

LOWER MAKEFIELD FARMLAND PRESERVATION, INC.
MINUTES – JULY 15, 2025

The regular meeting of the Lower Makefield Farmland Preservation, Inc. (Farmland) Board of Directors (Board) was held in the Municipal Building on July 15, 2025. Mr. Blank called the meeting to order.

Those present:

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

Absent: George Heinze, Secretary
Matt Ross, Supervisor Liaison

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Blank

Mr. Carney moved, Mr. Steadman seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of May 28, 2025.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Mr. Bankoske

Financial Updates – The only expense was the quarterly buffer maintenance fee in the amount of \$1,525 to Corcoran Landscaping. Mr. Carney stated this fee is four times a year during the crop-growing season at Corcoran's discretion to cut when needed, and it is split 50/50 between Farmland and the farmers.

Review of Current Budget, Expenditures, and 10-year Outlook – A balance sheet and income statement was shown looking out ten years. Mr. Steadman questioned the increase in revenue in 2030, and Mr. Bankoske stated if a new piece of land were purchased, it would be leased back out.

Related to this budget review and 10-year look ahead, Mr. Blank stated there could be a bad investment year, and Fidelity might do a Monte Carlo simulation for us to estimate probabilities of attaining our investment goals. Mr. Steadman stated over the last few years, there has been severe weather, and we have been accelerating tree expenditures particularly as the trees age. Mr. Carney stated \$15,000 has been plugged in for winter projects which he feels is the correct number since we have been doing \$10,000 and \$15,00 is a good yearly average going forward. Mr. Blank stated this document can be reviewed over time.

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OLD BUSINESS

Status update on access to Heather Ridge fields: Mr. Steadman

A contract was entered into with Premium Excavating, and work is scheduled for July or August depending on weather conditions. Mr. Steadman will follow up to make sure we are on the schedule. The cost is approximately \$11,000. Mr. Blank asked if they considered the weight that the trucks carry at full load, and Mr. Steadman stated they did consider that.

Status update on Expansion of Leedom field driveway: Mr. Blank/Mr. Carney
Mr. Blank stated this could cost between \$36,000 to \$50,000. He stated the engineering company was required to put together plans where the driveway matches the depth of material on Dolington Road, which is a State road, and needs to pass inspection by PennDOT. He stated the Board does not feel there is money to do this project this year, and it will be looked at again next year. The first deadline is the Conservation District where the Permit will expire in April, 2027. Mr. Blank stated that separately he put in a request to PennDOT about putting up signs on Dolington Road indicating "Caution - farm equipment entering/ leaving the highway," and he is waiting to hear back from them about that.

Mr. Bankoske left the meeting at this time. There was still a quorum present.

Sign on Belden field: Mr. Blank/Mr. Steadman

There were no brackets provided by the sign company to hang the sign. An incorrect attachment was made and the sign came down. An adjustment was made and the sign came down again. Mr. Blank stated he has an existing sign with the correct graphics that could be put on the existing pole, and Mr. Fuller agreed this could be done.

Mr. Blank moved, Mr. Steadman seconded, and it was unanimously carried to replace the current sign that came down with an existing sign and have Public Works put it up at the corner of Dolington and Woodside Roads.

Mr. Steadman asked Mr. Blank if he discussed the alternative signs with Mr. Fuller. Mr. Blank stated he did, and Mr. Fuller stated he feels they would work. Mr. Blank stated if we need new signs, he feels we should deplete our current stock first. Mr. Steadman stated Mr. Fuller had suggested that the alternative signs would cost less and they hold up well.

Mr. Blank stated Buster Doan's photo is fading on the sign at Patterson Farm,

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and we may want to look into replacing it. He added that when it was installed he asked the sign company how long they felt it would last, and they stated it would last about five years. Mr. Steadman asked why Farmland put that sign up since that is not Farmland's land and we do not lease that land. He stated the Township owns it and leases it, so it is the Township's responsibility although the Board could advise them that the photo is fading. Mr. Blank agreed, but added that Mr. Doan was a past-president of Farmland Preservation, lived and worked on Patterson Farm and the sign was placed in recognition of his long-standing support for farming in Lower Makefield Township. Mr. Blank stated he will follow up with the Township on this.

Fencing on Bond farm: Mr. Blank

There is a residence on Greenbriar Court where trees on the Farmland side and the resident's side are growing into the fence line and overtaking the fence. There were discussions with the resident to split the cost, but the resident indicated he did not want to do it at this point. Mr. Carney suggested that we let him know that at this time the Board has the funds to split the cost; but if the resident comes back in a year or two, the Board may not be in the same financial situation to be able to split the cost. Mr. Steadman stated it could also be more expensive in the future.

Deer hunting: Mr. Steadman/Mr. Carney

We have applied for the Agricultural Control Program at the Pennsylvania Game Commission (Red Tag Program), which we have been involved in for about five years. Tags were renewed for the four properties that are suitable for deer hunting – Radio Towers, Nursery, Leedom's and Belden. An application was sent in for red tags for Heather Ridge, but we have not heard back from the Game Commission on those. Mr. Steadman has the Red Tag coupons in his possession, and he will give them to Mr. Carney this week who will distribute them to the hunters. They are distributed one at a time; and if a hunter fills a tag, they can come back and request a second tag. If all of the tags on a particular parcel are filled, we can request of the Game Commission another set of tags although we have never had that circumstance in the past. This program helps our farmers keep the fields economically viable.

Mr. Blank stated in the past we had only two fields in the program, and now we are up to four and potentially five.

Buffer maintenance/summer work: Mr. Carney

The most recent buffer cutting was done on July 7th. Some branches have come

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down due to the most recent storms that Corcoran has been alerted to, and they will be going out and getting rid of those. Where branches fell into the crops, they will remove them taking care to minimize damage to the crops. Mr. Carney stated the storms are getting more severe and the trees are getting older, so this is something that will have to be anticipated. Mr. Corcoran advised of some issues he saw while on the properties that have already been addressed. There will be two more cuttings the timings of which are done at Mr. Corcoran's discretion.

Mr. Steadman thanked Mr. Corcoran and his team who are responsive and do good work.

NEW BUSINESS

Storm damage – all fields: All

Mr. Carney stated at the Bond Farm, Mr. Blank has advised that the water at the basin has greatly improved. Mr. Carney stated he has advised Mr. Corcoran of some tree limbs at Stackhouse, and they know about the ones on the Bond Farm. Mr. Carney stated he feels we are in good shape because a lot of proactive work has been done with the winter projects getting rid of the worst trees that have the greatest chance of coming down into the farming areas.

Mr. Blank noted the drainage at the Bond Farm, and he questions if Mr. Stewart is now able to farm the area which is now dry. Mr. Carney stated there is a decent amount of shading there and the soil would need to be tested to see what nutrients would be needed to get the land back to planting in future years.

Historic Structures Demolition Ordinance: Mr. Steadman

The Historical Commission hoped that this would be on the Board of Supervisors' Agenda for tomorrow evening, but it is not. The Ordinance came out of the need to strengthen the ability to protect historic structures in the Township since there is not one to prevent the demolition of a historic structure unless it is in a Historical Zone like Edgewood Village. The Ordinance that the Historical Commission has recommended was written by the Board of Supervisors about a year ago with the intent of having more "teeth" to protect some of the older, historic homes in the Township. He stated it would involve a review process if there were to be a demolition, but there has not been a lot of action on moving this Ordinance forward despite the fact that the Township seemed to want it. He stated the Historical Commission is hopeful that it will be on the Board of Supervisors' Agenda in August.

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Mr. Blank stated part of this involved not having demolition by neglect. Mr. Steadman stated that is what has happened in Edgewood Village, and is part of what they want to address; but he does not know how they address that particular dynamic.

Mr. Steadman stated the Historical Commission had asked if Farmland as well as the Patterson Farm Implementation Committee would come out and express support for this kind of Ordinance.

OTHER BUSINESS: Mr. Blank

Announcements – E-mails had been exchanged by Board members about tree dumping at 1363 Brentwood. Mr. Steadman stated a large tree from this property fell onto the Farmland property line, and it appears that the homeowner had the tree professionally cut up; but rather than remove the waste from their property, they dumped it over the fence onto the Farmland property which is a violation of

the no dumping policy. Mr. Steadman tried to reach out to that neighbor but he was unable to connect with them. He will continue to work on this issue, and he will keep the Board members advised.

Upcoming events or deadlines – Mr. Steadman stated the project at Heather Ridge was previously discussed. He stated he has sent a text to the owner of Premium Excavating asking for an update as to timing.

Policy for tree damage – Mr. Blank stated the Board has been discussing this off line. He noted a draft which has been modified based on input. Mr. Steadman asked if the first bullet which is what the neighbors are responsible for and the second bullet which is what Farmland Preservation is responsible for should be the same. He stated it is written as if a Farmland tree falls on the neighbor's property and not if the neighbor's tree falls on Farmland property, and he feels it should cover both of those circumstances; and Mr. Blank agreed.

Mr. Carney noted a section where "snow" should be added since that is a reason for trees to fall. He suggested that a final copy be circulated to all Board members before a vote is taken on adoption since Mr. Bankoske and Mr. Heinze are not present at this time.

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Mr. Steadman asked if all of the policies noted are available to the public on line, and Mr. Blank stated they are not since they are the Board's internal policies. Mr. Blank stated this has been discussed in the past and like any non-profit those policies are available to the public if they are requested. Mr. Steadman stated he agrees that some policies are strictly internal for operations, but for a policy that involves interactions with neighbors it would be beneficial to have that available to the public, and Mr. Carney agreed. Mr. Steadman stated a new policy like this could be included in the Township Newsletter. Mr. Blank stated he will ask for input from Mr. Bankoske and Mr. Heinze about putting certain policies impacting neighbors on the Farmland page on the LMT.org site.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mr. Blank

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

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS: Mr. Blank

1. Mr. Blank Follow-up on the Doan sign with Mr. Kratzer
2. Mr. Blank Discuss with Tim Stewart expansion of planting in the formerly wet areas on the Bond farm
3. Mr. Blank Send final copy of weather-related damage of trees policy to Board and ask if having it on the LMT site is a good idea and reference how frequently we are using it given the frequency of storms. Consider adding a link to the policies when sending out biennial letters to neighbors.
4. Mr. Steadman Drop off the Red Tag coupons at Mr. Carney's home who will distribute them

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Blank, President