stark on December 14; and Ms. Stark stated they would like to give the Committee the data the following day. Mr. Steadman asked if we want each Bidder to make a presentation or is there some screening to be done initially so that it may not be necessary to have a presentation from all of the Bidders. Mr. Mohan stated five presentations would take a lot of time, and we may want to reduce the five down to two to three finalists to make a presentation which should be done in early January so that we do not slow down the process. Ms. Stark stated that is common, and usually when the Bids are received you can see who the serious contenders are and who needs to be vetted more deeply. Mr. Camaratta asked who would make the decision as to who should make a presentation. Ms. Stark stated she would view that as a Committee decision although Avison-Young could provide a recommendation.

Mr. Camaratta stated the process would be that after Avison-Young levels the Bids, the Committee would review the information, try to narrow it down to two to three Bidders, and then request presentations from those finalists, and Ms. Stark agreed. Mr. Steadman stated the benefit of those presentations would be not only to clarify their proposal and help the Committee internalize it, but also would give the Committee the opportunity to ask detailed questions which would be valuable.

Mr. Childs asked Ms. Stark how many she expects will submit. Ms. Stark stated at this point she knows that there are four serious Bidders, and one has dropped out.

Mr. Steadman stated he assumes that we could get the list down to some finalists for presentations in early to mid-January. He stated while a January meeting has not yet been scheduled by the Township, we are targeting either the second or Thursday of each month so that there is consistency.

Mr. Mohan asked after the Committee chooses a Bid to accept, does the Board of Supervisors need to approve that adding we would have to get on their schedule as well. Mr. Steadman stated the Township has earmarked funds for this Committee to develop a Master Plan, but the Committee cannot sign a Contract or commit funds. He stated the Committee can make a recommendation of a final Bidder/Contractor, and we would take that to the Township for the contractor to be finalized and committed and get the Board of Supervisors to sign off on that or ask the Committee to go back and refine the Contract in some way. Mr. Majewski agreed with Mr. Steadman.

Mr. Heinz stated he assumes that if there is some preliminary work that is going to winnow out all but two or three contractors, we could ask that the Board of Supervisors to be presented with the same kind of presentation that the Bidders would make before the Ad Hoc Property Committee or it could be a combined situation with the Committee and the Supervisors. Mr. Steadman stated they may need to consider that if it is hard to get a consensus, and we will have to make a judgment call based on the facts presented. Mr. Camaratta stated there are two Supervisor liaisons who are invited to our meetings, and he feels we should strongly encourage them to attend the meeting when the presentations are made, and they can represent the Board of Supervisors in that way; and Mr. Steadman agreed.

Mr. Camaratta asked if the “monthly rhythm” is going to somehow slow the process down especially with Ms. Stark’s start date for the development of the Master Plan by the middle of February. He stated if we are going to review the Bids at our own meeting, schedule the presentations, and then go to the Board of Supervisors, we may need to consider some more ad hoc scheduled meetings. Mr. Steadman stated he feels we will need an ad hoc meeting/working sessions and not strictly limited to the monthly rhythm; and we will have to look at calendars and get the most members we can at any given time. Mr. Steadman added that as long as there is a quorum of the Committee, the meetings need to be public, and there is a minimum public notice period required. He stated there can be interim ad hoc meetings, and it is just a question of working our schedules.

Mr. Mohan asked how long it takes to get on the Board of Supervisor’s Agenda, and he stated depending on the timing it could be two to four weeks. He stated we could put something on their Agenda as an estimate; and if we believe we will have a recommendation by a certain date we could proactively

put it on the Agenda and work toward that. Mr. Majewski stated the Board typically wants the Agenda items the Wednesday before the meeting so that they can finalize the Agenda on Thursday and get it out to the Board on Friday. Mr. Camaratta stated the Board meets the first and third Wednesdays of the month, and he feels they would want to be on their first meeting in February, which is February 1. Mr. Steadman stated he feels we can ask to be on the Board's February 1 Agenda with our recommended contractor, and we will work backwards for the rest of December and January to be in the position to make that recommendation. Ms. Stark stated that would fit the current timeline, although we may need to stretch this out a little bit because of the holidays.

Mr. Steadman stated if the Committee has the Bids by December 15, the Committee could have an initial meeting on the leveled Bids early in the week of December 19. After discussion it was agreed to try to have a meeting on December 19. Mr. Camaratta stated he feels the meeting could be held the first week of January and still make the timeline.

Mr. Mohan stated he would prefer to do it before that so that the architects have more time to work on their presentations. Mr. Steadman stated the meeting on December 19 would be an initial session, and he would like to have that meeting before the holidays if possible. Mr. Majewski stated he will need to confirm with Ms. McVan that December 19 is available, but looking at the schedule it does seem as if that is available. The Committee was in favor of having the meeting that evening at 7:30 p.m. The Committee will review the information provided by Avison-Young on December 15 and be prepared to discuss it on December 19. Mr. Steadman stated he wants the Committee to have a consensus on this. He added that the invited stakeholders are invited to that meeting as well.

Mr. Childs stated we had talked about criteria for selection, and he presumes that will be part of what Ms. Stark will be sending; and Ms. Stark agreed.

#### THOUGHTS, IDEAS, AND ISSUES: All

Mr. Steadman stated when adding the invited stakeholders to this process, he had asked each of them that if they wanted to raise issues or present topics that are critical to them and the group that they represent, it would be a good opportunity to air those this evening.

Mr. Majewski stated he feels the Committee has set out a good framework, and Ms. Stark and her staff are experienced in this. He stated working with the consultant chosen should keep us on track. He stated if any issues come up, he will let everyone know.

Mr. Heinz stated the one aspect he has already raised is that he feels it is important that the professionals who were contacted to put together a presentation should have a reasonable chance of success in their work. He stated there should be enough time so that the presenters can talk about not only what their goals are and their interpretation of our goals, but also their own forte and whatever they are bringing to the table and the way that they would approach it.

Mr. Heinz stated the other aspect would be a critical appraisal of the historic fabric so that it is understood that we need to make a specific effort to say what are the important places. He stated maybe some of the newer construction that is there may not be so critical to be kept pristine, but to do what we can to conserve them which might mean an understanding of what it takes to stabilize and keep things preserved in situ for future utilization even if it might not make the most significant increase in the value that we get out of whatever we do on the Farm. Mr. Heinz stated the Farm itself has produced considerable revenue over a period of time that it has been in the hands of the Township. He stated he has never seen any documentation as to where that revenue went, but it looks as if not a lot was spent on the existing buildings, and a lot of it has gone into the General Fund as he understands, although he is not up-to-date on what has happened. He stated we should look at the history as part of the value.

Mr. Steadman stated the financial value is the lease of approximately 170 acres of the farmland, the modest rent that is collected from the two art tenants, and the Public Works utilization of the mulching area which gives the Township an area to process the leaves which has a certain economic value. He stated part of what we are going to address is how to keep it sustainable for the long run.

Mr. Gallen stated he is more concerned about pesticides, stormwater management, tree planting, improving the performance of any new or existing buildings, accommodating possible electric vehicle charging and renewables if possible.

Mr. Steadman stated Mr. Gallen's group pointed out that Buck Creek starts on Patterson Farm, and the two springs between the two farmsteads are the beginning of Buck Creek; and that ultimately runs down through the middle of Yardley and out to the River, and we want to be sensitive to that.

Mr. Hirko stated he feels that Ms. Stark and her team have a very good start in the right direction. He stated Patterson Farm Preservation is a non-profit that was started a number of years ago to preserve the agriculture part of the Farm and preserve as many of the buildings that we could possibly preserve for future use.

Ms. Sovinee stated as a tenant, they are interested in continuing to stay and potentially expand their footprint and make use of some of the buildings if possible. She stated it would be a collaboration between AOY and the Township because the buildings right now are not habitable, as there is no infrastructure there, no sewer, water, or electricity. She stated any of the newer buildings that would be used for anything not just art would all need that level of investment. Ms. Sovinee stated AOY has a lease through 2026 with a five-year continuance so that would put them through 2031, and they are very happy about that and hope to stay.

Mr. Camaratta stated the Historical Commission looks at the value of being the farms and the farmsteads; and their interest in the buildings goes beyond the houses, and they are also interested in some of the auxiliary buildings. He stated they know that some of them are not useful for the way farming is done today but believe that they do need to be preserved over time. He stated their goal is to submit both to the National Register of Historic Places as farmsteads, and for that they require not just the houses but also the other buildings on the property.

Mr. Steadman asked if it is sufficient if there is a house and a barn or does it require a house, barn, and other outbuildings. Mr. Camaratta stated there are twelve farmsteads in Bucks County that are on the National Register; and in the report that the Historical Commission did for the Ad Hoc Property Committee's final report, they listed which buildings were included. He stated not all of the buildings date back to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century; however, for those that do, they are important from a historical perspective.

Ms. Sovinee stated she feels that there is room for all of these uses, and she looks forward to seeing that work out in the Master Plan. Mr. Steadman stated he sees history, art, and agriculture as highly compatible as they can all complement each



other as well as other potential uses. Mr. Steadman stated he feels the agriculture and some measure of preservation of the historic buildings are a must. He stated it is then a question of what other things can create community value and benefit that complement and are compatible with that, and that is part of the process.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 7, 2022: Ms. Sovinee

Ms. Sovinee moved, Mr. Childs seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of November 7, 2022 as written.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Donna Doan, Patterson Farm Preservation, advised that the Stewarts were not able to attend tonight due to a medical issue. She asked the date of the next meeting, and Mr. Steadman stated they are tentatively targeting a working session on December 19 to be confirmed. Ms. Doan asked if that would include the stakeholders invited, and Mr. Steadman agreed. Ms. Doan stated that this is the Christmas tree season for the Stewarts, and she is not sure that they will be able to attend. Mr. Steadman stated he has talked to the Stewarts a few times, and he knows that attending these meetings is difficult, but they will be kept advised.

Ms. Doan stated Patterson Farm Preservation wants to see the Farm stay in agriculture. She stated there is about "a half million dollars on the table" if the Committee decides to go with exploring the option of working with Doug Wolfgang at the Farmland Preservation office in Harrisburg in regard to preserving the remaining thirty-eight acres that are not protected. She stated that would be income that could potentially restore some of the buildings. She stated she spoke with Mr. Wolfgang "a while ago," and he said that the buildings are part of that preservation which is different than the Bucks County program because the State program believes that there is contributory value of the buildings to the purpose of the farm. Mr. Steadman asked Ms. Doan if she could forward that information to the Committee as we do not have anything on that. He asked for any documents, e-mails, proposals, etc. since that needs to be part of our Master Planning process; Ms. Doan agreed to do that.

Ms. Doan stated in addition to planning what the use is for the buildings, we have to plan the management and have a plan for selection criteria, for tenants, and to have a fair and open process hopefully working with the Historic Commission that would determine what they would be looking for in a tenant and how the tenants could help to restore the buildings, contribute to the restoration, or have the buildings open. Mr. Steadman stated the Plan would decide on use and the criteria associated with that use and the management. Ms. Doan stated with regard to the fiscal responsibility, that has been a gray area in the Township.

Ms. Doan stated she also wanted to reiterate to the members of the Committee who are new to Patterson Farm that it is a huge privilege that we have a farm that has been in agriculture for almost 350 years. She stated as we approach that anniversary she would like to see a plan that incorporates the celebration of that milestone coming up and also honors Tom and Alice Patterson for the contribution that they have made to the community. Mr. Steadman asked what year is the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and Ms. Doan stated it is 2033.

Ms. Colleen Attara stated she has been a caretaker and stakeholder at the Farm for almost thirteen years; and as a small business owner and artist she has spent over \$100,000 on the cottage, part of which is because she keeps the oil tank full including when she is not there in the winter. She stated she is primarily there in the fall and spring and brings people in from all over the country to stay on the Farm. She stated when people are on the property, they can feel the energy of what is there. She stated there is an energy on the Farm because of the history, “plants and goodness on the Farm that transcends into her workshops.” She stated she has gotten a lot of press for her studio, and she always mentions AOY and the Township. She stated she feels the house is in such good shape because she has been the caretaker.

Ms. Attara stated a lot of the work that she does in the studio is stitching, hand work, and mending/textile work; and she thinks about the work that went on there for hundreds of years. She stated she and all the artists on the Farm are able to tell a story. She stated she would like to see it be a little more collaborative, and she would welcome meeting with Ms. Doan and the Historic Committees so that she can tell more of the history to people who come from across the country to the Farm. She stated she is grateful for the attention this “sacred place” is getting. Ms. Attara stated she is a for-profit business, and she does a lot of community work. She stated she is highly vested in the Farm, and she hopes that whatever happens going forward, that she is part of it.

Mr. Steadman stated he feels the property is a “gem,” and with proper planning and professional input, we can make it a special asset for Lower Makefield and the broader community beyond Lower Makefield.

Lora Tarantino stated she is grateful to see Patterson Farm Preservation included. She asked if it is possible that the Farm could have a sign saying “learn about the Master Plan” and a Website connection so that the community is more aware. Mr. Steadman stated he understands Ms. Tarantino would like them to publicize the fact that there is a group working to have a plan for the Farm to help create greater interest and input. He stated he feels they could consider what kind of outreach could be done. Ms. Tarantino stated she feels this would help build a base of support since they will be asking for feedback from the public.

Ms. Kathleen Hirko, 1450 Dolington Road, stated it was very “heartwarming” to hear from Ms. Attara that people come and experience the Farm; but she would like the Committee to realize that the residents of Lower Makefield would like to have the opportunity to visit the Farm as well. She stated the Township currently puts up signs and “keeps people out.” She stated people would like to take pictures there, and she hopes that the Committee will keep in mind that the residents of the Township are stakeholders and own the property and would like the opportunity to be allowed to experience the Farm and experience all the things that the tenants and people from out of town get the privilege to do.

Mr. Steadman stated that is a core tenet of why we are doing this. He added the Farm is not being used by the community now; but it is an active, agriculture operation so that the Township cannot have people wandering around there, but they want to come up with a plan that is compatible with productive agriculture and community use.

Mr. Hirko stated he feels with regard to signage at the farm since it is difficult to read something if you are driving on the road, and he asked if there could be something that would direct people to the Township Website. Mr. Steadman stated he feels the Committee will need to discuss what could be done, adding that people can watch the Zoom calls and the Meeting Minutes are posted on the Township Website.

Ms. Attara stated when she earlier mentioned people coming from across the Country she did so because that is money into our restaurants and Airbnbs, and they love Bucks County. She stated the core of people who come to her studio

are from this area, and a lot of it is done free of charge. She stated she does a lot of work with youth and parents who are dealing with children who have substance abuse issues. She stated she is on site a lot, and AOY serves many children in the summer. She stated she feels it is a community place, and she did not want to present that it was just people from other parts of the Country although that does help the local businesses. Ms. Attara stated she is open to any type of group. She stated she works in schools as well. She stated she is always happy to have people work in the studio or to work in the community.

**ACTION ITEMS, ASSIGNMENTS & MEETING SCHEDULE: Ms. Sovinee**

1. Ms. Stark – Provide Bids to the Committee
2. Mr. Majewski – Confirm meeting date of December 19 via Zoom to begin the selection process

Mr. Heinz asked that they follow-up on some way to publicize the timeframe that has been proposed and make people aware that this will be under discussion during our public meetings. He asked that they consider use of a QR Code and follow up with information that would be on-line. Ms. Sovinee asked Mr. Majewski if the only place a resident could go to and find information about what the Committee is doing is on the Lower Makefield Website, and Mr. Majewski stated he believes so. He stated once the contractor has been selected we will put additional information on the Website as to how we will engage the public in the process as he understands that is one of the key elements of the proposal.

Mr. Camaratta asked if we could use either the Newsletter and/or the social media sites to give a brief summary of the meeting and bring people to the site. He stated a virtual outreach should be considered beyond just having something on the Farm that people would physically drive by. Mr. Majewski stated he does plan to use Facebook, Twitter, and the other social media channels to do that. He stated a QR Code is a good idea since we could put up something at the ball fields and other places where people gather with the QR Code which would take someone to the link on the Website. He stated we just missed the deadline for the Newsletter for February. He stated the next Newsletter after that will come out in May.

Mr. Steadman stated a consistent theme being heard tonight is greater outreach and publicity of the Committee, the Committee's work, and the creation of a Plan so that will be added to our to-do list.

December 8, 2022

Ad Hoc Property Committee

There being no further business, Ms. Sovinee moved, Mr. Camaratta seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bette Sovinee, Secretary