

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD  
AD HOC PROPERTY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES – JANUARY 27, 2022

The regular meeting of the Ad Hoc Property Committee of the Township of Lower Makefield was held remotely on January 27, 2022. Mr. Steadman called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Those present:

Ad Hoc Property Committee: Dennis Steadman, Chair  
Fred Childs, Vice Chair  
Bette Sovinee, Secretary  
Sarah Daubert, Member  
John Mohan, Member  
James Nycz, Member  
Jim Scott, Member

Others: Fredric K. Weiss, Supervisor Liaison

Absent: James McCartney, Supervisor Liaison

Mr. Steadman stated the Committee is working diligently to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors, and the deadline they have imposed on themselves is the Supervisors meeting of March 2, 2022. He stated the recommendations will be on the historic structures on the Patterson Farm and at the Makefield Highlands Golf Course. There are sixteen total buildings. The Committee is trying to do this in the context of balancing out the preservation of history and agriculture in the Township, community use of these resources, and being fiscally-responsible to the taxpayers.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – JANUARY 13, 2022: Ms. Sovinee

Mr. Nycz moved, Mr. Mohan seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of January 13, 2022 as written.

BARN PRESERVATION & REUSE: Mr. Childs

Mr. Childs stated one of the members of the Lower Makefield Historic Society made him aware of a Web forum about barn preservation, and one of those participants,

Mr. John Porter from the University of New Hampshire is present this evening along with Mr. Steve Bedard who is a contractor who has experience in barn renovation/restoration. Mr. Childs stated he has asked them to provide insight from their experience particularly with large barns. They had been provided some information about the two barns the Committee is interested in which are Pennsylvania bank barns that have deteriorated quite a bit and have not been used for many years.

Mr. Porter stated his primary choice would be to see the barns preserved as barns as part of a farming operation although that can be a challenge. He stated he saw that one of the options was to have a farmer lease it, but he added that can be risky because if it is not part of the farmer's prime operation, it may deteriorate. He stated the second choice would be that if the farm is still operating, the barn could be used as a farm stand. He stated while housing is an option additions such as patio doors, bow windows, etc. can make it no longer look like a barn. He stated it is nice to have the barns able to be enjoyed by the public which would relate to the arts options that had been suggested. He stated you need to have someone take over the stewardship of the barn so that the barn is taken care of. He stated in New Hampshire he is aware of some success stories with Towns, Historical Societies, etc. taking on the barn as a project getting public support and having public fund drives so that the barn can be fixed up and it can be opened up to the public at certain times. He stated after restoration, the barns need to continue to be maintained.

Mr. Bedard stated he reviewed the list provided and all of the options could work. He stated he was only provided outside photographs of the two barns, and he asked what structural repairs are contemplated. Mr. Childs stated to some extent they both have a stone foundation that would need at least re-pointing; and in some cases there are sections that have been re-done with concrete block. He stated there has been a lot of animal intrusion, and the ground floors have been tunneled by local wildlife. He stated there are support columns that have been added over the years, but they are not necessarily in the right location or providing sufficient support so that the upper floor would not be suitable for heavy loads. Mr. Childs stated the outside has weathered.

Mr. James Melia from Remington & Vernick, the Township engineer, stated he composed the Facilities Assessment and Structural Evaluation Report for the two barns. He stated the Satterthwaite barn had undergone some renovations in 2007. He did an analysis in some locations, and where there is typical column and beam spacing it is rated to store farm equipment and bales of hay stacked

three bales high. He stated some additional girders and two columns could be put in to get it to rate. He stated he did a similar analysis for the barn at Patterson Farm; and for about two-thirds of the second floor they could take on about 60 PSF deadload for storage. He stated there is some significant undermining of the columns in that barn with animal burrowing throughout. He stated until that is addressed, he would not recommend putting anything on the second floor.

Mr. Bedard asked if these are both post and beam structures, and it was noted that they are. Ms. Sovinee showed pictures of the interior of the barns. Mr. Porter stated it appears to be a combination of post and beam with some balloon framing in between. Mr. Bedard stated people who are in restoration try to keep the structures on the same existing site whenever possible. He stated the next option would be to move it to some other location on the property if it can be moved. Mr. Bedard stated it appears that both of these buildings could be dismantled; and they could be numbered and taken apart and re-used that way for housing on a private lot or a commercial venture. He stated he is aware of a barn in his area that was moved an hour away and is being used as a library. He stated he understands the goal is to keep the barns on site and make some use of them.

Mr. Pockl stated the Patterson barn has a stone wall for the first level, and he does not feel that barn could reasonably be transported to a different location.

Ms. Sovinee stated she feels they should not consider re-location, and they are looking for uses on site.

Mr. Pockl stated there is lead paint on the barns, and that will need to be remediated as well. Mr. Bedard stated in New Hampshire that is not that big of a deal once you know how to do it. He stated it adds up to 25% additional cost to deal with the lead issue.

Mr. Steadman stated these two barns are on 220 acres of preserved farmland, and they want to keep them in place. He stated they feel the tenant farmer will be able to use one of the barns. Mr. Steadman stated other ideas discussed were that the barns be used as a public facility, a brew pub, restaurant or some other commercial undertaking; however, he feels those plans would be very ambitious. He asked Mr. Porter and Mr. Bedard about barns being converted to that kind of use and the issues and magnitude of expense. Mr. Porter said there is a brewery in New Hampshire that is in a barn. He stated it usually involves a lot of reinforcement, and there are Code issues for public safety. Mr. Bedard stated he knows of

some restaurants that are in old barns. He stated he has also done housing before; and if you looked at the barns, you would not know that there was housing within them. He stated he is happy to hear that they are not looking to move the barns off site. He stated all of the options being considered could work; and if they can get the outer structure, the support system, and the foundation secured, they can then build from that. He stated snow load issues can be resolved by using a metal roof so that snow will not stay on it. Mr. Bedard stated in the past renovations of an old barn cost about 10% more than what it would typically cost to build new; however, with the current material and labor costs, the costs are basically the same to renovate compared to building a new facility.

Mr. Childs stated at the symposium it was indicated that in New England there has been interest over the last few years by people buying old farmsteads and converting them to housing and using the outbuildings as well. Mr. Porter stated people have been moving into the country from the cities, and they have spent a significant amount of money to restore the buildings. Mr. Bedard stated people are even buying these properties almost sight unseen, and then asking him to come in to tell them what they need to do with the structures. He stated a lot of this has to do with the technology of being able to work remotely.

Mr. Steadman stated we had some Real Estates assessments done on these properties, and that analysis concluded that these sites are not candidates for someone with means coming in and purchasing these properties for Residential use given their locations.

Mr. Porter asked if there is a central funding source or a group who is putting this together and would raise funds to do something with these structures. Mr. Stedman stated the property is owned by Lower Makefield Township which bought the land and the buildings in 1998. He stated they are at a crossroads where the Township needs to make decisions with regard to investing in these buildings in combination with non-profits, public grant money, etc. He stated the Township formed this Committee to look into these properties and make recommendations. Mr. Bedard stated it seems that the properties were purchased more for land protection as opposed to building protection, and Mr. Steadman agreed. He stated of the 221 acres, 183 have Agricultural Easements in perpetuity. He stated there is some land amongst that with structures that does not have those Easements. Mr. Steadman stated it is a tract of farmsteads that adds character to the community that we want to see retained/preserved to the extent that it is feasible and reasonable.

Mr. Steadman stated there needs to be a use and a steward that has the means to take that over, and how deep into that the Township Government wants to go solo is to be determined.

Mr. Porter asked if the Township would maintain ownership of the buildings, and Mr. Steadman stated the Committee has been charged to look at all options including potential sale of portions to private interests. He stated one of the farmsteads is already subdivided into approximately five acres, and that contains a house, a barn, and some outbuildings. Mr. Steadman stated a Real Estate assessment was done on that particular parcel, but it was deemed not suitable for a Residential investor, and they would be looking at some other potential Commercial utilization and possibly utilization by the Township itself in terms of office/meeting space for the house and barn.

Mr. Porter noted he is familiar with a farm in New Hampshire where the Township had their offices for a short period of time although he understands they have since moved out; and since that time “things are going downhill.”

Mr. Bedard stated if they decide to sell a barn with land around it, he assumes they could do a Preservation Easement; and Mr. Steadman stated if there was to be such a transaction, they are assuming that it would be with some historical preservation Easements that would obligate the new owner to retain certain qualities and limit what they can do.

Mr. Porter asked if there is a Historical Society which would could get involved in this. Mr. Steadman stated the Township has a Historical Society and a Historical Commission, and the Committee has been dialoguing with them. He stated while they are interested, there are not a lot of resources there although they do have expertise that would help with Grant writing and some stewardship expertise as well as raising public awareness and fundraising.

Mr. Porter stated there are two to three farms in New Hampshire which have become farm museums, one of which was very well endowed; but the others depend on memberships and donations and they are “limping along.” He stated they display equipment and charge admission and also have a series of educational programs during the summer. Mr. Bedard stated he believes that one of them is experimenting with having their own CSA to help out with funding.

Ms. Sovinee stated it seems that their experience is if they find a steward any of the uses that have been proposed would be viable. Mr. Porter stated they need to have someone willing to take this on and look after it adding that there needs to be a money source. Mr. Bedard asked if the Township has any interest in partially funding any of the options being considered, and Mr. Steadman stated they are waiting for the Committee to come back with recommendations to get a sense of the magnitude of the funding that might be required. He stated there is a general sense of support, but there needs to be more specific proposals before that can be quantified. Mr. Bedard asked if there is any State funding available; and Mr. Steadman stated they believe there is with Grants, and our State Senator is supportive of these kinds of initiatives. He stated between the State, the County, and the Township there will be funding, although the question is the magnitude of that and the priorities.

Ms. Sovinee asked Mr. Porter and Mr. Bedard to speak to the situation where the Township would maintain ownership of a barn but lease it to a non-profit. Mr. Bedard stated he is aware of a situation where the downstairs of some historic buildings were used for museum space and the upstairs were rented out as apartments which paid for the on-going maintenance of the buildings. He stated he was asked if he was interested in doing a long-term lease putting money into the project, and at the end of the lease, they would get their building back. He stated there are different structures that can be done. Ms. Sovinee asked the length of a long-term lease, and Mr. Bedard stated it can be anywhere from thirty years to ninety-nine years. Ms. Sovinee asked if the tenant would make the structural improvements on the property, and Mr. Bedard stated they would do so in lieu of payments. Mr. Bedard stated he had to meet certain deadlines over a three-year period to get work done so that he could then have control over it for thirty more years. Mr. Bedard stated there are two apartments; and he rents one out, which takes care of the cost of all the repairs that there were done there. He stated he uses the other apartment personally.

Mr. Porter stated if they can find a pressing use, that will make a lot of things happen. He stated if they can be creative and find a need that the Town, the Historical Society, a museum, or an arts groups has, that will drive it. Mr. Bedard stated he agrees adding that it takes someone being the leader to push this through. He congratulated the Township for going through the process to try to save the structures for future use. Mr. Bedard stated they can provide photographs of some re-use activities that have been done. Mr. Porter asked that they be kept in the loop as they are personally interested in this.

Mr. Porter and Mr. Bedard were thanked for providing their experience and expertise.

#### FACILITIES ASSESSMENT – RENOVATION COST ESTIMATE & STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

Mr. Steadman stated the Township hired Remington & Vernick to provide this report which the Committee has been provided. Mr. Steadman stated the report indicated that the assumption was the barn would be stacked with hay three bales high with a bale weight of ninety pounds. Mr. Steadman stated the utilization would be straw - not hay, and straw is much lighter. He stated it would also be much higher than three bales high, and it could be 20' to 30' high. Mr. Steadman stated he would like to understand the assumptions that went into the calculations.

Mr. Melia stated one bale is 2 ½' by 1 ½' and weighs 20 pounds per square foot. He stated the building would be rated, and if every square foot were stacked three bales high it would equal 60 PSF. He stated if they were to go to 80, it does not rate. He stated 60 PSF is just the deadload and he is also counting 30 PSF live load, recognizing that those two loads would not occur simultaneously in the same spot; but for the sake of structural analysis, he needs to calculate that.

Mr. Steadman asked if the analysis is consistent with the intended use by the farmer of the second floor where there are large mounds on each side of the center corridor where you enter the second floor. He stated that would be stacked with straw, and the farmer would park the farm equipment in the center corridor with straw on each side. He asked if the building would withstand that utilization. Mr. Melia stated he would need to know the weight of the machinery and where it would be placed. He stated if it were to stay on the east side of the building between bents 3 and 6, there are much more closely-spaced columns, and it could hold that weight. He added that 60 PSF across the entire floorplan is a lot of weight. He stated if he were provided the weight of the equipment, he could provide an answer.

Mr. Steadman stated being sure that one of the barns could be used as a barn is a goal. Mr. Melia stated the Satterthwaite barn would be the better option, and Mr. Steadman agreed.

Mr. Mohan asked if they were to provide Mr. Melia with the specs could he provide a response within forty-eight to seventy-two hours. Mr. Pockl stated if there are additional questions that they want to send them, the turn-around time on response would depend on the questions but they would be diligent in responding. Mr. Childs stated the Committee would need to go through Mr. Ferguson or Mr. Majewski with any questions.

Ms. Sovinee stated one of the items with regard to the Caretaker's House was repair of the first floor framing system, and Mr. Melia stated that is the floor beams. Ms. Sovinee asked if that is a replacement of wood structures or an installation of steel. She asked if there is consideration of historically-correct reinforcements. Mr. Melia stated they could repair it by sistering the existing beam which would be the less expensive. To replace it, they would temporarily jack the house and remove the existing timber beams and put back timber beams as steel would not be needed for that short span. Mr. Steadman asked what method was included in the cost estimate, and Mr. Melia stated it would be jacking of the house and replacement.

Mr. Steadman stated he was impressed with how low the cost was for repair of the Caretaker's House with the estimate of \$53,000. Mr. Melia stated only about a third of the floorplan has framing that would need to be replaced. Mr. Steadman stated that estimate of \$53,000 is for the necessary structural repairs for that building and it is not a renovation or restoration. Mr. Pockl stated that is true for the most part although they do have a line item for painting the exterior and electrical work. There is other work that will be required including plumbing and heating. Ms. Sovinee stated the estimate is \$150,000 to \$350,000 to restore it to historical standards.

Mr. Steadman stated the Committee needs to consider for each structure whether the estimates are applicable to what the Committee might recommend doing versus what has to be done right now because there are needed repairs.

Mr. Steadman asked Mr. Melia if the estimate for the Slack House was for repair and bringing it to usable condition, and Mr. Melia stated that was a renovation cost of structural repairs and getting it to a point where it could be used for a residence, Commercial, or Retail space. He stated this is true for the costs for the Satterthwaite House as well. Mr. Pockl stated with the Slack House they included installation of bathrooms, HVAC, painting, etc. Mr. Melia stated it also included taking out the plaster walls, running electric, and putting in



drywall. He stated they would also need to replace windows and window sills because they are not functioning and are not energy-efficient. He stated if they wanted to have the Slack House host events, they need properly-functioning windows. Mr. Steadman stated the estimate for the Slack House is \$916,000; and they will look at exactly what that includes versus what it might need for its ultimate end use that might be recommended.

Ms. Sovinee noted the widening of the driveway on Planter's Lane, and she stated the report did not call for expanding the culvert. Mr. Melia stated the cost estimate reflects widening without extending the length of the culvert. He stated it would cost a lot more to entirely excavate and remove the existing culvert and put in a new one. He stated in addition to that they would have to re-locate all of the utility poles if they wanted to go to 24' wide. Ms. Sovinee asked if they could not just do an expansion to the north side; and Mr. Melia stated while they could, if they were to go all the way to the north side, they would start encroaching on the cornfields. Ms. Sovinee stated those cornfields are not preserved. Ms. Sovinee stated she is asking because, as designed, there is a pinch in the road. Mr. Pockl stated they did consider that, and they believe that there are plenty of places where an existing bridge or an underpass of a Railroad crossing is too narrow to handle two-lane traffic; and there are signs at either end advising drivers it is a one-lane bridge. He stated even with the ultimate end use of having these buildings fully functioning, you would not get the amount of traffic that would warrant needing one lane in each direction at that pinch point.

Ms. Sovinee stated at that pinch point where the culvert is, there are the ponds which take a lot of the run-off from the farm so it does flood; and she asked if that area is considered a wetland or are there other environmental considerations. Mr. Pockl stated it is a stream, but he does not know that it is wetlands per se. He stated any work done to that culvert could be considered maintenance from DEP standpoint; but if they are expanding the culvert and increasing the size of it, that would require a Permit from DEP. Ms. Sovinee asked if the ponds have any special environmental designation that preserves them in any capacity. Mr. Pockl stated the Township Ordinance considers them as areas to be preserved. Mr. Steadman stated it is a sensitive area, and the ponds are important.

Mr. Pockl asked Mr. Melia what the width of the driveway would be at the culvert, and Mr. Melia stated it would be 18'. Mr. Pockl stated highway lanes are typically 9' to 12' wide.

Mr. Steadman stated they appreciate the Township's response by providing these assessments quickly. He stated this is important input to the Committee's analysis. Mr. Pockl stated they appreciate the Township reaching out, and look forward to answering any other questions in the future.

DISCUSSION OF SLACK HOUSE PROPOSAL: Mr. Steadman

Mr. Steadman stated Spirit Golf worked on a proposal for the Slack House. Because of its location on the Golf Course and the Spaziano Real Estate estimate, it is not a suitable location for a private residence. It was discussed that it could be used as an event space or restaurant. Mr. Steadman stated he received the proposal from Spirit Golf during tonight's meeting, and he will distribute it after the meeting. Mr. Steadman stated one of the considerations is that the Slack House is an expensive undertaking to bring to usable condition for an event or restaurant space. The estimate from the Township engineer was \$916,000, and the estimate from Worthington was \$816,000 to \$1.5 million. Mr. Steadman stated if it were to be used as a restaurant and required the investment of \$1.5 million, the operator would have to share their profits with the Township so they would need a lot of volume through put to get an attractive ROI for two entities. He stated Spirit Golf's proposal seems to indicate that they are willing to build an event facility for 200 to 250 people, and they believe there is space to provide parking. If the Slack House were to be restored, it would be used as a bridal suite/gathering place for the bridal party and would help sell a successful event venue at Makefield Highlands which would be a source of revenue for the Township for a long time.

Mr. Steadman asked the Committee to look at Spirit Golf's conceptual proposal so they can discuss it in the future. Mr. Steadman stated he will be interested to hear Mr. Mohan and Mr. Scott's opinion on this.

DRAFT OUTLINE OF RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT: Mr. Steadman

Mr. Steadman stated it is anticipated that the Committee will present their report to the Board of Supervisors on March 2. He stated he distributed a draft outline that could be used, and he asked for feedback from the Committee. Mr. Scott stated he feels it is concise and hits all the points. Mr. Nycz asked

with regard to the recommendations if we want to provide multiple possible recommendations for uses to the Board of Supervisors since the Supervisors will make the final decision. Mr. Steadman stated he does not believe that there would be only one recommendation, but he does feel the Committee should indicate what is their number one recommendation. Mr. Mohan stated he would be in favor of providing multiple options so that the Board of Supervisors can see the different possibilities. Mr. Scott stated he feels that “keep it standing” is also an option and would differentiate it from preservation or rehabilitation. He stated they could recommend doing the structural work necessary to keep a structure the way it is now. Mr. Steadman stated he agrees that in some cases that may be a recommendation as he does not feel the budgets will be there to do everything to every building they would want. He stated there will also have to be priorities, and the Committee should recommend what should be done in Phase 1 and then later phases. He stated a recommendation could be to keep it moth-balled and prevent it from deteriorating further. He stated it should still be noted that without a use, the “building is dead.” He stated the two buildings that are in the best shape are the two buildings that have been used – the Joseph Yardley House and the Tunnickliff Cabin. He stated they are in respectable shape because they have been used. He stated they need to have the buildings in use or the question is why are we spending money.

Mr. Childs stated he feels it needs to be made clear to the Township that a lot of these estimates were done some time ago and really only aimed at the most critical repairs; and it is not really bringing them up to any real condition of usability. He stated if they do not do at least these things as a bare minimum, things will continue to deteriorate. He stated it needs to be made clear that this is going to cost money whether it comes from the Township or some other source. Mr. Steadman stated the Facilities Assessment just reviewed is a prime example of that. He stated it indicated that it would cost \$53,000 for the Tunnickliff Cabin, but realistically it would be in the \$300,000 range to actually restore it. He stated he feels that is a “historical gem” as it is the oldest house in the Township, possibly the oldest house in Bucks County, and one of the oldest houses in Pennsylvania. He stated if there is a building that should be restored as opposed to renovated, he feels that would be the building. He stated the fact that it is relatively small and in relatively good shape makes it more affordable as well. Mr. Steadman stated many of the existing cost estimates are just the cost to repair and not the cost to make a structure usable, and the Committee wants the buildings to be usable as if they are not used, they will start going in reverse again.

Mr. Steadman stated he would like the Committee members to think about what sections of the Table of Contents they would take on. He asked that they look at the outline and decide what element they would like to write recognizing that the entire Committee will then review it and agree on the final document. He stated he needs the Committee members to begin drafting. He asked that the Committee members think about what they can realistically devote time to and let him know what Sections they will be responsible for drafting. Ms. Sovinee stated she feels that a lot has already been drafted and she assumes it would just need to be put into a narrative as opposed to the tables that have already been prepared and discussed; and Mr. Steadman agreed. He stated the narrative would include the options that had been looked at and the pros and cons of each along with the Committee's recommendation for the best option. He stated the drafts can be circulated and revised as needed.

Ms. Sovinee asked if a presentation will be done along with a written report when the Committee goes before the Board of Supervisors, and Mr. Steadman agreed. He stated he has started working on a Power Point presentation that would be presented on March 2 along with the written report. He stated he feels the Committee can get this done if it is divided up. Mr. Steadman stated he will put together some introductory slides and the drafts that have already been circulated and commented on. He stated he wants the Committee to feel confident in the final recommendations; and if everyone contributes and makes comments, that would be a productive way to get this done. Mr. Childs stated they also have the presentation that Mr. Majewski did when they first started meeting, and there is also information they have from Jeff Marshall. Mr. Steadman stated both Mr. Majewski and Ms. Sovinee have a lot of photographs that could be used as well as the photographs from the Remington & Vernick January report that are useful.

Ms. Sovinee asked Dr. Weiss how long they will have for a presentation before the Board of Supervisors. Dr. Weiss stated he would suggest a fifteen minute presentation; and if they need more time, he will coordinate that with the Chair. He stated the Board is looking forward to the presentation. Ms. Sovinee asked if they should have less history and pictures and focus more on the recommendations, and Dr. Weiss agreed. He stated it may be a good idea to touch on the history of the properties for the residents, but the Board knows what is going on. He stated the Committee's job is to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors, and he would center the presentation around that. He stated they want some preliminary decisions made so that they can make progress and save these buildings.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Sovinee asked Mr. Scott if he has worked in the area of Lease Agreements, and Mr. Scott stated he is familiar with those types of Agreements. He stated he can discuss some of the pitfalls, but this is a unique situation in that we are not starting with new and modern buildings so a lot of the expectations between the landlord and tenant on repairs and maintenance will be different from what is found in other leases. He stated the other aspect is that typically the landlord has an obligation to themselves or to shareholders to maximize the revenue which is not entirely consistent with what the Township is doing.

Ms. Sovinee stated with regard to AOY's interest in the pack house, they are wrestling with how long a lease they would need in order to get Grants for that as a non-profit. She stated they would also need to know what kind of repairs would be done by the Township and by AOY. Mr. Scott stated they should look at a ten-plus year timeframe, and it should be reflected in the lease rate depending on what the tenant or the landlord are responsible for.

Mr. Childs stated Mr. Mohan was looking into contractors that do barn timber re-use and he sent him the name of a firm that is in New Jersey. Mr. Mohan stated he reached out to Hartland, and they indicated that they will come and take the wood for free. They would dismantle the building, and we would not have to pay them to do that, and they would take the wood as payment.

Mr. Childs stated he had mentioned previously that there is a local resident who has restored his historic property which is near the Patterson Farm, and he is amenable to have the Committee visit his property. The weekend of February 5 was suggested. Mr. Childs stated he will send more details to the Committee so that if anyone is interested he can arrange for that visit.

Mr. Steadman stated he feels that would be useful.

Mr. Steadman stated he has had discussions with Tim and Sam Stewart of Charlann Farms. Mr. Steadman stated if there are uses for the buildings on Patterson Farm that the current farmer can make productive use of that would rank high. Mr. Steadman stated in the next few days he hopes to walk the property with Tim and Sam Stewart to look at the buildings in more detail. He stated they know that the Satterthwaite barn is likely to be the barn where they could park equipment and store straw. The advantage to that is that it would put their activity further away from some of the more public activities

at the Patterson Farmstead, but the downside is that they would also be some distance away as all of their produce/vegetables are grown behind the Tunnicliff Cabin between there and the greenhouses and the woods. If they planted near the road, people might help themselves. Mr. Steadman stated Satterthwaite is not as convenient, but is probably the best option. He stated there are other buildings that they could make use of including the well house on Satterthwaite that is in fairly decent condition and the concrete building that is behind the Satterthwaite barn where the Township is storing a piece of equipment. Mr. Steadman stated Patterson P7, the equipment garage, is also of potential interest to the Stewarts. He stated it should be made clear what buildings the Stewarts would be using, and that would be built into the Lease and they would contribute to the maintenance. Mr. Steadman stated once a date and time is set for the tour, he will advise the Committee who are welcome to be part of the tour and discussion.

Mr. Childs stated with regard to the Tunnicliff Cabin if the artist who is using that now was relocated, would she need bathroom/kitchen type facilities, and Ms. Sovinee stated she believes so. Mr. Steadman stated that is what is there today; and if the Board of Supervisors wants to go in the direction of using the Cabin for some other purpose, they would have to work out an alternative with that tenant. He stated the Lease is month-to-month and either party can make a change, but it would take planning and communication.

Ms. Sovinee asked if they are including the cost of the dendrochronology studies. Mr. Steadman stated they are not to his knowledge. He stated he understood that there was a combination of the Historical Committee and the Patterson Farm Preservation group that indicated that they had a professor/organization that was willing to do it. He stated the Committee would welcome that kind of information but they were not including that in any costs to the Township for this. Mr. Nycz stated they did indicate that they would be willing to do it, but they would need permission from the Township to do so.

Mr. Childs asked Mr. Nycz if he is familiar with that technology and whether it would be appropriate. He stated he assumes they would need to compare the core samples they get with other samples that are similar in this region to see where they can age it to. He also asked if the firm that was referred to is the only firm that does that. Mr. Nycz stated he does not believe there is only one place that would be able to do that; but he does not believe that we have to organize that immediately.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Kathleen Hirko, 1450 Dolington Road, stated she understands that the Committee was formed to figure out the future use for the structures and the repairs needed on the structures. Mr. Steadman stated they are to make recommendations to the Township which is the owner of the properties on what uses could be made to the buildings that would help justify the expense of repairs necessary.

Ms. Hirko stated she was confused why they were discussing putting in a two-lane driveway on the farm and asked why they would spend money on a driveway when they are talking about fixing up structures. Mr. Steadman stated one of the options they are looking at when they are considering having community use and utility from the structures, is using the Joseph Yardley House as an anchor for an arts center which is there now, has been successful, and has been growing rapidly in the last few years. He stated to have that kind of public use without interfering with the farmer, they are looking into some site improvements. He stated currently it is a number of buildings and homes that made sense hundreds of years ago, but now there are tenants and the Township is using some of them. He stated they want to consider what the farmer, the Township, and a public space would need. He stated they may want the community to have access to a historical building like the Tunnicliff Cabin or the Joseph Yardley House but not interfere with the farmer. He stated the site may need some demarcation like a split-rail fence to separate the people from the crops. He stated site improvements are therefore being discussed, and included in that, would be consideration of the long driveway which is currently a single lane which can be awkward at times.

Ms. Hirko stated while she understands this, she feels that should be a future consideration since the structures are what are important right now. She stated she feels those should be made stable as opposed to talking about roads which could be considered after all the improvements to the structures are done.

Ms. Hirko stated she thinks it is wonderful that they are meeting with the farmers, and she fully supports the Stewarts as the Township needs them to keep farming, and anything we can do to support them would be great.

Ms. Hirko stated she did not hear the entire discussion with the experts at the beginning of the meeting, but she did hear them talk about people in the

Township getting involved such as a Historical Society. She stated there is a non-profit group, Patterson Farm Preservation, that is insured, and her husband is the President. Ms. Hirko stated she and her husband renovated their home which is an 1820 home, and they had similar issues to Satterthwaite as their home was empty for ten years. She stated there are people who want to work and have insurance and the credentials. She stated the Historic Society has Helen Heinz who is willing to write Grants. She stated she feels that they could get a lot of people in the Township to help; and she knows some tradespeople who indicated they would volunteer their electrical, plumbing, and expertise if allowed to restore the home.

Ms. Hirko stated they had talked about taking the buildings down for barn wood, and she would not like to see that; however, if they are going to do that for free, she has experience with that, and they should keep it local. She stated her husband is a licensed contractor, and he could take it down for them. Ms. Hirko stated these properties belong to the Township and are an important part of the Township to a lot of people, and she asked that they let people get involved in this and help.

Mr. Steadman stated the Committee is aware that Ms. Hirko's organization has offered to help. He stated that would be at the execution stage, and the Committee is at the conceptual stage.

Ms. Hirko stated if the farmer does lease the barn, they would be willing to help him fix the barn as well. She stated they would do whatever they can to keep the buildings standing.

A woman named Laura stated she is a passive observer of Patterson Farm, and she feels what is missing is a cohesive thread that would bring together these multiple uses that are being talked about. She stated she agrees that a building has to be used; but once they touch the integrity of Patterson Farm, there is the threat that they are going to lose what is there now. She stated before they decide that they will let the Golf Course use one building for a venue, they need to look at what the community can bring in. She stated if they start taking away buildings, it loses the life that it had even though it "has been in limbo all of these years." She stated she feels people are too busy to focus on what is at stake and what the Committee is going to be presenting to the Board of Supervisors. She stated as a member of the public she has no access to it and cannot walk



the grounds or put up a sign asking people to call in if they want to save the property. She stated as was noted previously at a meeting no one would want to see a parking lot or cars taking over with the vista interrupted. She stated the purpose of this land was farming, and these buildings had a purpose. She stated some of them are in disrepair, but she agrees with the previous caller that the community could rally and “surprise everyone with how they could contribute and have their name connected with a future that will live beyond them.” She stated a restaurant would come and go, and she questions how many breweries and venues there can be for those who can afford that; but for the rest of the community there are people in colleges and schools, and there could be visits, field trips, and education. She stated there are towns that transplant buildings to make a faux village, and here we have a historic farm.

She stated she would not want to see the Satterthwaite House become an office building as there are office buildings that exist that need to be used. She stated she feels this has a greater purpose. She stated stabilizing may be the first course of action. She stated they should look for the connecting thread that brings in all of these pieces so that they really have a community farm and a community wanting to preserve this land as open space so that they can take advantage of it through a museum, a University, or a school; and it is not just something that they just see from their car. She stated there could be an annual day or weekend when it is open to the public to walk the grounds. She stated she hopes they find a way to communicate this more to the public so that the Committee gets feedback. She stated she hopes that the community will rally and speak out in favor of preservation.

Mr. Steadman stated this will stay as open space, and it is preserved as farmland in perpetuity. Laura stated it is the forty acres that they are looking at with the structures that are at risk. Mr. Steadman stated they are trying to determine the best way to keep the buildings to help justify the repairs since it is expensive to repair them.

A woman named Emily stated she agrees with Laura and hopes they will consider the integrity of the land. She stated she lives across from Patterson Farm, and she sees the incredible amount of wildlife on the property. She stated she is concerned that the section that is not preserved will become a parking lot or something else. She stated she has seen farmland get developed, and she hopes that they will try very hard to keep the integrity of the property as it is an

incredible farm. She stated if there is a restaurant or brewery there, those will come and go and turn into something else such as a “Kohl’s parking lot and a ShopRite.” She stated she hopes they consider the importance of preserving the land. She stated she knows that they have discussed this being turned into a farm/agriculture museum; and while that would not bring in the same amount of cash as an event space would, she feels that would be worth considering if they could potentially make the first floor of the property a farm museum and the second floor office space. She stated the younger generation is interested in “hobby farming” and she feels that would be good to consider. She stated there are some in New Hope that could be looked into to see if they are at all profitable. She stated she feels it would be great to have some community/ educational space although she understands that would not be as easy as selling it to a developer for commercial use.

Mr. Steadman stated the comments are appreciated. He showed a slide of the Patterson/Satterthwaite property, and he stated most of the land which is not agriculturally-preserved includes the wet ponds/stream areas, which are difficult to plant, and the farmsteads. He noted the areas which are sensitive areas which he does not envision changing in any significant way because it is important to the drainage which was compromised when 295 was cut in and changed the direction of the water flow as noted by the Soil Conservation Service. He stated they need to be responsible for this rich agricultural land. He stated the land they are discussing has not been preserved, but that does not mean that it will not be planted in agriculture if it is reasonable and feasible to do so. He stated he does not see a major risk of big development in non-preserved space. He stated Charlann Farm is important as there are only a handful of farmers left in Lower Makefield Township. He stated Charlann also has the next generation coming up with Tim Stewart. He stated they want to be sure to respect the farmers and the farmland and keep as much as they can.

A woman named Gerilynn stated she lives in California and she signed the Change.org petition to save this piece of property in Lower Makefield. She stated she is struggling to stop development in California. She asked for the contact information of the individual who spoke earlier and indicated that it is easy to remove lead paint. Mr. Childs stated while he does not have the e-mail for Mr. Bedard, he believes that he stated if someone is a certified contractor who is experienced in lead remediation, they are able to do that efficiently. Mr. Steadman stated he has been told by contractors in Pennsylvania

that is it is not that expensive to remediate. Mr. Steadman stated California probably has different regulations, so she should contact a local contractor. Gerilynn stated she likes that the public is allowed to speak as that is not allowed at her Council meetings.

#### FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

It was noted the next scheduled meeting is a Zoom meeting on February 17 at 7:30 p.m.

#### ACTION ITEMS FOR FOLLOW-UP: Ms. Sovinee

1. Committee Members - E-mail Mr. Steadman what they will work on for the Draft Outline of Recommendations Report by the end of the weekend
2. Mr. Childs - Advise the Committee of the time and date to meet with the neighbor who has done a renovation
3. Mr. Steadman – Advise the Committee of the time and date to walk the Patterson property and look at the buildings with the Stewarts

There being no further business, Mr. Nycz moved, Ms. Sovinee seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:31 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bette Sovinee, Secretary

