

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
FARMLAND PRESERVATION INC.
MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 23, 2020

The regular meeting of Farmland Preservation, Inc. was held remotely on September 23, 2020. Mr. Blank called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Those present:

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

Others: John B. Lewis, Supervisor Liaison

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Steadman moved, Mr. Bankoske seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of July, 2020 as written.

RECOGNITION OF ERIC YEAGER FOR SERVICE TO FARMLAND PRESERVATION INC.

Mr. Yeager was recognized for his several years of effective, reliable service to the Farmland Preservation Board. During Mr. Yeager's Tenure he held the office of Board Secretary and was the main contact with Corcoran Landscaping which did much of the work on clearing bamboo in the buffer areas. Mr. Lewis noted that Mr. Yeager was recognized at the last Board of Supervisors meeting with a framed resolution from the LMT Board of Supervisors .

CORPORATE OFFICER REASSIGNMENTS

With Mr. Yeager's departure, there is a need to reassign responsibilities. Mr. Steadman agreed to take on the role of Board Secretary.

Mr. Bankoske moved, Mr. Blank seconded and it was unanimously carried to elect Dennis Steadman as Secretary for the remainder of the term.

Mr. Blank noted that the By-Laws do allow for Board members to serve two Officer positions.

PARCEL REASSIGNMENTS

Board members divided the farmland parcels such that there is one member responsible to review each parcel on a quarterly basis or as needed.

Mr. Yeager was responsible for Bridle Estates (now going to Mr. Steadman) and for Farmview II (now going to Mr. Blank). Thus, in summary, Mr. Bankoske has Leedom, Heather Ridge, and Farmview I. Mr. Blank has Stackhouse, Longshore, and Farmview II. Mr. Steadman will have Makefield Brook, Clearview, and Bridle Estates.

Mr. Blank asked if they are in agreement that if a neighbor files a complaint with a property, it will be assigned to the person who is responsible for that parcel to review and report back to the Board and be the liaison/communication conduit with the neighbor. This was acceptable to the Board members.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Bankoske stated at the last meeting we had decided to move the Corporation's Assets at Vanguard over to Fidelity which is now complete, went smoothly, and now everything is at Fidelity.

Mr. Bankoske reported there was no Operating Income or Expenses since the last meeting.

Mr. Bankoske reported on the selection of accounting software. Compared to what we have today, QuickBooks would be easier, provide better reporting for the Board, and would be useful for the Annual Compilation and Tax Returns.

At the last meeting a version of the software was discussed that would cost approximately \$30 a month after the initial trial period. Mr. Bankoske learned that QuickBooks is available to non-profits through a vendor called TechSoup. TechSoup has a better version of Quick Books that they could provide if we qualify as a non-profit at a cost of \$75 a year compared to the normal cost of that version of \$75 a month. In order to proceed with this, Mr. Bankoske needs to submit documents that are in the Farmland filing cabinet in the Township Building. Mr. Lewis stated the Township building is not open to the public, but someone could get him the information, and they would discuss timing outside the meeting.

MEETING (8/12/20) WITH TIM STEWART & RACHEL ONUSKA (BUCKS COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT)

Conservation Plans for Stackhouse, Clearview, Makefield Brook

Mr. Blank reported on his meeting on August 12 with Mr. Tim Stewart and Ms. Rachel Onuska on the soil loss that has been occurring at Stackhouse, Clearview, and Makefield Brook. Ms. Onuska showed him and had him sign some Conservation Reports which she has since sent to him in hard copy. Mr. Blank has since scanned those documents and sent them to the Board. The Conservation Reports include soil types, the crops rotated, etc. Both Ms. Onuska and Mr. Stewart will be available on October 20 at 6:30 p.m. for an Executive Board Session with Farmland Preservation, Inc.

REVIEW OF LAND DEVELOPMENT SUBMISSION – PRICKETT PRESERVE (WEGMANS/APARTMENTS) ON STONY HILL ROAD

This Plan was sent to the various Township Committees for any comment on the development, which is not close to any of the Farmland properties. Mr. Blank, Mr. Steadman, and Mr. Bankoske all stated they had no comments. Mr. Blank will advise Mr. Majewski that Farmland Preservation, Inc. has no comment on the Prickett Preserve development plan.

DEER HUNTING UPDATE

Mr. Steadman reported on the participation in the Pennsylvania Game Commission “Red Tag” Program, which allows for the harvesting of antlerless deer outside of the hunting season. Four properties were enrolled in the program (Clearview, Longshore, Makefield Brook, and Leedom) and red tags were secured for each property. The Red Tag Program came to an end for 2020 as of Friday, September 18 as the normal hunting season began in Bucks County on September 19.

Mr. Steadman will be sending in the final report to the Game Commission before the end of the month together with the return of all unused red tags. Six doe were harvested under the Red Tag Program, and they were all harvested within August and September. Utilization of the red tags was disappointing as there were about 20 tags available. Three of the six were used by BOWMA on the Leedom property. Generally, the other hunters

were not as productive as BOWMA. In some cases, there were complicating issues due to COVID with unusual work schedules and demands on their time such that they were not able to get out in the field as much as expected. Also, one of the key hunters had a family illness. Mr. Steadman stated six was a low number as he would have projected a number of about twelve or more.

Mr. Steadman reported that he and others learned a lot through this first year of the Red Tag, and he feels they would likely do it again next year now that they have invested the time in the program and know how it operates. He expects that they will be more effective and efficient in the future, and it will not be as time-consuming for him next year. He also feels the productivity would be expected to be higher next year if BOWMA's role is expanded.

Mr. Blank stated one of the homeowners in the area was concerned about the Game Commission signs about hunting, and she wanted to know where that was taking place; and he addressed her concerns.

The Program started in March, but in the middle of the Program, a new game warden took over this area and advised them that each property enrolled in the Red Tag Program should have two signs posted that are provided by the Game Commission. Mr. Steadman felt the signs provided by the Game Commission that were posted in July were unclear and triggered some confusion. Since the signs went up he has received four to five calls per week, mostly from hunters who had seen the signs and wanted to know how to get access. He also received some calls from neighbors who wanted to understand what was going on. Clearly the signs created work for him and confusion for the community; but we followed the Game Commission's protocol.

1642 FAIRFIED ROAD @ FARMVIEW I (DRAINAGE ISSUE)

Mr. Bankoske stated this property is at the very bottom of the farm field. The water drains in that direction and there is a large retention basin at the bottom of the hill. The property owner reached out to the Township (Mr. Majewski) asking for someone to look at the area where there was pooling and icing over in the winter. Mr. Bankoske asked Mr. Majewski to advise the homeowner, Mr. Patel, that Farmland would look at this; however, it would not be until after the field was harvested later this year. Mr. Bankoske has it on his list to go look at it after the field is harvested.

Mr. Blank stated the Stewarts have a plan to widen the grass terrace in that field, which may improve the situation. Mr. Steadman stated that a Conservation District Plan might address this low-lying area that needs to be managed.

(POST-MEETING NOTE: The Board should ask the question of Ms. Onuska related to the Conservation Plan for that parcel at the October 20, 2020 Videoconference.)

1524 POWNAL DRIVE @ LONGSHORE (VINES GROWING ON FENCE AND FENCE PUSHED IN

Mr. Blank stated he, Mr. Bankoske, and Mr. Lewis went out to this property to help clear very thick vines that were growing on the fence. Homeowner, Mrs. Patel, was very thankful for what was done and how quickly we responded. More needs to be done and Farmland will go back for the rest of the clean-up once the corn is off the field.

Mr. Bankoske commented that it is not only the responsibility of Farmland Preservation to maintain growth on the Farmland fence, but also the homeowners have a part to play as well. This message was relayed to Mrs. Patel that we would appreciate it if she would take care of her side as well.

Mr. Steadman commented that we do want to maintain our side of the fence; however, we cannot take responsibility for maintaining both sides. Each homeowner would have their own standard as to how they want something treated, and Farmland would not want to be involved handling the homeowners' property.

Mr. Blank stated he will go back out and look at the property and then send out an e-mail to see what dates work to go back for further cleanup as necessary.

2048 FARMVIEW DRIVE @ LEEDOM (MR. SEAN CARNEY) DEAD/DYING TREES IN BUFFER AND FENCE

Mr. Bankoske stated clearing was done on one side of this property about one year ago. There was a large portion of the fencing that came out and may need to be replaced, and there was a lot of brush at that location.

Mr. Carney is a relatively new neighbor at 2048 Farmview Drive, and there is a lot of brush on the Farmland side of the property as well as trees/shrubs that have grown up intertwined in the fence. Mr. Bankoske gave Mr. Carney permission to go through to the Farmview side of the property after the field is harvested and remove the brush and take down what is intertwined in the fence line on the shared property. He stated Mr. Carney will clear out the brush that is laying there. Mr. Bankoske stated he seems like a great neighbor. They discussed the pine trees that have come down recently on the Farmland side, which were not planted correctly by the developer. Mr. Carney indicated, if it was agreeable, that he would replace trees on the Farmland side of the property; however, he advised Mr. Carney that the Board is not in favor of that since it creates further maintenance and issues for Farmland. Mr. Carney understood. Mr. Blank stated that the neighbor had also indicated in his letter how much he and his family enjoy the view of the Colavita Christmas Tree Farm.

2088 FARMVIEW DRIVE (HARDING PROPERTY) @ LEEDOM

Mr. Bankoske stated twenty minutes before tonight's meeting started, we received an e-mail sent by Mr. Harding stating that Farmland Preservation had not maintained the property line, specifically the fence, and that there was poison ivy and weeds growing through the fence. He had indicated in the e-mail that it had not been maintained for a few years. Mr. Bankoske stated the neighbor is probably correct, and we should go out to the property to assess it. This is a property that Tom McGowan had maintained up until this year; and generally, Tom did a good job maintaining the property and the buffer. We do know that none of the farmers were going in and cleaning or spraying the fence on the properties. We can talk to Sam Stewart about potentially cleaning up that fence line.

Mr. Blank stated if a time is set up, he would be happy to go out to that property with Mr. Bankoske; and possibly they could get Sam or Tim to go out with them as well.

Mr. Steadman commented that we should look at that whole line as a project rather than on a neighbor-by-neighbor basis, and Mr. Bankoske agreed. This property line is believed to be in good shape up until the bend. In 2017 Farmland took out a number of trees behind the Harding property and he believes it extended into the neighbor's property a little bit. He believes Rick's Expert Tree Service did part of this as well, and it is

possible that it has not been looked at in a detailed way for the last three years. Mr. Blank was there with Tom McGowan last year, and Tom had pulled down two pine trees then.

SYCAMORE TREES ALONG WOODSIDE ROAD @ LONGSHORE

Stuffed Animals/Signs Tacked to Trees - Trees Interfering with Walking Path

Mr. Blank stated someone had tacked up stuffed animals with positive message signs for people “not to get down over COVID,” and after some time he has taken most of them down.

Mr. Blank stated someone had also complained that there were overhanging trees that were interfering with the walking path. Mr. Lewis stated it seems like there has been some tree trimming done. He stated the Township is working on this. Mr. Blank stated he believes that was through Ms. Tierney as he has some e-mail correspondence from her.

(POST-MEETING NOTE: Mr. Blank confirmed with Monica Tierney that it was the LMT Public Works that cut the limbs.)

The stuffed animals and signs were hung on the sycamore trees with staples, and Mr. Blank could not get most of them out. Staples will do serious health damage to the trees, and it is going to be a big job trying to get all the staples out. Mr. Steadman stated the staples need to come out because it does long-term harm to the trees.

Mr. Blank reported there were also bugs that had nested inside the stuffed animals. Mr. Steadman stated if there is anything up against a tree like that, the bark will stay wet which results in insects and fungus entering the bark.

Perhaps the staples could be removed on the same day as the work is done on the fence behind 1524 Pownal Drive in November. Mr. Steadman stated the metal needs to come out of the trees, and we do not want people to be treating the trees like telephone poles.

Mr. Blank stated if this continues to happen, they may need to put signs in the area next to these trees.

BAMBOO REMEDIATION PROGRAM UPDATE

Makefield Brook, Stackhouse (Mr. Kaplan's fence), Farmview II (7 Sunnyside Lane)

Mr. Blank spoke to Matt Corcoran who indicated he is happy with the progress they have made keeping the bamboo down, and they had treated it twice this year. He stated they plan to do another treatment again soon. Mr. Corcoran indicated that he did not need to wait until the crops are off the field since they have made a path for themselves to get to the areas, and they plan to do it fairly soon.

Mr. Blank stated he contacted Mr. Kirk of LMT Ordinance Enforcement and advised him that there was bamboo growing on 7 Sunnyside Lane and it is growing on the homeowner's side near Farmland's fence even though the homeowner had put up a barrier. He has not heard back from Mr. Kirk so he will contact him again.

REVIEW OF OPERATING PRINCIPLES FOR LMFP, INC. BOARD

Mr. Blank stated we have reviewed these and revised them, and they are on the SharePoint site. The Board intends to review them periodically to see how we are doing and to see if they need any modifications. These Operating Principles will be reviewed with any new Director that joins the Board so they understand our process and how we operate.

The Board agreed that the Operating Principles would also be reviewed once a year at the Annual Meeting or the beginning of the year.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Steadman reported that he recently went onto the Clearview property to take down the hunting signs and at the end of the driveway that wraps around to the radio tower there were landscapers mowing both sides of our driveway. They were hired by the owner of the radio tower property; and while the driveway is on Farmland property, it is used by the owner of the radio tower to gain access to their property.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

Mr. Blank stated he will contact Ms. Kieslich to confirm that she will be doing the Minutes.

Mr. Lewis will determine how Mr. Bankoske can get access to the Township Building.

Mr. Blank will respond to Mr. Majewski that they have no comment on the Prickett Development.

Mr. Bankoske will follow up on 1642 Fairfield Road at Farmview I after the corn is out.

Mr. Blank will look at 1524 Pownal Drive mid to late October and send out an invite for further work there, and we can also look into getting the staples out of the sycamore trees along Woodside at that time.

Mr. Bankoske stated he will set up a time for Board members to review 2088 Farmview Drive on the Leedom parcel.

Mr. Blank stated he will follow up with Ms. Tierney with regard to the walking path to make sure the Township did the work, and check to see if they need anything further from Farmland Preservation.

Mr. Blank stated he will follow up with Mr. Kirk on the bamboo behind Sunnyside Lane.

Mr. Blank stated he will also make a note that at their yearly meeting which is usually held in January that they should go over the Operating Principles at that time.

Mr. Steadman stated he is a long time member of the National Arbor Day Foundation, and he will check into whether they might have any resources, such as a professional-quality sign that could be mounted on a post that discusses protecting the trees and not to fasten things on them. He stated possibly they could put this type of sign at both ends of the row of the line of trees where the stapling occurred.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Blank, President