

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC.
MINUTES – NOVEMBER 19, 2024

The regular meeting of the Lower Makefield Farmland Preservation, Inc. (Farmland) Board of Directors (Board) was held in the Municipal Building on November 19, 2024. Mr. Blank called the meeting to order.

Those present:

Farmland Preservation, Inc.: Michael Blank, President
Dennis Steadman, Vice President
George Heinze, Secretary (left meeting in progress)
Dan Bankoske, Treasurer
Sean Carney, Member

Others: Daniel Grenier, Supervisor Liaison

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Heinze

Mr. Steadman moved, Mr. Blank seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of September 17, 2024.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Mr. Bankoske

Income/Expenses for October – November, 2024 – The latest Invoice from Corcoran Landscaping in the amount of \$1,175 was paid. This was for the latest round of buffer maintenance. There is a PennDOT fee for engineering work that needs to be paid.

Update on Legal Review of LMFP, Inc. Structural Documents – In the next week or two Mr. Bankoske will send an e-mail to the Board with the final policies with notes for the Board to review, and these policies can be discussed at the January meeting. These policies include: Conflict of Interest Policy, Investment Policy Statement, Document Retention Policy, and Public Inspection/Disclosure Policy and Procedure Statement. The Board worked with the attorney reviewing the existing policies and there was an Executive Session to discuss those policies. After discussion on the updated policies at the public meeting in January, the policies will be considered for adoption.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC.
MINUTES – NOVEMBER 19, 2024

UPDATE ON WRIGHT FARM DEVELOPMENT PLANS: Mr. Blank

Earlier this year engineering Plans were sent out, and the Board provided comments. An updated Plan was provided, and the Board sent revised comments on July 12. Mr. Majewski organized a walk-through on November 6 with Mr. Majewski, Mr. McLoone, Mr. Doug Wright, the farmer whose property is being developed, Mr. Joe DeLuca, the developer, and Mr. Justin Geonnotti, from Dynamic Engineering.

A summary had been provided to the Board of what had been said verbally to be confirmed in writing. Mr. Majewski will request that the developer and their agents respond to all of the Boards that had comments. As to open space for farming, 25% of the land was mandated to be preserved as open space which equals about 5.6 acres. When the Board first saw the Plan, it was not felt to be conducive to farming because the dimensions were too narrow for farm equipment to be moved around; however, the new Plan, to be re-confirmed, has been re-configured to allow for 125' of space at its narrowest which should be sufficient to get in farm equipment. In addition the Township expressed an interest, to be approved by the Board of Supervisors, for farming to be done there and to have Farmland Preservation, either by Easement or actual transfer of land have and oversee that property. Mr. Blank stated the question is whether that land could be deemed to be contiguous with Bridle Estates since the By-Laws require a minimum of ten acres for Farmland Preservation to assume a parcel. If it is judged to be contiguous, that would be more than ten acres.

It was also stated at the walk-through that the access for traffic to the new development will not be via Route 332, but it will be from the back side through Surrey Lane. Farming access to the Farmland parcel, Bridle Estates, will still be maintained as Patterson Lane will be maintained. There was also discussion about a gate being installed there. The Township is open, with Board of Supervisor approval, to granting Farmland an Easement or an outright transfer to Patterson Lane to get farming access adding it would be for emergency access as well. There was also discussion about the .3 acres that connects to the (Kimmel) Farm, and they would be open to transferring that to Farmland as well.

Curb cuts were included in the Board's comments to make sure that they would be wide enough to get farm equipment through there, and it was indicated that they would be included. With regard to the buffer the Board was concerned that a little over an acre of Farmland's Bridle Estates property would be lost if the buffers were on the Farmland side of the property line, and Mr. DeLuca had stated that they were planning on putting the buffer on their side to be bounded by a split-rail fence; and then as the property is laid out now, there is a road/hardened-soil area where trucks and farm equipment can drive

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC.
MINUTES – NOVEMBER 19, 2024

so there is almost 35' between where the nearest tree could be planted and the cropping area. Additionally, Lower Makefield indicated they would take into consideration trees that would not provide too much shade for the crops.

New Plans were to be generated last week coming from the developer and the developer's engineer.

It was requested that they include in the Homeowners' Agreement a clause that the buyers of these properties know that they are bordering active farmland and that there is no trespassing, and Mr. DeLuca had no problem with including that.

Mr. Steadman stated the new Plan still needs to go through the review process and get approval from the Township, and Mr. Blank agreed.

UPDATE ON LEEDOM DRIVEWAY ACCESS PROJECT: Mr. Blank

PennDOT indicated this afternoon that they wanted their payment for review of the project, so the Plans as submitted to PennDOT can be considered for approval. Formal approval will be received once the fee is sent to them. The Plans will then go to the Bucks Conservation District for their approval of the Erosion and Sediment review. Mr. Blank stated we first had to be approved as a cooperator farmer and given a number, and that gave us the ability to not have to pay a fee for the Conservation District review. Mr. Blank and Mr. Carney had been on the property with a representative from the Conservation District earlier, and he indicated at that time that he did not think that there were any issues. If approval is received from the Conservation District, the next step is to go to the Township for the Permit.

The quotes from asphalt and construction firms for this project came in quite high so Mr. Blank is now getting quotes from smaller firms who might be able to do the digging and put in the gravel and then sub-contract to a paver, and it is felt the bids might be lower than what were submitted before.

NEW LEASES FOR 2025: Mr. Steadman

Of the nine parcels there are two parcels where the Lease is not going to be renewed as of December 31 of this year. Bids were sought on those parcels. The first parcel is the Bridle Estates parcel, which is behind Doug Wright's farm where there is 40 acres of preserved farmland.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC.
MINUTES – NOVEMBER 19, 2024

Mr. Heinze left the meeting at this time.

Three Bids were reviewed and were reviewed on the basis of the economics of the Bid, the quality of the Bidder, and giving a preference for farmers based in Lower Makefield. There was a range of Bids, and the highest was from Shady Brook Farm, which was unanimously selected by the Board of Directors. They will be leasing the property starting on January 1, 2025. It is a ten-year Lease, which is being drafted for review and signature by Shady Brook. Mr. Steadman stated we are excited to have Shady Brook as a tenant farmer on our preserved farmland as they have been important farming member of our community for a long time. Notification went out today to all Bidders of this decision.

The other parcel is Heather Ridge, which is accessed off of Heather Ridge Drive. It is a total of 58 acres, of which approximately 45 is tillable. It has been farmed by Tom McGowan and is contiguous with his farm. The successful Bidder for this parcel was Tim and Sam Stewart of Charlann Farms, who currently lease the majority of our farmland, and are a quality operation and a very good tenant with whom we have excellent relations. They provided an excellent Bid. Mr. Steadman stated we are excited to have them expand their footprint and continue their farming operations in Lower Makefield.

WINTER PROJECTS: Mr. Carney

As has been done over the past years, Corcoran Landscaping will be hired for ten days to perform buffer maintenance and work on the properties that cannot be done during the farming season. Mr. Carney stated he believes that we are heading in a direction that we will be able to use less time in the years to come if there are no new large issues. He stated in the past, there were some projects that they could not get to and had to be holdovers; however, last year there were no holdover projects, and looking at this year's list, they should be able to achieve this work inside of ten days. Mr. Carney stated he has been keeping a list throughout the year from e-mails, phone calls, etc. of work to be done. He stated this includes 1616 Fairfield where there are dead trees on the Bond Farm, an area behind Colavita's Christmas tree farm at the back wood line which has dead branches and branches that are creating a lot of shade, the Bond Farm retention basin work, 1775 Greenbriar Court where work needs to be done, and filling in some holes throughout the buffer area that have gotten large and are causing issues for the smaller mowers that are being used. Mr. Carney stated when there was a site visit at Heather Ridge, Mr. Corcoran asked for two days of work there to prepare for taking care of that buffer with the type of equipment that he will be using.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC.
MINUTES – NOVEMBER 19, 2024

Mr. Carney stated at this point eight to nine days will be needed and the other one to two days will be held for issues that may come up or if one of the projects on the list takes longer than anticipated.

Mr. Steadman asked if we are now in the winter season and if there is a time when they will start using these days. Mr. Carney stated he advised Corcoran that the Board was meeting this evening; and once the list was complete, he would contact them and go over a plan. He added he usually allows them to decide when they want to do the work. He stated they will not work right now at Colavita's since this is his busy season, and they like to do this work when the ground is frozen. They will perform the work between now and well before the planting season so they are out of the farmers' way.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Blank stated Dumack Engineering was the low Bidder to do a survey at Heather Ridge, and we contracted with them to survey the line between Mr. McGowan's property which is contiguous with Heather Ridge. They will put stakes at the corners as well as halfway between the corners. Mr. Blank stated they will go out next Tuesday to look at access to the upper field and also Mr. McGowan wants to discuss the contours that he has put in for drainage and how that will work now that another farmer will be working the contiguous field. Mr. Stewart will attend on Tuesday as well.

Mr. Blank stated we will also need to discuss with Mr. Corcoran how that boundary, which is mostly in an open field between the two farms, will be maintained.

Mr. Steadman asked that since there are new farmer tenants on two properties, if we should send a letter to those residential neighbors bordering those properties advising them of the new tenant. The Board agreed that it would be good to be proactive and communicate with the residents about this change.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS: Mr. Blank

1. Mr. Blank – Add document review to the January Agenda
2. Mr. Blank and Mr. Heinze – Send letters to Bridle Estates and Heather Ridge neighbors about the change in farmers.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC.
MINUTES – NOVEMBER 19, 2024

There being no further business, Mr. Carney moved, Mr. Steadman seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

George Heinze, Secretary