

**TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC
June 2, 2020**

The regular meeting of Farmland Preservation, Inc. was held on Tuesday, June 2, 2020 via Zoom. Mr. Blank called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Those Present	Farmland Preservation	Mike Blank – via Zoom
		Eric Yeager – via phone
		Dan Bankoske- via Zoom
		John Lewis – via Zoom
		Dennis Steadman – via Zoom
	Others	Bob Colavita – via phone

MINUTES

Mr. Blank stated the first order of business was to approve the minutes from the February 20, 2020 meeting as the March meeting was not held. He asked if there were any comments on these minutes and none were expressed. Motion made by Mr. Bankoske to approve minutes of February 20, 2020 as amended. Mr. Steadman seconded the motion. Motion moved and approved by the Board and carried.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Mr. Bankoske reported he would give a quick update on the two brokerage accounts. The Fidelity account, as of the close yesterday, was roughly \$416,000. This is a decrease of just under 4% year-to-date. The Vanguard account is roughly \$515,000 with investment performance also down about 4%. Overall Vanguard, year-to-date, is down about \$6,000 or 1% when factoring in income and expenses.

Mr. Bankoske reported that he received the signed lease from Sam Stewart/Charlann Farms for the Leedom property. Mr. Bankoske will get the signed copy scanned into the records and the original to the township office to store. Mr. Bankoske also reported that he received Mr. Stewart’s check for the Leedom track and, since the last meeting, had reimbursed Sterling Farms for rent monies paid for Leedom earlier in the year.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC

June 2, 2020

Mr. Bankoske reported that the William Penn Bank checking account has been closed. The remaining \$275 balance was transferred to the Vanguard account. He has started paperwork for a second Fidelity account to be used for cash management (e.g., bill pay, cash transfers, etc.). The bill pay feature is important for the electronic payment ability it includes. This account will include checking. Mr. Blank reminded all that Vanguard required checks to be written for no less than \$500, while Fidelity has no minimum requirement.

Mr. Bankoske recommended a future meeting agenda item to revisit the Vanguard account and decide if any action is necessary. In May 2019, funds were moved from a Vanguard self-directed mutual fund account to a Fidelity managed brokerage account. He stated we would review performances of the two accounts after 6-12 months and decide what, if anything, should be done with the Vanguard account.

There were no public comments.

Mr. Blank asked if Mr. Bankoske now had access to all accounts. Mr. Bankoske replied he does have access except paperwork needs to be completed to allow him to write/sign checks from the Vanguard account. Mr. Bankoske has the paperwork to be signed to allow this.

Mr. Blank stated that he had approved work by Matt Corcoran for \$350 to clear a buffer. In the past, this type of work has been done only after full Board review. Mr. Blank stated that he felt it would be helpful if a spending cap were established, equal to or less than \$500, where that amount of spending could be authorized by the President or Treasurer, without full Board involvement. Mr. Steadman expressed agreement with this proposal as it seems more efficient. His only request would be that any work so approved would then be presented at the next Board meeting for review. Mr. Blank agreed and stated that the Board has put in place Operating Principles (which are ground rules of engagement) that may have preceded Mr. Steadman's joining the Board. He further suggested that the Operating Principles would be a good place to add the spending cap. Mr. Steadman made a motion to make this change with a document spelling out the specifics be brought to the next meeting making sure the change is consistent with the operating agreement and any other corporate documents. Mr. Yeager seconded this motion. All approved.

Mr. Blank added that discussions had been held about our accountant and accounting software. Mr. Bankoske replied he was thinking about reviewing these items once the checking account is in place. Mr. Bankoske will bring an update to the next meeting including realistic expense estimates.

There were no public comments.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC

June 2, 2020

OUTCOME OF SPRING TOURS

Mr. Blank asked to hear any comments from Board members on the condition of the buffers before discussing Farmview I and the house bordering that parcel that had a couple of trees removed. Mr. Steadman reported on the condition of the buffer at Makefield Brook. He stated improvements were made last year with the bamboo barrier and bamboo removal which have the buffer on the western edge of this field in good shape. Continuous maintenance will be needed to stay in front of the bamboo, which has been discussed with Sam Stewart. There are no other issues with this buffer. Mr. Yeager asked if Matt Corcoran has done the first round of annual bamboo remediation for this year as he has not received any notification that the work has begun. Mr. Blank replied that Mr. Corcoran has started remediation work. Mr. Blank received a call that Mr. Corcoran was at Stackhouse but work was impeded by Mr. Kaplan's fence which is limiting his ability to get to the bamboo there. Mr. Yeager asked if this is the wooden fence? Mr. Blank replied it is the wooden fence and he has asked Mr. Bankoske to look into this. Mr. Blank stated that Mr. Corcoran stated to either work around or remove the fence would cost an additional \$250 which has not been approved yet. Mr. Bankoske stated he plans to go out to see what Mr. Corcoran is talking about. He knows there is a split rail fence there and also a deer fence but he doesn't think either fence lines up with the property lines there. Mr. Bankoske will take a look and discuss with Mr. Kaplan as needed to see what if anything needs to be done.

Mr. Blank commented on Farmview I and Mr. Dan Ward. Farmland had the Stewart's remove two trees that were threatening to fall on the property at 1620 Fairfield Road. Both trees were taken down but large logs and debris remain from the cutting whose removal was not part of the Stewart plan. Mr. Ward requested this be cleaned up and this should be done for easier mowing access. Mr. Blank and Mr. Bankoske went to the property on Memorial Day and removed what debris they could but the remaining debris was a bigger job. This further work was what Mr. Corcoran had quoted at \$350 and that Mr. Blank had referred to approving earlier. Mr. Corcoran has completed that work.

Mr. Blank moved the discussion to soil conservation. Mr. Blank and Mr. Bankoske saw progress, which the Board was informed of, at Stackhouse and Clearview. The Stewarts' had put up spiked hay bales and erosion blankets on both properties. Mr. Blank stated Clearview looked good. Mr. Bankoske stated the work looked good at Stackhouse also. On Stackhouse, the main ravine and piece off to the side had hay bales. Mr. Bankoske did not walk back up to see if soil had been added to any spot but he will revisit at some point. Mr. Blank stated he was unaware if soil was intended to be evened out or if a berm was meant to be built up to prevent further flow. He asked if Mr. Steadman

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC

June 2, 2020

had anything to add, who stated he thought this was a temporary solution until the Bucks County Conservation District re-engages, hopefully in the fall. Soil would be evened out to take away depth no new berms would be added. Mr. Bankoske will revisit Stackhouse.

Mr. Blank stated, that as a follow up to the spring tours, a letter has been sent to Mr. Stewart from the Board, delineating each area he needs to work on to prevent erosion. We will be keeping an eye on this in the future. Mr. Steadman thanked the farmers for their work on this.

Mr. Bankoske added one other item from the spring tours. He had driven the section of Dolington Road off of Mr. Colavita's leased property where stakes had been placed to discourage motorists from driving on the grass areas. He noticed some additional ruts had appeared in new areas. Mr. Bankoske stated that Mr. Colavita had mentioned placing additional stakes in this new area. Mr. Colavita replied this would be a great idea as motorists are not driving where the stakes are but have started driving where there are no stakes. This makes mowing the area more difficult.

There were no public comments.

CROP ROTATION AND WINTER COVER CROPS

Mr. Blank asked if Mr. Steadman had anything further to add to the Board's previous discussion. Mr. Steadman stated when looking at the soil preservation erosion plan from the Agricultural Conservation Service (ACS) they call out two specific actions. The first action is that crops should be grown on a 3-year rotation. Two years of corn followed by one year of soybeans. The soy crop returns nitrogen to the soil to benefit the corn crop. Our lands are not being used in this manner. We are planting only corn due to the pressure from the deer population. Deer can destroy up to 100% of soy crops. The damage to corn, while severe, is less (about 50%) which allows for some crop production. Mr. Steadman stated he views the crop rotation recommendation from ACS as informational to make the Board aware of what best practices should be, vs. what is being practiced on our properties. The second action is for winter cover crops to be planted to help prevent erosion. However, the current land leases state that winter cover crops are not required if farmers are using a no till production method, which does not break-up the soil and leaves biomass as an alternative to winter crops. Based on these actual practices, crop rotation and winter cover crops do not necessarily apply and exceptions have been granted to LMT fields. Mr. Blank agreed. He asked if the grasses he has seen on the fields count as winter crop. Mr. Steadman stated grasses do not count as winter crop. He added, that as an example, the Sterling property (not Farmland Preservation) plants winter wheat, which grows in the fall, goes dormant during the winter and is harvested in the early spring. Mr. Blank asked if the grasses were a better solution than winter wheat? Mr. Steadman replied grasses are used to assist with

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC

June 2, 2020

erosion protection. Mr. Bankoske added that Farmview II had used winter crops about two years ago.

There were no public comments.

DEER HUNTING

Mr. Steadman stated that Farmland Preservation this year is assisting in achieving the township goal of improved deer population control. Farmland has applied for the Red Tag Program on three properties farmed by Mr. Stewart. The Red Tag Program is designed by the Pa. Game Commission that allows the harvesting of deer in a very controlled and specific way to prevent agricultural production damage. The harvesting can take place on agricultural property only and no other land. The Red Tag Program allows for harvesting of non-antlered deer outside of and beyond the normal deer hunting season. Farmland is utilizing the program as a test case in 2020 on these three properties. The harvest results must be reported monthly to the Pa. Game Commission. The May report was just filed and no deer were harvested nor were any in April. Mr. Stewart has designated archery hunters for these properties who will continue into the fall and be assessed at that time. The Leedom property had an issue with the change in lease delaying the submission for the Red Tag Program on this property. The application was late, usually in January, but has been submitted. We have not received a reply to date. If approved, BOWMA will be the designated hunting group for that property. Depending on the success across all properties, BOWMA could be the designated group for all land in lieu of the hunters chosen by Mr. Stewart. Mr. Steadman stated 2020 will be a learning year, supporting the township goal of population control and farmers' goal of limiting crop damage. Mr. Blank asked if BOWMA has hunted the Leedom property before. Mr. Steadman replied, BOWMA has hunted Leedom during normal hunting season, but not under the Red Tag Program. Mr. Blank asked if the Red Tag Program is not approved for Leedom, can BOWMA continue to hunt in season. Mr. Steadman replied that BOWMA will continue to hunt in season so no step backward will be taken, only a step forward if approved for the Red Tag Program.

There were no public comments.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC

June 2, 2020

LEEDOM LEASE TRANSFER

Mr. Blank stated we have already reported on the lease transfer. He added this is the first time in his ten years on the Board that a lease has been transferred. Mr. Steadman stated that Mr. Bankoske has already answered all the questions regarding the transfer and the lease document and payment have been received. Mr. Steadman does not anticipate any issues with the lease which begins its ten-year term in 2020.

There were no public comments.

BAMBOO REMEDIATION

Mr. Blank asked that Mr. Yeager bring the Board up to date with bamboo. Mr. Yeager stated he has not spoken with Mr. Corcoran but the remediation program was started in May. He does not have confirmation if the work is complete. He will contact Mr. Corcoran tomorrow and email an update to the Board with photos if possible. Mr. Blank reminded Mr. Yeager to let Mr. Corcoran know that Mr. Bankoske will be contacting Mr. Kaplan about the fence issue on the Stackhouse property. Mr. Yeager asked when we will have an answer on the fence issue. Mr. Bankoske replied he will need to take a look, review the property lines and possibly involve Mr. Kaplan. Mr. Yeager stated he will contact Mr. Corcoran about the other two properties in the meantime. Mr. Blank stated we do know that some work had begun on Makefield Brook but that is may not have been completed.

There were no public comments

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Blank stated he was flipping the agenda order to see if there is any other business to be discussed at this time. Mr. Steadman stated he would like to discuss the schedule for future meetings thanking the Board of Supervisors for providing the current Zoom format. Mr. Blank replied that Farmland meeting are dependent on the BOS and must be coordinated with other meetings. Mr. Lewis stated that the township currently only has slots for Zoom meetings in the first and third weeks of the month. With the county moving to the “yellow” phase soon, the meetings may return to in-person but no agreement is in place yet for how to accomplish this. Mr. Blank stated from his perspective Farmland should plan for a Zoom format for their next meeting. Mr. Bankoske asked if Farmland should plan around its members summer schedules. Mr. Steadman replied, given the current situation, Farmland probably should not schedule more than one meeting at a time. Mr. Blank stated he was given three possible dates from Barbara Ellison for this meeting then polled the Board on which was best. He felt we should take the same approach for the next meeting.

There were no public comments.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC

June 2, 2020

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

- Mr. Blank will apply the spending cap for expense approval and subsequent Board review to the Operating Principals for the next meeting.
- Mr. Bankoske will bring an update on the accountant and software to the next meeting.
- Mr. Blank will contact Barbara Ellison for possible dates for the next meeting and poll the Board to select a date.
- Mr. Steadman will contact the Pa. Game Commission on the Red Tag Program application for the Leedom property.
- Mr. Yeager will follow up with Mr. Corcoran on the bamboo remediation progress.
- Mr. Blank will follow up with Bucks County Conservation District about providing their input by the fall.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael S. Blank, President