

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC.
MINUTES – MAY 6, 2021

The regular meeting of the Lower Makefield Farmland Preservation, Inc. (Farmland) Board of Directors (Board) was held remotely on May 6, 2021. 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 Acting Secretary
Daniel Bankoske, Treasurer
Sean Carney, Member

Absent: James McCartney, Supervisor Liaison

REVIEW & APPROVAL OF MINUTES: All

Mr. Steadman moved, Mr. Carney seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of April 15, 2021 as written.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Mr. Bankoske

Payment was sent to Corcoran Landscaping in the amount of \$5,000 for work done at the Leedom’s property. An invoice for \$6,000 was received from Corcoran Landscaping for the work done at Stackhouse, and that check will be mailed shortly. A check will also be sent shortly to Corcoran Landscaping in the amount of \$400 for the bamboo work done at Makefield Brook.

PROCESS FOR INTERVIEWING PROSPECTIVE BOARD MEMBERS: Mr. Carney

In the past few months Mr. Carney and Ms. Bock joined the Board with Ms. Bock since resigning. Bringing on a new Board member is an investment of time and energy in orientation, coordination and communication, not to mention the time and effort of the BOS in interviewing and selecting Board candidates. Given the recent situation, the Board discussed what it could and should do to support the BOS in their selection of Board members to avoid such ‘false starts.’

The discussion included the observation that the efforts expended by Farmland Board members may not be typical of other volunteer boards as, in addition to meetings, emails, phone conversations, etc. there is physical, outdoor work that needs to be done by the Board on a monthly basis. In the recent case of Mr. Carney, he got involved with the Board as a Farmland neighbor dealing with issues along his property. After Mr. Blank reached out to Mr. Carney regarding Board membership, he took the time to discuss with other Board members what was involved with serving on the Board to make an informed determination that he was willing to make the necessary commitment.

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Messrs. Blank, Bankoske and Steadman stated their entry to the Board was different and simply based upon an interview and resume review by the BOS. They all felt learning more about the responsibilities of a Board member would have been beneficial to them.

Following discussion, the Board developed a recommendation to the BOS in their appointment of members to the Farmland Board. First, it needs to be stated clearly, that only the BOS can appoint members of Farmland Board and the Board is not recommending altering that at all, but rather, to enrich the process to increase the probability of success.

- When a resident expresses interest in serving on the Board, they could be put in touch with Mr. Blank to provide the individual with background on the role and expectations of Board membership. This simple step early in the process would provide a prospective candidate with an understanding of the scope and nature of the role to be filled during the four-year commitment before the interview with the BOS to avoid any missed expectations. Plus, this may save the BOS needing to do go through the interview process more often than necessary.

Mr. Blank will discuss this with Mr. McCartney as the Board liaison to the BOS. Mr. Bankoske suggested the Township Manager should also be contacted about this as Board applicants go through the Township Manager who then forwards their resumes on to the Board of Supervisors.

There was no one from the public wishing to speak on this matter.

UPDATE ON HONEYBEE KEEPING: Mr. Steadman

The three-year Lease with Dr. Sven Strnad began May 1. Dr. Strnad has signed the Lease, which was mailed together with the first rent check for signature to Mr. Blank at the Township Municipal Building. The Side Letter Lease Agreement was also sent to Charlann Farms for Sam Stewart to sign, which, in essence, releases him of responsibility for the honeybee plot leased to Dr. Strnad. Mr. Steadman stated that Mr. Stewart has had no objections to the agreement, but it has not yet been signed and received back from Mr. Stewart and a follow-up e-mail has been sent.

The honeybee hives will be installed this weekend. A picture of the hives was shown. With regard to Dr. Strnad's liability insurance, there is standard umbrella liability coverage under his homeowner's insurance; however, his insurance company would not put into writing that the honeybee hobby would be covered. Mr. Steadman, Dr. Strnad, and the insurance agent have shared several e-mails with their interpretations of the policy; and the agent has agreed with their interpretation of the policy which would be that this leased area adjacent to his residence being used as a hobby would be covered.

It takes a lot of work to get two colonies established, and the hope is that this will be successful and Mr. Carney expressed interest in visiting the site if possible. Mr. Steadman reported that Dr. Strand has expressed his willingness to show the hives to any Board member.

It is expected Dr. Strnad would probably be on the property about once a week tending the hives; although initially it would probably be more frequent.

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Mr. Steadman was thanked for the work he had done on this project and Mr. Blank added that Farmland Preservation has received good PR from this project.

There was no one from the public wishing to speak on this matter.

UPDATES ON PARCEL ISSUES

Stackhouse and Bean Farm (Mr. Kaplan): Mr. Carney

Clean-up work to the Stackhouse buffer area was completed. Corcoran Landscaping had advised that there was brush that was piling up on the south end of 1561 Dolington (Bean Farm/Mr. Kaplan's property) including some fresh-cut wood. Mr. Carney walked the property line with Mr. Kaplan and it's clear that over the years Farmland branches/trees have come down, which were cut up and left in that area, as well as some illegal dumping that has also occurred. It was decided that Corcoran Landscaping should clean up that fence line as part of their overall project, which was documented through pictures and videos.

A "No Trespassing/Under Surveillance Sign" was installed, and a game camera will be there on and off to monitor the area. Mr. Kaplan had asked for a gate or chain link to go across the drive to keep vehicles from going in there; however, this would interfere with our farmer's safely getting their equipment onto the property. Mr. Kaplan was reminded that the fence line had been cleaned up at the Board's expense and he should remind anyone doing work there that nothing is to go over the fence line. Mr. Carney will continue to monitor this.

The northern side of the Kaplan property was sold and a home will be constructed. The driveway will be installed down the fence line. The fence line and the property line do not match. Conservation work will be done on our bordering field there to resolve a water issue, and this driveway will create more impervious surface so this should be discussed with the Township. Mr. Blank stated the stormwater drainage plan for the Kaplan Subdivision had been reviewed by Rachel Onuska from the Bucks County Conservation District who did not have an issue with it if all plans are adhered to in execution. The developer needs to comply with all setbacks.

Mr. Carney will contact Mr. Majewski to discuss the stormwater run-off, the property line, and the buffer area including the impact of the driveway and any tree removal.

Farmview I Drainage Into Retention Basin: Mr. Bankoske

This is the south side of Woodside/Dolington down to the bottom of the hill where pooling takes place on Farmland property. The water should be drained off into the retention basin; however, a rock dam prevents the drainage. The Township has agreed to bring the level of the rock pile down so that the water can drain off. The project is on the Township's list of projects, but it has not been scheduled as the Township is waiting for when the needed equipment will be in the vicinity.

There was no one from the public wishing to speak on the parcel issues.

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AGREEMENT WITH CORCORAN LANDSCAPING, INCLUDING BAMBOO REMEDIATION: Mr. Carney and Mr. Bankoske

The Board had been considering starting a multi-year contract with Corcoran Landscaping to do work on properties considered to be a priority. The purpose and benefit are to better schedule and budget both work and payments and capture 'volume discount' pricing. Corcoran Landscaping agreed to charge a winter rate at \$1,000/day, a summer rate of \$2,000/day, and on-going bamboo maintenance work at \$1,200 annually, which includes three maintenance treatments/year. An additional benefit of the Contract approach is that Farmland would be purchasing 'fixed-priced days' from Corcoran Landscaping instead of ad hoc jobs. For example, if there were a storm which required removal of a fallen tree, Mr. Corcoran would take care of it and upon completion Mr. Corcoran would deduct the number of hours spent on the project from a fixed rate day, with a number of hours left to be used on that day.

Regarding a 3-year contact, Mr. Corcoran agreed that the winter day rate of \$1,000/day and the bamboo rate of \$1,200/yr. could be fixed for the term, as his labor costs are predicable. However, the summer day rate would have a 2.5%/year escalation as his summer wages vary and are less predictable.

The draft Contract had been dropped into the Teams folder for Board review.

The Board discussed various billing options, quarterly, monthly and as-occurred. After much discussion, it was decided it would be best and easier for both parties to invoice and pay per job as the work is done. This way, the project could then be allocated to the right farm/parcel for expense analysis.

The ten winter days will be allocated by the Board based on the priority of farms that the Board has already put together. It was discussed that next year after the crop is picked the Board will determine what the plan is and then advise Mr. Corcoran who will fill the ten winter days. Mr. Carney stated he would be willing to keep track of the work done by Corcoran during the summer for which the Board is purchasing two eight-hour days at \$2,000 an hour. If Mr. Corcoran wants to bill at the completion of a job that takes two hours he could do so, and they would still have six hours for that day left to use as they wish.

Mr. Blank asked what would happen if they did not have work that needed to be done. Mr. Carney stated the Board is guaranteeing Corcoran Landscaping ten winter days and two summer days; and while Mr. Carney does feel that the days would be used, they also could be used for Corcoran to cut buffer areas, which could be a half day's work, or to complete some other project. The Board is confident that no hours would be left on the table.

After discussion, the Board agreed that a three-year price agreement is in the interest of Farmland as it is believed there is sufficient work to be done and that the hours will be fully utilized. Also, the rates are locked in and the Board knows the quality of the work and responsiveness of Corcoran Landscaping. Mr. Bankoske moved, Mr. Steadman seconded and it was unanimously carried to adopt the Agreement and present to Mr. Corcoran for execution subject to modifications of the billing arrangement as discussed.

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Mr. Carney will finalize the Agreement for review by the Board before it is signed. This will lock in the prices for three years, and payment will be per job.

There was no one from the public wishing to speak on this matter.

SOIL CONSERVATION ON CLEARVIEW AND STACKHOUSE: Mr. Steadman and Mr. Carney

Board members met at Clearview and Stackhouse with the machinery operator and the Bucks County Conservation District representative to go over the plans for field reshaping.

On Clearview the field has two terraces that over the years have become ill-shaped and no longer provide the drainage, soil protection needed. The project will re-shape both terraces including installation of heavy rocks at the terrace south ends towards I-295. Mr. Tim Stewart indicated that the work was started. Stackhouse will be done after Clearview.

There was no one from the public wishing to speak on this matter.

COMMUNITY DAY, SUPPORTING FARMING TENANTS: Mr. Blank

Lower Makefield Township Community Day will be held on Saturday, August 28, 2021. Based upon participation in recent years, it is not believed to be productive for Farmland to have a table by itself. Thus, this year Farmland Preservation has offered to pay the sponsorship fee (\$50) to any of its farming tenants who want to participate. This is seen as a way to (a) support Community Day, (b) support our Farmers, and (c) increase the visibility of Farmland and better tie Farmland to our active Farmers. Tim and Sam Stewart of Charlann Farms have taken the Board up on that offer. Farmland will have signage at the Charlann Farms table and if a Board member can be there as a representative and to answer questions, it would be productive and appreciated. All Board members are welcome to come and more information will be coming out from the Community Day organizers.

There was no one from the public wishing to speak on this matter.

POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS FOR PATTERSON FARM: Mr. Blank

The Board of Supervisors is setting up an Ad Hoc Committee to look at all of the Township-owned (mostly) historic properties, including Patterson Farm. While Farmland has no responsibility for Patterson Farm, Farmland's experience with other local farm parcels and farmers, as well as the personal interest of some Board members suggest that Farmland can support the Township in this endeavor.

Mr. Blank asked that the Board consider what ideas they have to have to make Patterson Farm a better reflection of the role Lower Makefield has played in farming. Mr. Blank stated he feels the Board should offer that Farmland Preservation get representation on the forming

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Committee, and he will contact Ms. Blundi advising her that one or more of the Board members would be interested in serving on the Committee once they know what will be involved.

There was no one from the public wishing to speak on this matter.

OTHER BUSINESS: All

Re-Assignment of Responsibility for Bridle Estates

The Board recently went through farm assignments for which each Board member would be responsible, but since Ms. Bock has recently resigned, they need to reassign Bridle Estates, which was hers. The property is contiguous with the Wright Farm, and there have been no recent issues at Bridle Estates. Mr. Carney stated he would like to get more familiar with the Farmland properties, and he would be willing to take on that responsibility. Mr. Blank stated he contacted Doug Wright about the USDA survey, and he responded immediately and was very helpful and cooperative.

Red Tag Program

On April 19 Mr. Steadman received twenty-three 'red tags' from the PA Game Commission covering four Farmland properties – Longshore, Leedom, Clearview, and Makefield Brook. Sam Stewart holds the Permit. Nineteen of the twenty-three tags have been distributed to sub-permittee hunters. Mr. Steadman submitted the April Red Tag Report to the Game Commission as required at the end of each month. No deer were harvested in April. Ten of the nineteen tags were distributed to BOWMA for use on the Leedom property. Last year BOWMA was quite successful in using the tags.

The red-tag hunting season is short, expiring May 15, resuming July 1 and ending Sept 18. Red tags are for antlerless deer only by archery only in LMT. Each red tag hunter needs to carry the Game Commission permit for that parcel of land with required signatures. Mr. Steadman gave each hunter a copy of the necessary permit along with the 'red tag.'

Mr. Carney stated if there is interest in additional locations, Stackhouse is a potential parcel since Mr. Kaplan is interested in having his property hunted. Mr. Steadman stated we had not applied for red tags for the Stackhouse property, but could do so if there is an interest. One tag is issued for every five acres of crop land.

There was no one from the public wishing to speak at this time.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS: Mr. Blank

- Mr. Blank – Contact Mr. McCartney regarding education/orientation of prospective Board members
- Mr. Carney – Contact Mr. Majewski about the driveway to be installed at the Bean Farm as well as tree issues, stormwater run-off, the property line, and maintaining the farming buffer area.
- Mr. Carney – Contact Mr. Corcoran to revise and finalize the Corcoran Agreement.

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- Mr. Blank – Advise Ms. Blundi that some Farmland Board members would like to participate on the Ad Hoc Committee depending on what is involved.
- The Board – Re-assigned Bridle Estates to Mr. Carney.

There being no further business, Mr. Blank moved, Mr. Carney seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dennis F. Steadman, Acting Secretary