

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
AD HOC PROPERTY COMMITTEE
MINUTES – JANUARY 13, 2022

A meeting of the Ad Hoc Property Committee of the Township of Lower Makefield was held in the Municipal Building on January 13, 2022. Ms. Sovinee called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Those present:

Ad Hoc Property Committee: Dennis Steadman, Chair
Fred Childs, Vice Chair
Bette Sovinee, Secretary
Sarah Daubert, Member
John Mohan, Member
James Nycz, Member
Jim Scott, Member

Others: Fredric K. Weiss, Supervisor Liaison

Absent: James McCartney, Supervisor Liaison

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Nycz moved, Mr. Mohan seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of December 8, 2021 as written.

UPDATES AND DISCUSSION:

Update on Bank Barns: Mr. Childs

Ms. Sovinee stated Mr. Childs had asked Jeff Marshall, formerly of the Heritage Conservancy, to attend and provide an update on bank barns. Mr. Marshall stated he was President of the Heritage Conservancy for the last ten years, and has since retired. He stated he is also the founder of the Historic Barn and Farm Foundation of Pennsylvania, a past President of the National Barn Alliance, which is a Nation-wide organization, and a past Board member of Preservation Pennsylvania. He stated he preaches barn preservation throughout the Country.

Mr. Marshall stated he was previously before the Ad Hoc Property Committee to provide background information on historic resources and house museums. He stated he was advised that the topic of barns was going to be specifically addressed, and he is present this evening as a barn preservation advocate to discuss how to make a barn economically viable when it is not used for its original purpose.

Mr. Marshall stated Mr. Childs had sent him the list of options which the Committee had put together, and he has experience with a number of them. He stated all but the first and last options on the list involve some adaptive re-use. He stated a barn is a use; and once the barn structure is not used for the purpose of storage of grain, animals, etc. it becomes another use under Zoning and would be required to adhere to fire egress, fire suppression, and other regulations that would be required of any use involving assembly.

Mr. Marshall stated the Heritage Conservancy owns a number of historic buildings, and they needed to address how to preserve the character of the building and make it economically sustainable. He stated you need to consider what comes first – protecting a historic resource or the economics of the situation. He stated there needs to be a united vision of what is most important. He stated he has seen a number of adaptive resources for barns throughout the Country, where at the end, you do not know that it was a barn; and it is instead a “nice, big, timber-frame structure.” He noted the Heritage Conservancy owns a large, beautiful barn in Warwick Township that has sat vacant for twenty years because they cannot come to a consensus as to how to move forward, so Lower Makefield is not alone. He stated it is difficult to justify spending money unless there is a use for a structure.

Ms. Sovinee asked for an example of a success story in Bucks County, and Mr. Marshall noted the 1920 barn used by the Bucks County Audubon Society in Solebury. He stated the issue with most barns is their vast size and issues with regard to heating and cooling and not dividing up the spaces that give the barn character. Ms. Sovinee asked the condition of that barn, and Mr. Marshall stated there were no structural issues; but the issue was “shoehorning” the use they wanted into it. He stated it was a relatively small, three-bay, ground barn, and they did put in a balcony. He stated character in a barn is generally expressed by having its timber frame still visible.

Mr. Marshall stated Lower Makefield has Pennsylvania bank barns where the bottom levels were used for stabling and the second level used for hay.

Ms. Daubert asked what the Audubon Society is using the barn for, and Mr. Marshall stated they are using it for their offices. Ms. Daubert asked if there is anything there for the public, and Mr. Marshall stated there are some exhibits. He stated restrooms were put in.

Mr. Steadman asked if there are any examples of successful re-use of the kind of Pennsylvania bank barns like we are dealing with. Mr. Marshall noted Carousel Village in Wrightstown Village which is used as a Retail space. He also noted La Stalla in Newtown with the restaurant on the lower level, and a yoga studio/ Retail on the second floor. He stated there is also a barn on Langhorne-Yardley Road in Middletown in one of their parks although he is not sure what they have done with it. He stated in Tyler State Park they do not use any of their historic barns other than the stable.

Ms. Sovinee asked Mr. Marshall for an estimate of the cost to convert, however, Mr. Marshall stated he could not give an estimate as it depends on what they are trying to do. He stated preserving a shell without installing plumbing, heating, etc. would be different from some other use.

Mr. Marshall stated years ago when he was involved with Lower Makefield putting together a report on all of their historic properties, the Township hired a consultant to do an in-depth analysis of the Elm Lowne barn, and the Township should still have that analysis. Ms. Sovinee stated that is now privately owned. Mr. Marshall stated the Township commissioned an in-depth study of it before they sold it.

Mr. Childs stated a determination of the end use of the barns is important.

Ms. Sovinee asked if the process should be a determination of the end use and then get engineering studies. Mr. Marshall stated you need to know the physical characteristics of the building you are dealing with so they are concurrent paths. He stated they need to consider what they want to do with the building and if it is suitable for that type of use. Ms. Sovinee stated if the recommendation is for a certain end use, they need to advise the Board of Supervisors that they need to do engineering studies as well. Mr. Marshall stated they also need to consider Zoning and what is economically viable.

Mr. Marshall noted the Pricket Preserve property being developed in Lower Makefield by a for-profit developer. Mr. Nycz stated the barn on that property is in a very different condition than our barns. Mr. Marshall stated that the

developer's path forward is to recoup their investment and maximize their return. He stated the Township is looking at a community asset, and there is an ever-diminishing supply of these buildings. Mr. Nycz stated currently you cannot see the barn from the street at Prickett Preserve while the Township barns are very visible. Mr. Nycz stated the barn at Prickett Preserve is in much better condition and has been in use up until the time it was sold as it was used to show antiques and had already been adapted.

Mr. Marshall stated with regard to re-use of barns, people often suggest a museum; but similar to a house museum, that is not sustainable if you are depending on charging people to come in which usually only provides 10% to 12% of the costs, adding the costs of maintaining these buildings are "phenomenal." Mr. Marshall stated he did not see a barn museum as one of the potential uses, but Mr. Nycz stated they did list education which would be a more active use such as by a 4H group, agricultural schooling, Scout groups etc. so it would be less than a formal museum. Mr. Marshall stated those uses would not generate a high amount of revenue either.

Mr. Steadman stated they touched on a fundamental issue when there was discussion about working on the engineering and use planning, and the Township would need to spend money on cost estimates. He stated the Ad Hoc Property Committee has no decision-making authority or any budgets. He stated they are at the conceptual stage which is the first stage. He stated once there is a vision, you would lay out a detailed plan with a budget, and then you would execute. He stated we are at the conceptual stage where we are trying to evaluate different concepts and potential uses; but in order to evaluate that, we need to have at least ball-park estimates on whether the potential use is feasible or not as we would not want to present an idea to the Board of Supervisors without knowing approximately what that could cost to show that it is potentially affordable.

Mr. Steadman stated if someone were to indicate that they wanted to have a restaurant or brewery at one of the barns, he does not know how much that would cost although he feels that you could build a new building of the same size for a small fraction of what it would cost to re-fit an old, existing structure to the same use. He stated when we look at business opportunities we need to be realistic about the ROI that anyone would get from a business whether it is Retail, a restaurant, etc. He stated if they are to force a business into a structure that would be more expensive to retrofit than it would be to build from scratch, they are setting the capital hurdle that much higher. He stated if the barns need plaster walls, A/C, plumbing, sprinkler systems, and multiple egress for fire, it would be a small fraction to build that from scratch.

Mr. Marshall stated he would suggest doing some outreach to see if there are farmers who might want to use these barns as well as to restaurateurs and others who have done a similar project to see what ideas are possible.

Mr. Nycz asked Mr. Marshall if he has any examples of barns that have fallen into similar non-use and have been revived for some farming capacity. Mr. Marshall stated his own barn was about to collapse, and he was able to purchase some additional land so that he could have horses on his property since within his Zoning District he was not able to do much else. He added Lower Makefield is fortunate in that the properties are in an area that is open since anything that brings in income brings in noise and other disturbance to the neighbors including traffic. He stated this happened to the Audubon Society when they had events, and neighbors came out to fight that. He stated he was involved in a project in Wrightstown where the neighbors came out and stated they would rather see houses than horses. He stated you need to be prepared for unexpected responses from a certain segment of the population who are entitled to their opinion. He stated he had neighbors who fought what he was doing at his property because he had horses.

Ms. Sovinee asked Mr. Marshall the cost to renovate his barn, and Mr. Marshall stated he is still doing it twenty years later. He stated he has a metal roof on his barn rather than the wood shingles. He stated it is made for the horses on the lower level and he has storage above.

Mr. Marshall stated there are potential opportunities for someone who wants to have an equestrian facility. He stated he had advocated for putting the Satterthwaite property into private hands because it is difficult to get someone to invest in a building that they do not own and there are difficulties with short-term and long-term Leases.

Ms. Daubert asked about a stable/equestrian/boarding use which is popular at this time. It was noted there is a facility boarding horses across the road currently. Mr. Nycz stated if they were to do that at the Township location, they would need some of the existing farmland to make space for the horses.

Mr. Nycz stated the Historic Commission did suggest working with the farmer who is already there as well as trying to get them as invested as possible into the maintenance of the buildings as well as the preservation of the farmland. Mr. Marshall stated that is an uphill battle since none of this is very profitable to the farmer to fix buildings. Mr. Nycz stated it would involve the Township as well to make an investment into the buildings.

Mr. Marshall stated most people who have animals want to be on site so that would involve Residential use as well. Ms. Sovinee stated the Stewarts who farm that property do not have animals.

Mr. Steadman stated he has spoken to the Stewarts a lot. He added that the bulk of this land is preserved farmland, and it can only be that if there is a farmer. He stated the Stewarts of Charlann Farms rent this land, and they would have interest in using either one of the barns for storage. Mr. Steadman stated it would need to be examined to insure that it is weight-bearing so that would be an investment in the barn to stabilize it for their use. He stated it would be a convenience for them to keep some equipment off of the roads going back and forth to their own property. Mr. Steadman stated the Stewarts could probably also make use the three-sided shed and P5 which would be convenient when they are harvesting. He stated they could therefore use three of the buildings for agricultural use which he feels is important. He stated we are trying to keep this as a farm. Mr. Steadman stated Lower Makefield does not really have a "farm" since a farm is made up of farmland, farm buildings, and a farmer; and if you do not have a farmer, you do not have a farm. He stated currently the Stewarts are the farmers for all of that land, but the Stewarts do not live on the property and live a mile away. He stated the Stewarts farm 1,000 acres in Bucks County, and this is only 180 of those acres so it will not drive their future. Mr. Steadman stated while he is passionate about keeping farms, they are actually keeping the farmland and they should keep as many farm buildings as the farmer can use. He stated he is concerned about the old buildings that the farmer cannot use. He stated this property can support a part-time farming tenant. He stated we are fortunate to have an active farmer willing to rent the property, and to his knowledge, he is the only farmer in Lower Makefield that has the next generation ready to step in who is Tim Stewart, who in his 30's and a Penn State Agricultural Grad. He stated all the other farmers are either retired or about to retire. He stated he feels they should do all they can to help the farmers use the property; but without a farmer living there, it is buildings and land.

Dr. Weiss stated at Satterthwaite there was no one living at the property, and he agrees that there needs to be someone living there to take care of the property.

Mr. Childs thanked Mr. Marshall for making this presentation in addition to the presentation he made in September which touched on a number of issues especially the lack of a sustainable use as a museum, living history

farm, etc. Mr. Childs stated what has been discussed by Mr. Marshall and Mr. Steadman refers not just to the barns but to a lot of the other buildings as well.

Mr. Mohan stated he has been trying to reach out to someone who would be willing to provide quotes to buy the wood from any of the buildings that might be taken down, and he asked Mr. Marshall if he knows of anyone. Mr. Mohan stated he did try JC Woodworking in Perkasie in November, but he has not been able to connect with them since then. Mr. Marshall stated the vast majority of people in that business will take down your barn at no charge in exchange for the wood. Mr. Marshall stated there is also Hartland Salvage in Montgomery County that could be contacted.

Historical Sub-Committee Update: Mr. Nycz

Mr. Nycz stated they looked at the names of all of the houses on the properties. He stated they used "Patterson Farm" to describe the entirety of the farmstead. He stated they went with the name the "Joseph Yardley House" rather than the Janney-Brown/Yardley House because the Yardley family owned the property for the longest period of time, and the current appearance of the building was made possible by the Yardley family. Ms. Sovinee stated the 1830 addition was put on by Janney; and Mr. Nycz stated while he agrees, it was purchased by Joseph Yardley who then unified the façade of the house.

Mr. Nycz stated they also wanted to use the name "John Tunnicliff Cabin" to describe the caretaker's cottage on the property to bring it in line with its historic ownership and also with the naming convention of the other buildings which are also named by their prominent owners. Mr. Nycz noted that the Tax Records show that in 1693 Tunnicliff bought a piece of land from Thomas Janney, and they believe it was this property because of the look of the property and the fireplace being placed on the corner of the house. Mr. Nycz added that one of their recommendations under the Executive Summary was to do a dendrochronology study to look at the wood in the building to determine its age because it could be a very significant house and could be one of the oldest existing cabins in the County.

Mr. Childs stated in the Summary it was not clear where it stated that the cabin was primarily associated with John Tunnicliff with a sale in 1690's and the Janney purchase of the property in the early 1700's. Mr. Nycz stated because the cabin

could be historically-significant if the date is verified, they felt naming it after the Tunnicliffs as the first inhabitants would be more apt since they actually have records that they inhabited the house, and they are not sure it would make sense to name it after the Janneys since they obviously lived in the larger house on the property.

Mr. Nycz stated the second part of the report looks at the National Registry of Historic Places. He stated there are criteria for what is historically significant. He stated they also need to consider the implications of registering houses with the National Registry which includes Grants for the preservation of properties. He noted the Save America's Treasures Grant provides between \$125,000 and \$500,000 for preservation of such properties. He stated there are also other Grants that can be applied for to preserve the properties as well as to plan for the preservation. He stated if they wanted to do an archeological assessment, that could be done using a Planning Grant. He stated if they are thinking of adaptive re-use, that could be one way that the Township could help to front some of the costs for updating the properties. Ms. Sovinee asked if these would be Matching Grants, and Mr. Nycz agreed.

Dr. Weiss stated the Board of Supervisors has no problem with how they name and determine the historical accuracy of the buildings for Grants. He stated the reason for the Committee was to prioritize, using whatever information they have, and recommend to the Board of Supervisors what they should do with regard to what building they should start with, estimated costs, and the possible use.

Mr. Nycz stated one of the main reasons he brought up Grants and the Historic Registry is because one of the issues they discussed with re-use and sale, was how could the Township sell or re-use any of the buildings given their current state. He stated Grants are a viable option that they could explore as a Committee to recommend to the Township if National Registry would help bridge the cost gap later on. Mr. Nycz stated there are also examples of farms that are on the National Registry in Bucks County. He stated there are one hundred farms on the Registry, and twelve of them are located in Bucks County. He stated there are links for all of them as well as how they meet the criteria for historical significance. Ms. Sovinee stated she did look at those and noticed that a lot of them were privately-held, and Mr. Nycz agreed.

Mr. Nycz stated also included in the report are some recommendations primarily based on the feedback the Township had received on its previous Application of the farmstead to the National Registry of Historic Places. He stated one is to provide a professional archeological assessment of the structures. He stated the second is to describe the continuous agricultural contribution of the land, which seems to be the main significance of the property as being in continual agricultural use for three hundred years primarily by Quaker farmers which is very unique when looking at the farm properties on the National Historic Registry in Bucks County. He stated the third is describing its contribution to the nearby Historic District that exists in Edgewood. Mr. Nycz stated emphasizing those three in any Application would be very important. He stated what makes the property historic is primarily the agricultural aspect of the property.

Mr. Nycz stated they also recommend working with the farmers to determine how continued farming would look with any potential uses.

Dr. Weiss stated the vast majority of the land at Patterson Farm is dedicated for farming and it is under a Conservation Easement. Mr. Nycz stated they would want to insure that use of any of the structures would not disrupt the farming, and Dr. Weiss agreed. Dr. Weiss stated they want to get the structures to a state that they will be fixed and used continuously and not get to this point again.

Mr. Steadman thanked Mr. Nycz for the report. He stated he has no reason or basis to challenge the naming recommendations. He stated he sees no downside to the National Registration, but he feels the priority at this time is to focus on the use and get concepts and plans in place for the properties as opposed to spending energy on getting on the National Registry at this time. He stated getting on the National Registry could help with Grants; however, we are not in a position to write any Grants at this time since we need to have more certainty as to the use/intention of the buildings in order to ask for money.

Mr. Scott stated he would want to know if there are any downsides of Historical Registry and if there are stipulations or strings attached that could potentially eliminate uses from the list. Mr. Steadman stated the report seems to indicate that there would be no restrictions at all, and they could still even tear down a building on the Registry. Mr. Nycz stated as noted earlier a lot of the buildings on the National Registry are privately owned, and the Government would not be taking over a property when it is placed on the National Register. He stated the point is to encourage the owners of the property, in this case the Township, to preserve the property with Grant opportunities and match opportunities.

Slack & Satterthwaite Real Estate Report Update: Mr. Steadman

Mr. Steadman stated the Board of Supervisors made it clear to the Ad Hoc Property Committee that all options should be considered including sale of property. He stated the Report was provided and stands on its own. He stated the market analysis suggested that neither of those locations are suitable for private residences because wealthy people who would be interested in spending that kind of money would not choose to live in those locales.

Mr. Steadman stated it was indicated that the highest and best use for the Slack House would be event space which could be a restaurant tied to the Golf Course or part of a larger event space possibly managed by a wedding/event organization; and that would need to be determined. Mr. Steadman stated the setting and majestic quality of the Slack House would suggest that. Mr. Steadman stated the rationale of using the Slack House as an appendage to a bigger facility is because it will be quite expensive to renovate; and in order to achieve a return on investment, the return would be more attractive if there were several hundred people going through that business since a 60-seat restaurant would not have the same volume turn as a larger event venue.

Mr. Steadman stated there is a macro-proposal still to be coming from Spirit Golf which indicated they would provide some of the macro-economics on that type of event space.

Mr. Steadman stated on the Real Estate Report for the Satterthwaite House, given the condition and the location, the best opportunity would be if that parcel could be sold and renovated with some Historical Easements to maintain the look of the property for a light Commercial or Office space. He stated the Report seems to indicate that even that would be a stretch for that building because of its condition.

Mr. Mohan asked when they anticipate getting the report from Spirit Golf, and Mr. Steadman stated it was anticipated it would be received by December 31. He added he spoke to them over the holiday, and they indicated they would get it out as soon as they could but certainly by January.

Cost and Engineering Estimates: Mr. Steadman

Mr. Steadman stated Chance Worthington has agreed to provide ball-park estimates for three properties – the Slack House into an event venue/restaurant,

the Satterthwaite House into an Office whether it is used privately or by the Township, and the cost to restore the John Tunnicliff cabin, which seems to be in reach because it is small and has been in use. Historically, it seems that would be the most historical structure so that if there is one structure that they would like to evaluate for restoration, he feels that would be the building to consider.

Mr. Mohan asked when the Lease is up for the artist who is currently leasing that space; however, it was not known. Mr. Steadman stated he feels they can get that from Mr. Ferguson. He stated there would be a transition period necessary; however, before the Committee can make the recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to potentially restore that building, he feels they should have a handle on the amount of money that would be needed.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Steadman stated he would like to hear the Committee discuss some of the uses being considered.

Mr. Mohan stated if they are going to have the spaces open for public use at the Patterson side, he is concerned about the lack of parking adding that on the Satterthwaite side there are more options for parking availability. Ms. Sovinee stated when AOY has events they use the field between the hedgerow on the south side and the drainage creek and the start of the crop land. She stated it is the leach field so it cannot be plowed. She stated they have been able to park many cars there for their events. Mr. Mohan stated he would be concerned about parking there when it rains, and Ms. Sovinee agreed. Mr. Mohan stated if they are considering expanding the uses in that area, he feels they need to take that into consideration; and he does not see how that could happen without sacrificing farmland which is not an option.

Mr. Steadman stated the preserved farmland actually goes back a lot further than the crops are planted. He stated he has asked Mr. Ferguson to provide them with an overlay map of the preserved farmland versus the buildings. He stated Charlann is farming more than what is preserved. He stated there is flexibility to change the lay-out. He stated if public utilities and a driveway are coming in, there could be several yards of grass around the building before a split-rail fence that would offset the crops. He stated there should always be a buffer between the actual crops that is mowed so that sprays, etc. are not right up against the fence.

Mr. Steadman stated he believes the farmstead has latitude, and he feels out of those acres and the space coming up through the driveway from Mirror Lake Road, parking could be designed. He stated where the crops edges now are not where they have to be in the future, and those could be pushed back 10 to 40 yards.

Mr. Mohan stated he feels that 40 yards would get two rows of parking, and that would open up additional uses for that space.

Mr. Mohan stated for the other barn, he had heard that there were people in the area interested in opening up a brew pub; and they could put the brewery on the ground floor and the restaurant on the second floor, but he has no idea what that would cost. He stated they would definitely need sewer and water and utilities as well as fire suppression, etc. He questioned if they would lose the charm of the barn at that point. Mr. Mohan stated there would be sufficient parking for that use.

Mr. Childs stated with regard to the Slack House, they also need to consider parking if it is going to be an event space. He stated they had talked about using the available spaces they have for the Golf Course, but he does not feel that would be adequate. He stated if they were to add a large, new barn-sized structure behind the house, it may impact the look of the area.

Mr. Mohan stated he feels the best opportunity for the Slack House is to see if Spirit would take it over and run it. Ms. Daubert stated it would be good to have occupancy in it. Mr. Mohan stated it could be a profitable venue. Dr. Weiss noted that the Township owns the Golf Course and Spirit manages it. Ms. Daubert stated it could be expanded to include the Slack House. Ms. Sovinee stated they would have to consider what renovations would be needed, who would pay for the renovations, and how long the Lease would be in order to make it work for everyone. Ms. Daubert stated the more the Township spends, the higher the rent would need to be; and if the Township did not have to put in as much money, the rent could be less.

Ms. Daubert stated with regard to the Satterthwaite House, she is concerned that to restore the building it could cost nine times what it would cost to build a new building.

Mr. Nycz stated with regard to Patterson, he does not feel there will be one solution that solves the entirety of the property. He stated he feels that the farmer could use some of the buildings, AOY could use more of the buildings for their use, and the cabin could be used for some historical usage. He stated he agrees that the cost figures for the Satterthwaite are very high, but it is also the most visible.

Dr. Weiss stated the Board of Supervisors will probably be talking about money beginning next month as it relates to how much they are willing to allocate for renovations/restoration. He stated this will be discussed when the Board of Supervisors discusses what to do with the Sewer sale proceeds.

Mr. Scott stated he feels with regard to preservation, the Committee may need to decide that if they are going to preserve one structure, they may have to take down others in an effort to save whatever is deemed to be more important. He stated that could also open up parking and make it more manageable. He noted specifically the Satterthwaite corn crib which is not as much of a focus as preservation of the bank barn which is more visible from the roadway. Ms. Daubert stated she does not feel the corn crib is old enough to be considered historical. Mr. Scott also noted the pump house. He stated he would be an advocate for trying to preserve the more prominent structures, and to be more proactive in channeling resources and allocating dollars. Mr. Mohan stated before they get rid of the pump house, they would need to make sure that they get public water and sewer; and Mr. Scott agreed.

Mr. Steadman asked if resources were funneled to the big bank barn, and money was not spent on the smaller out-buildings, would there be a need to tear those down versus just letting them be there. He stated if they were to get into a dangerous condition, that would be different. Mr. Steadman stated it would take money to tear them down. Ms. Daubert stated those structures would just not be a priority.

Mr. Steadman stated there are some buildings that are not historic, and he noted the shed/garage where the Township stores equipment on the Satterthwaite property behind the bank barn. He stated it is a concrete block building from the 1950's/1960's. He also noted the pack house is a concrete building from the 1940's or 1950's, and he does not see that as a historic building. He stated he is not saying he wants to get rid of them. He stated they are not the same as the well house behind the Joseph Yardley House which is a historical building. Mr. Nycz agreed.

Mr. Nycz added that looking at the buildings individually, a building built in the 1970's as a garage is not going to qualify compared to the old residences; however, what the pack house and some of these other buildings do is contribute to the historic farmstead which is the main thread that ties together the historical significance of the Patterson Farm which is its agricultural use. He stated the question is how much can you remove and have it still have the agricultural significance. He stated he does not feel there is a need to demolish a building if it is still standing upright and not taking up any usable space. He stated the pack house is an example of a building that is close to being historical. He added that at one point it was housing for farm laborers as well as being a pack house which is crucial for farming.

Mr. Childs stated he agrees with a lot of the comments that have been made and there are different options for various buildings that we will have to pin down more as to what is really feasible and what it is going to cost the Township. He stated what we have now is that essentially most of the buildings have been out of use and "abandoned." He stated it is not an active farm per se, and we have a collection of buildings that used to be used in that respect. He stated they have learned that turning it into a living history museum is costly and not sustainable so they need to look at other options if they want to preserve the buildings as they are.

PUBLIC COMMENT

It was noted that an e-mail was received from Lora Tarantino, a Newtown Township resident. Mr. Steadman stated she indicated that she was very concerned about the preservation of Patterson Farm and its properties. Mr. Steadman stated he would comment that the Committee is as well which is why they are volunteering their time, and it is also why the Board of Supervisors had the vision to form the Committee in the first place.

Mr. Steadman stated Ms. Tarantino's first question has to do with whether the condition of the Satterthwaite House was documented when it was purchased by the Township in 1998. Mr. Steadman stated he does not know about that, but he does not believe that has any bearing on its condition today or the options moving forward.

Mr. Steadman stated she also asked if maintenance funding had been provided since the purchase by the Township, and Mr. Steadman stated he understands that there has been a Maintenance Budget by the Township every year, and they have been doing maintenance on the structure. He stated she indicated that she had learned that an engineering assessment was done two years ago for the Satterthwaite House, and she asked if that was done at Lower Makefield's cost.

Dr. Weiss stated the Township did pay for that. Mr. Steadman stated she asked if those findings are available to the public, and it was noted that they are.

Mr. Steadman stated Ms. Tarantino also asked if LMT sees a partnership role with Patterson Farm Preservation, Inc. in its future development of the properties on the land. Mr. Steadman stated this Committee does not speak for Lower Makefield Township, but the Committee itself is very open to working with any potential partner to jointly support or fund our goals of trying to balance the priorities of preserving our local agricultural history, achieving community utilization of the property, and being fiscally responsible. Mr. Steadman stated he has met with the President of that organization in a cooperative fashion, and the Committee believes in cooperating and being good neighbors.

Mr. Steadman stated Ms. Tarantino asked if when LMT purchased the land as open space was it discussed at a public meeting; however, Mr. Steadman stated he does not know although that has no bearing on today's issues. He stated she also asked what outreach is being done within Pennsylvania and area local historical institutions for guidance, and Mr. Steadman stated they have tapped into local experts including Jeff Marshall; and they will be making recommendations to the Township to apply for Grants from various institutions both State and County-wide. He stated it should also be noted that we are at a concept-recommendation stage, and engineering/architectural plans will come at the next stage which is the planning stage which will depend on the Board of Supervisors accepting, rejecting, and modifying the recommendations. He stated at this point the Committee is trying to develop concepts to see if the Township and its community resources can support the concepts.

Ms. Donna Doan stated Patterson Farm has been part of her life for the last sixty years. She stated her father farmed there, grew up there, and lived in the Satterthwaite House. She stated he also spent twenty years on the Farmland

Preservation Corporation in service to the Township. Ms. Doan stated along with neighbors she started Patterson Farm Preservation to advocate for the continued agricultural use of the Patterson Farm. She stated Delaware Valley University is an agricultural institution, and Tim Stewart who farms with Charlann is in a mentorship role there, and they do bring students out to the Farm. She stated she feels there is a lot of potential for activities to go on there for agricultural learning. She stated as we address the crisis of farmers and the lack of farmers in our Country with farmers aging out, we need to do everything we can to advocate for farming and keep farming viable in our community.

Ms. Doan stated Patterson Farm is in the top two percentile of fertility for soil content according to the United States Department of Agriculture. She stated the land has been farmed for almost three hundred fifty years. She stated we should be trying to stave off any encroachment as this Farm is in the Agriculture Security District which is an area meant specifically for agriculture and was placed in that District by Tom Patterson in 1997.

Ms. Doan stated Patterson Farm Preservation is ready, willing, and able to commence a project for dendrochronology with Mike Cuba, whose company is Transom, and he is a timber frame expert. She stated he does dendro-chronology studies and sends his samples to a laboratory at Oxford, England. Ms. Doan stated they would love to get into Satterthwaite and the Tunnickliff Cottage and do a research project partnering with Bucks County Community College who are already on board. Ms. Doan stated she will bring students out and have them work with Mr. Cuba so that they can see the sampling of the timbers and get the results so that there is good, solid, factual information before they go any further.

Ms. Doan stated the Historic Commission should weigh in the on the selection of any tenants going forward, and there should be an established, written criteria so that we know that the tenant and the farm will benefit each other. She stated she feels we should “keep everything as calm as we can.” She stated she has talked to a number of neighbors of the Farm, and they are not really supportive of any idea that will bring a lot of traffic to the Farm, and they have gone to Court over this issue before. She stated they love the Farm, and they feel that it increases their property values to have it there, to have it quiet, and to have it dark at night. She stated they are also glad to see BrightFarms leaving.

Ms. Doan stated Patterson Farm Preservation restored the one building behind the Satterthwaite House. She stated they re-built the floor and started to prime it, but they were stopped; and they would love to get back in there to finish it. She noted this building was the garage behind the Satterthwaite House with the well. Ms. Doan stated they will also tackle the corn crib if they are allowed. She stated they will straighten it and put a roof on it. She stated they will make it useful for storage. She stated the Township used to put their tractors in there, and they could do that again.

Ms. Doan stated her father paid to have the block house behind the Satterthwaite barn painted, and it is useful now. She stated some windows need to be repaired, and Patterson Farm Preservation will tackle that. She stated they can start to get this work done and it does not cost a huge amount of money.

Ms. Doan stated in April, 2015 or 2016, her group discussed with the Board of Supervisors the possibility of Satterthwaite House being conveyed to a 501C3. She stated at that time they did not have a 501C3, but the Board of Supervisors stated if they were to form it, they would consider it. Ms. Doan stated her group is still interested in that for the Satterthwaite parcel. She stated the Agreement of Sale is in at the Township, and the group's check is there, but it has not been cashed or returned so that is still an offer that is on the table for what to do with Satterthwaite. Ms. Doan stated they will fundraise and write Grants to get it done.

Mr. Steadman asked Ms. Doan if she is stating that they would be willing to pay for the dendrochronology study. He also asked how long that would take. Ms. Doan stated she believes it takes three months for the results to come back. She stated if they want to partner with Patterson Farm Preservation that is fine. She stated they did talk about costs with Mr. Cuba, and they could fundraise for that. She stated it is not a large expense, and it would give more information that would be useful as they direct the future of the buildings. Mr. Steadman asked Ms. Doan if she is saying that she has the funds to do that now, and Ms. Doan stated they do. Ms. Doan stated she believes that the information she sent included Mr. Cuba's proposal.

Mr. Steadman stated he agrees that the soil is among the best soil in the Country.

January 13, 2022

Ad Hoc Property Committee

FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

Ms. Sovinee stated the next two scheduled meetings of the Committee are January 27 and February 17 via Zoom. Ms. Sovinee asked when the Committee feels they will be ready to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. Dr. Weiss stated they could make their recommendations to the Board of Supervisors at the Board's first meeting in March which is March 2, 2022. Dr. Weiss stated they could also delay until March 16, which is the second meeting of the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Steadman stated they will look to get on the Board of Supervisors' Agenda on March 2 and have March 16 as a back-up.

There being no further business, Mr. Nycz moved, Mr. Mohan seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bette Sovinee, Secretary