

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC.
MINUTES – JULY 16, 2024

The regular meeting of the Lower Makefield Farmland Preservation, Inc. (Farmland) Board of Directors (Board) was held in the Municipal Building on July 16, 2024. M. Blank called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Those present:

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

Absent: 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 May 21, 2024.

APPROVAL OF COLAVITA LEASE: Mr. Steadman

The Lease has been expanded from seven acres to eight acres, and there is a new term as well as some additional conditions. The Lease will be sent to Mr. Colavita with a copy provided to the Board. The Lease is consistent with prior discussions. An Escrow was established several years ago to have funds available should the Lease be terminated so that the fields can be put back into cropping condition which could include digging up any stumps and removing trees. It is believed that the Escrow is sufficient to cover that contingency. Nothing is required of the Colavitas to refresh that Escrow.

Mr. Bankoske joined the meeting at this time.

Mr. Steadman moved, Mr. Heinze seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Lease as circulated and send for review by the Colavitas.

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FINAL UPDATE ON 2023 FLOODING ADJACENT TO THE NURSERY: Mr. Steadman

The area was assessed by the Bucks County Conservation District of USDA and the Director of Lower Makefield Public Works, and both concluded that the flooding that the neighbor experienced was not coming from the Farmland field but was an overflow capacity from the retention basin at the corner of the farm field and the adjacent neighborhood. During the 1,000 year storm, the retention basin was overwhelmed and released water as it was designed to do; and the neighboring property is in that path. The Farmland field does not represent a risk to the neighbors.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Mr. Bankoske

Income/Expenses for June-July, 2024 – Two checks in the amount of \$1,175 each were sent to Corcoran Landscaping for buffer maintenance. \$50.51 was sent in May to Bob Shaw Signs for the Houpt Farm sign for additional hardware. A checking account has been opened at WSFS to make paying bills on-line easier. The Escrow Account for Bob Colavita has been re-established and has a current balance of \$18,636. It is in a Treasury Money Market Fund.

Attorney Review of Revised Foundation Documents – The Board was provided documents showing the old and new files including the Conflict of Interest Policy, Document Retention Policy, By-Laws, Investment Policy Statement, and Public Inspection Disclosure. There have been a lot of additions to the By-Laws, re-ordering, and modernization, but the key existing components are still there. The Investment Policy Statement is new. Mr. Bankoske would like to work with one other Board member to further discuss the By-Laws and the Investment Policy Statement, and they will then be brought back to the full Board. The Conflict of Interest Policy, Document Retention Policy, and Public Inspection Disclosure could be reviewed by the Board now and considered for adoption at the next meeting. Mr. Blank agreed to work with Mr. Bankoske on the other two documents.

An attorney specializing in non-profits had been retained to take a comprehensive look at the documentation. There are some substantive changes by way of additions and some new language has been added but there are not substantive changes to existing provisions. Mr. Blank stated there is one section that cannot be changed without a Proposition voted on by the citizens, and that has not been changed.

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Mr. Blank asked the Board to review the documents other than the By-Laws and the Investment Policy so that they can be adopted at the next meeting.

LMFP COMMENTS ON RESUBMISSION OF WRIGHT FARM DEVELOPMENT PLANS: All

The Board initially commented on the plans; and while one of their comments was taken up, the rest were not. The revised plan was provided, and the Board submitted comments again on July 12. Mr. Majewski is arranging a walk-through of the property with DeLuca's engineer for the Committees that have comments. The Board's comments generally had to do with getting access for farmers to our parcel at the north end of the Farm and having Patterson Lane be the main access point. The Board also commented on having connectivity through Surrey Lane which will be extended for the Bridle Estates Development and wanted to make sure that there was sufficient width for farm equipment and curb cuts. There was no mention of the loss of Farmland cropland due to the buffer that had to be installed, and the Board commented that they wanted the developer to address that. The Board also commented on the type of fence to be put up, and the Board indicated that they prefer a storm/chain link-type fence. It was also noted in the comments that the Board also has prior approval of any vegetation that is planted in the buffer. The statement to be included in the Homeowners' Association By-Laws should indicate that the homeowners understand that they are living next to active agricultural land and what to expect as well as that there is to be no trespassing. The final comment was the request to discuss with the developer the open space that is in the current plan and whether that could be re-configured in some way to make it more amenable to actual farming as currently it is narrow and jagged. Once the date of the walk-through is known, Mr. Blank will advise the Board.

PROGRESS ON DRIVEWAY EXPANSION ON LEEDOM: Mr. Carney/Mr. Blank

The Board was approached by the farmers about expanding the landing pad and the driveway off of Dolington on Leedom's Farm for safety reasons and easier access for the equipment getting in and out of the driveway. Permits were needed to have millings dropped there, and the Stewarts will spread them and build a pad. The Board was asked to expand the driveway from the existing 18' to closer to 28' to 30' with an angle that would make it safer for the farm equipment entering and exiting the property on Dolington. Estimates were obtained by Mr. Blank for paving.

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The timing will be about twelve months out. A proposal will be put together for the Township and the farming tenants describing the extensiveness and cost of the plan with the hope being to come to an agreement as to the cost once there are real numbers.

Quotes have been received by three engineering firms, one of which is Dumack Engineering, a LMT resident who is very cooperative, appreciates the Board's mission, and wants to work with them. His proposal was almost half the cost of the other two engineering firms. His proposal does not include any revisions which may be required after PennDOT's review, and the engineering firm would go on an hourly basis to do any revisions required by PennDOT. Mr. Blank stated since this is a fairly straight-forward project he does not feel there will be any dramatic revisions, if any; and Heath Dumack indicated that he would work with the Board on that if revisions are needed.

Mr. Carney stated he feels the Board would need to be willing to pay for the cost of the entire project although he hopes that the Board will not have to pay for the entire cost. He stated the project is straight-forward and the use of the road is minimal as it is just used for farming which is an easier process for Permits. Mr. Blank stated the cost for everything is approximately \$15,000. Mr. Steadman stated he would support moving forward at this time.

Mr. Heinze stated he would be in support provided that it does not go over 20' since going over that may result in more cost. Mr. Carney stated when they went out and measured, the furthest they were extending it was 18', and the farmers were very happy with that adding that they would be satisfied with 13' to 15' as anything would make it significantly easier for them to get in and out of the driveway.

Mr. Carney asked about the culvert, and Mr. Blank stated that will be determined by the engineering firm. Mr. Blank stated the paving contractor will do the gravel base, the asphalt or compacted stone on top, depending on what is needed, and the pipe. That is included in the total cost of the project.

Mr. Blank stated with regard to Mr. Heinze's comment, we should look at if the square footage of what we will be doing fits within the exemption so that there is not a problem in getting it Permitted. He stated he will work with Dumack to make sure that we do not go over that amount. Mr. Carney stated he would also like to confirm the cost benefit of pavement versus compacted stone including not only the upfront cost but also the future maintenance costs for this size of equipment. Mr. Blank

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stated Harris Paving will be providing a cost for crushed stone and paving, and he will ask about maintenance. Mr. Carney stated they need to consider how little this is driven on but also with the tonnage that will be driving across this.

Mr. Blank stated he will follow-up with the engineer and the paving firm and provide the information to the Board via e-mail.

HEATHER RIDGE ACCESS AFTER CURRENT LEASE EXPIRES: Mr. Blank

The current farmer, Tom McGowan, will not be re-newing the Lease for next year. There is a problem of gaining access to the field over the concrete bridge that is in disrepair. There needs to be discussion about what needs to be done to be able to get equipment to the field. Mr. Bankoske suggested the Board visit the property with Mr. Majewski to see if there are other ideas for access points that might work. Mr. Carney stated after that they should walk the property with the Stewarts as they have recently purchased larger equipment, and they need to consider the clearance needed. Mr. Steadman suggested visiting the site with Mr. Majewski and Tim Stewart simultaneously. He stated there are a number of issues associated with the current access including the slope, trees that would have to be severely limbed or taken down, and the existing stream that could be high in the spring. Mr. Steadman stated access to the more forward field is not a problem, and the access to the back field is the issue. Since that back field has marginal soil, they should discuss what could be grown there and what would it be worth.

Mr. Bankoske stated he feels that any discussion with Mr. Stewart needs to have a caveat that this is for his input only, and it is not a guarantee of a Lease being offered. Mr. Steadman stated this is to get input from a farmer, and they could get input from Mr. McGowan as well.

Mr. Blank asked for help with Heather Ridge, and Mr. Carney agreed to help with this project.

OTHER BUSINESS: All

Mr. Carney stated he and Mr. Steadman have been discussing hunting on Beldon Farm (previously called Longshore), and they have decided to open hunting back

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up but do it at a slower pace with fewer hunters than in the past to try to alleviate some of the previous issues. Three hunters have been granted permission to hunt the property, and they have made Mr. Hirko aware of this since his property is in the middle of that area. Parking and some other details still need to be worked out. Hunting will be from elevated stands, and the hunters are aware of all of the laws. Once the hunters put their stands up, they will be tagged. Next year a fourth or fifth hunter may be added if it works out well this season. The hunters are aware that they cannot park in Mr. Hirko's driveway.

Mr. Carney stated Corcoran Landscaping did the second round of buffer cutting. Mr. Corcoran advised that there are certain areas in the buffer where large holes/swales are being created. He will visit the locations with Mr. Corcoran to mark the worst areas. Currently there is a light winter schedule, and possibly some of the larger holes could be filled in as part of a winter project. It is not known how these are being created, and a mower has even gotten stuck in a very large hole.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS: Mr. Heinze

1. All – Review documents provided by Mr. Bankoske so feedback can be provided and completed documents can be approved at the September meeting
2. Mr. Blank and Mr. Bankoske – Review the By-Laws and Investment Policy Statement for any further wording refinement and recommendations and provide that to the Board for review and approval moving forward
3. Mr. Blank – Work with Dumack on plans for Leedom's driveway and evaluate the asphalt versus crushed stone cost difference and ongoing maintenance costs. Project will be capped not to exceed anything that would require more detailed Permits, etc. for the work in that location
4. Mr. Blank – Arrange a walk-through with Mr. Majewski and Tim Stewart of the Heather Ridge field to initiate potential ideas and solutions for access. Available Board members can participate in that as well, and the date of the walk-through will be provided to the Board by Mr. Blank
5. Mr. Steadman – Send Lease to Colavita

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PUBLIC COMMENT

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

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

Respectfully Submitted,

George Heinze, Secretary

