

LOWER MAKEFIELD FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC.
MINUTES – MARCH 18, 2025

The regular meeting of the Lower Makefield Farmland Preservation, Inc. (Farmland) Board of Directors (Board) was held in the Municipal Building on March 18, 2025. Mr. Blank called the meeting to order.

Those Present:

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

Absent: Matt Ross, Supervisor Liaison

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Heinze

Mr. Blank moved, Mr. Steadman seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of January 21, 2025.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Mr. Bankoske

Income/Expenses for February – March, 2025 - \$1,400 was paid to Dumack Engineering for the driveway project on Leedom, \$12,000 was paid to Corcoran Landscaping which was part of the winter work project, and \$408 was paid to McNees and Wallace, which is the law firm that is working on the legal document. While \$1,064.60 was paid to Bob Shaw Signs, Farmland will be receiving a check for that so it will be a net zero. This relates to the sign on the Radio Tower parcel that someone hit, and the company who employed the individual who hit the sign is reimbursing Farmland for the cost.

Mr. Steadman stated the expenditures this past month are approximately equivalent to our entire rental income for the year. He stated since we spend more than we take in each year, we need to be responsible stewards of our assets; and he believes that we are.

Approval of LMFP, Inc. Structural Documents – Final versions of the Conflict of Interest Policy, the Document Retention Policy, the Investment Policy, and the Public Inspection Disclosure Policy and Procedure were e-mailed to the Board. The Conflict

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of Interest Policy, the Document Retention Policy, and the Public Inspection Disclosure Policy and Procedure are fairly generic, and in good order.

The Investment Policy is memorializing what has been in place by way of meeting Minutes and discussion over the years, but it was never documented in a formal, stand-alone policy. The Investment Policy was drafted by the Board's attorney with input from the Board.

The Board discussed these documents in the fall, and Mr. Bankoske proposed that these policies be adopted tonight.

Mr. Bankoske moved, Mr. Heinze seconded and it was unanimously carried to adopt the four policies.

Mr. Bankoske was thanked for his work on this project. Mr. Bankoske stated as part of the Investment Policy, the Board is to review the Policy on an annual basis; and this could be an Agenda item for the next meeting and also include a review of the performance of our current investment portfolio. Mr. Blank stated signatures are required on the documents, and Mr. Bankoske agreed to send them out via Docusign. Signed documents will be in the SharePoint site, and will be provided to the attorney by Mr. Bankoske.

CORCORAN PROJECTS: Mr. Carney

The 2024/2025 Winter Work Project was put together which is traditionally ten pre-paid contracted days with Corcoran Landscaping. Corcoran was given six jobs, three of which being more detailed jobs than traditionally. He stated they took care of the dead trees at 1616 Fairfield which was requested.

Colavita Farm Tree Limbing - Work was done along the entire back line of Colavita's Christmas Tree Farm, and any of the branches that were growing over and shading the Christmas trees were removed. He stated this was a bigger project than originally anticipated since some of the trees had to be completely topped off. This required an additional two days of work, and this was granted with the Board's approval; and instead of ten days, twelve days of work was actually done, and that is reflected in the Treasurer's Report of having paid Corcoran \$12,000, and not \$10,000.

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Bond Farm Drainage – A lot of work was done behind 1775 Greenbrier Court as well as on the retention basin which has been a continuing problem. A waterway was built for the water to make its way to the basin when there is heavy rain. Debris was also cleared out and water routed to the low point which was the original low point when the basin was built.

Holes Filled in Buffer Areas - Some holes were also filled in the buffer area; and while they did not get all of that work done, they did fill the worst holes. Mr. Corcoran has indicated that when he has dirt available from jobs, he will dump some of it at each of the farms in the buffer areas where work still needs to be done.

There are no major projects to be pushed off to 2025/2026 other than filling some holes. All of the jobs that the Board was contacted about by neighbors were completed.

Heather Ridge Limbing, Buffer Maintenance – Two days were allocated to Heather Ridge since Corcoran will be taking over that buffer area with the transfer of the Lease. The area was cleaned out so that it can be taken care of in a manner similar to that of the other buffers. The trees did not need to be trimmed as high as anticipated because Corcoran uses lower equipment than what was previously used.

Mr. Steadman noted the back yards of the houses on Heather Ridge Drive. He stated when they were on the site with the Stewarts, they were concerned about the height of some of the pine trees which cast a lot of shade on the crops. He noted the topping off of the trees done at Colavita and asked if that should be considered for this property as well. Mr. Carney stated once the Stewarts start farming this and see what is happening, we can consider a plan as to what to do next year. He stated whenever they go back there to do any work, there does not seem to be stunted growth of the corn in that area.

HEATHER RIDGE ACCESS: Mr. Steadman

As discussed previously, there is an old driveway that could potentially be restored although it has not been used for about sixty years. Bulldozer work is needed to clear the area and recreate the old original driveway to give access to the back fields. The Stewarts took a bulldozer operator out to the property recently, and he wants to review the project with the Board in more detail before he can bid

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on the project. A tentative date has been set to meet on the property at 10:00 this Saturday (3/22/25), and Board members were welcome to come. The Stewarts will be invited to attend as well. The bulldozer operator indicated that he believes that there will be some tree work that he will want done first by Corcoran or whoever the Board chooses.

Recreating the driveway will allow farm equipment to handle the angle and slope of access to the back as they go down the ridge and back up. This also requires access over a low swale as was discussed previously. While originally Mr. Steadman felt that the bulldozer operator could recreate the driveway this spring and then the address the swale access, depending on the plan, we may want the bulldozer to go out once and do everything at the same time which would be more efficient.

Mr. Blank stated it may be necessary to have dirt and rock pushed up to get swale access and it may also be best to wait to have the landscaper do any work at this time or it may just grow back. Mr. Steadman stated he would like to get a bid at this time from the bulldozer operator, but not schedule any of the work until a decision has been made on the swale access so that the bulldozer can be on site once and not twice. The best way to access the swale is still an open question. Several Board members felt it was important that the Stewarts be present at the meeting with the bulldozer operator on Saturday. (During the meeting the Stewarts contacted Mr. Steadman and agreed to attend on Saturday at 10:00)

WRIGHT FARM OPEN SPACE: Mr. Blank

The DeLuca development is going through the approval process with the Township, and the Board provided comments. Board members had met with the developer, and Mr. Blank met with the engineer and Mr. Joe DeLuca. They accepted all of the “must haves” that the Board asked for including the access through Patterson Lane to our farm field. Farmland has not lost any acreage due to installation of buffers. There will be no tree or shrub planting on the Farmland side of the fence on the northern side of the development. The new plans have just a fence and no plantings on either side, but on the western side, there are a few properties that show shrubs planted on the residents’ side of the fence. DeLuca is proposing to put up a split rail fence with wire mesh. In the area where there are no shrubs planted for buffering, there is an access road that will act as a buffer anyway to

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access what will be the fence between the DeLuca property and the Farmland Bridle Estates field. They also agreed to put in the Homeowners' Association Agreement that the residents understand that there is a farm field, there is to be no trespassing, and they acknowledge that they are living next to an active farm property.

With regard to the open space, the Planning Commission is recommending that it be left as open space, and that trees be planted along Yardley-Newtown Road which will throw shade to the north onto the open space. They are also adding a buffer of shrubs and plantings between the new houses and the open space. With these plantings, the shortest planned distance of 125' will be cut down further. Mr. Blank stated he does not feel it is practical for the Board to push for this to be farmed, and he feels the Board should turn its attention to perhaps preserving some land on the Torbert property. He stated the Board of Supervisors would have to agree to incentivize the Torbert Farm developer to create some open space since they are not obligated to do so.

Mr. Steadman asked with regard to the access to the field via Patterson Lane, what is happening to the solo resident in the back that uses that lane. Mr. Blank stated the new plan calls for that resident or anyone visiting that property to come through the re-aligned Patterson Lane which runs east/west and not the Patterson Lane that exists there now although visitors would probably have to get on a portion of that that is closest to the Farmland parcel. He stated to exit that resident's property, they would come across Patterson Lane to the west and then make a right on the new Surrey Lane extension and go out through the Bridle Estates development.

Mr. Steadman stated the existing Patterson Lane will be decommissioned as a road to be maintained and plowed in the winter, but it will remain as it is today which is adequate for farm equipment access. Mr. Blank agreed adding that it will be chained off near Route 332 and also near the existing residence. He stated he heard from Mr. Majewski that the Fire Department indicated that the current Patterson Lane was too narrow. Mr. Steadman asked if the developer will be installing the chains at either end, and Mr. Blank agreed. Mr. Steadman stated the Board should comment on the location of those chains to be sure that the farmer has adequate distance to pull in safely completely off the road before they have to stop and open the chain. He added the Flemings will be farming this property now, and it is not known the type of equipment they will be using. Mr. Steadman stated he will report back on the distance the Flemings need.

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Mr. Heinze stated how we are proceeding sounds reasonable. He asked if there is a start date when the developer will start on the infrastructure, and Mr. Blank stated they are hoping to start early next year (2026) although that will be determined based on all of the various approvals that need to be secured. Mr. Blank stated that the only way the residents of the new development can get to their homes is through the current Bridle Estates development.

Mr. Blank stated that to the west of the planned development there is approximately 2.5 acres of open space that is in the middle of the north/south border of the development that does not back up to any houses. He stated there is a slight rise shown on the Plans that farm equipment would have to get up to get to that, and he feels we should inform the Tanners who are farming Ms. Kimble's property currently to start discussions with DeLuca about perhaps using some of that ground for their farming as well. Mr. Steadman stated since Ms. Kimble was involved with the Board in the early discussions, it may be appropriate to brief her on Farmland's status, and also discuss the 2.5-acre issue as well. Mr. Blank agreed to do that.

Mr. Carney left the meeting at this time.

LEEDOM DRIVEWAY EXPANSION: Mr. Blank

Mr. Blank advised Mr. Tim Stewart and Mr. Carney that PennDOT approved the revised engineering plans last week. The next approval needed is from the Bucks County Conservation District, and Mr. Blank delivered the plans to their offices in Doylestown yesterday. He was advised their review will take 30 days, although it can sometimes take less time for a simple plan like this. Mr. Carney is starting discussions with Corcoran to get a bid as to what he feels it will cost. Mr. Blank stated that the paving contractors had quoted between \$10,000 to \$20,000 (post-meeting note: one quote was \$38,500). The engineering firm felt that a landscaper could do this for less, and Mr. Corcoran looked at the site before there was a finalized plan, and he indicated that he would be interested. A pipe has to be laid in the culvert, and a landscaper could sub-contract to a paving company for that and for the asphalt paving. The new plans were provided to Mr. Carney who will go out to the site with Mr. Corcoran in the next week. Once there is a contractor, Mr. Blank will put in for a Township Permit. It is possible that this could be completed by early to mid-May; but if not, it will be done after harvest.

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PennDOT indicated that the maximum width of a driveway that they would allow on a State road, like Dolington Rd is 20'. Mr. Blank stated we had originally put in for 35'. The current driveway is 12', and it will go from 12' to 20' with flanges as it hits the road. Mr. Blank stated Tim Stewart had indicated that he would be appreciative of anything we could do to expand the driveway, and he feels that this will be helpful.

Mr. Blank stated the Township was supposed to drop off millings to help out with the current situation, but he does not feel that was done; and he will follow up with Mr. Carney on that. Mr. Steadman stated there is a very large pile of millings on Patterson Farm that the Patterson Farm Implementation Committee has asked the Township to remove.

DAMAGE TO LMFP PRESERVED FARMLAND SIGN AT RADIO TOWER: Mr. Blank

A car took out the sign on February 20 when the roads were icy. The driver worked for New Hope Academy, a tutoring company, and they shared their insurance information. When they learned of the cost, the company decided to pay out of pocket; and a check should be in the mail. A check was already sent to Bob Shaw to pay for the sign. Mr. Blank stated New Hope Academy was quick and responsive to our needs. Assistance will be needed in putting the sign back in along Woodside.

Mr. Bankoske stated he saw that a Farmland sign at the corner of Woodside and Dolington on the Belden Farm was hanging off one day; and the next time he drove by, it was back up. Mr. Blank stated he has seen this as well, and he will follow up on this with the Township.

Mr. Blank stated he will contact the Township about getting the sign back up that was taken out by the car. Mr. Steadman stated that sign was between the driveway where the split rail fence is and Taylorsville Road, downhill from the driveway. Mr. Steadman stated when the Township is ready to install it, he will go with them to the site.

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LEASES FOR BRIDLE ESTATES AND HEATHER RIDGE: Mr. Steadman

This item is complete, and the Leases have been signed. Mr. Bankoske stated he will check on whether the rent checks were received, and advise Mr. Steadman who will follow up with the Flemings and the Stewarts if there is a need for follow-up.

LETTER TO NEIGHBORS: BRIDLE ESTATES: Mr. Heinze

Mr. Heinze has started on this and will get this finished. This is the letter to let the neighbors know that the farmer has changed, and the Flemings will be farming the property instead of Doug Wright who had farmed it for many years. Mr. Blank stated once the letter is done, Ms. McVan will send it out since she has the list of residents.

OTHER BUSINESS: All

Mr. Heinze stated in the past during late spring/early summer, the Board has done walkthroughs of the fields with some of the farmers; and he asked if that will be done this year. Mr. Blank stated he does not feel that is needed this year since we are covering each of the individual fields as needed. Other Board members agreed.

Mr. Blank stated he had indicated previously that we would be reviewing our ground rules/operating norms at an Executive Session; however he did not want to call an Executive Session just for that. He stated if there is a need for an Executive Session at some point in the future, he will include that at that time.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS: Mr. Heinze

1. Mr. Bankoske – Send out a Docusign request for the documents approved tonight which will then be placed in the SharePoint site
2. Mr. Blank – Follow up with Mr. Carney on the status of the millings to be used at the Leedom driveway
3. Mr. Bankoske – Confirm the receipt of Lease checks and reconcile the Leases that have been signed.

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4. Mr. Blank – Comment on the location of the chains at the Wright Farm Development after Mr. Steadman speaks to Paul Fleming.
5. Mr. Blank – Update Sharon Kimmell on the Wright Development
6. Mr. Blank – Follow up with the Township on hanging the Haupt sign
7. Mr. Blank – Put on Agenda for next meeting Investment Policy review and investment performance.

There being no further business, Mr. Steadman moved, Mr. Blank seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

George Heinze, Secretary