

BEAUFORT COUNTY RURAL AND CRITICAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD

The Beaufort County Rural and Critical Land Preservation Board meeting (hereafter known as the Board) was held on January 12, 2017, at the Beaufort Jasper Water and Sewer Authority Board Room a 3:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Mike Mathews (Chairman)
Mr. Mark Baker (Vice-Chairman)
Mr. Bob Bender
Ms. Susie Fripp-Gordon
Ms. Gail O’Kane

Mr. Ed Riley
Ms. Dorothy Scanlin
Ms. Denise Sullivan
Ms. Norma Stewart

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Richard Walls

STAFF PRESENT:

Ms. Lisa Lord, Beaufort County Open Land Trust

GUESTS PRESENT:

Ms. Alice Howard, Beaufort County Councilwoman
Ms. Allison Copping, Beaufort County Assistant Attorney
Ms. Nancy Moss, Beaufort County Planning Department
Ms. Heather Spade, Beaufort County Planning Department

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mike Mathews called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

REVIEW OF AGENDA

Chairman Mathews asked if there were any changes to the Agenda and there were none.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Chairman Mathews asked if there were any changes to the Minutes from the November 10, 2016 Board meeting. Hearing none, Vice-Chairman Baker made a motion and Ms. O’Kane seconded the motion to accept the Minutes as written from the November 10, 2016 Board meeting. **The motion was carried unanimously to accept the minutes as written from the November 10, 2016, Board meeting** (FOR: Mathews, Baker, Bender, Fripp-Gordon, O’Kane, Riley, Scanlin, Sullivan, Stewart).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Financial Update

Ms. Lisa Lord gave a financial update. Currently the R&C Program has a negative balance of \$4.1 million in funds. The Finance Department intends to issue the \$20 million referendum (approved in November 2014) by the end of January 2017. Once this happens, there will be approximately \$15 million left to spend within the R&C Program. Half of that money can be used for park infrastructure. Additionally there is a restricted gift fund totaling \$1.3 million that has donor specific restrictions on how these funds can be used.

Chairman Mike Mathews discussed the idea that even though \$7.5 million could be used for park infrastructure, it does not limit this Board to use it to purchase properties if opportunities become available.

Passive Park Update

Ms. Lord updated the Board members on the development of the three passive parks. Crystal Lake is being constructed at this time and will hopefully be finished by March 2017. Phase 3 of Crystal Lake, which entails connecting the boardwalk around the lake, is in the planning stages at this time. Plans for Fort Fremont are being finalized and should go to bid sometime this summer. Beaufort County staff and the contract engineer are bringing Okatie Preserve to the Town of Bluffton for permit approval with the intention of also going to bid this summer.

There was some discussion again about the role of the Board as it relates to passive park development. Chairman Mathews stated that per Brian Flewelling the Board needs to stay focused on protecting properties and that Mr. Flewelling is working through the Natural Resources Committee on a more formal way to handle passive parks. For now County staff will handle passive park development and keep the Board abreast of progress within these parks.

Miscellaneous

Ms. Lord stated that the Economic Benefits Analysis Study is now fully funded by the Trust for Public Land who will begin gathering data in February. Also next month the Board will need to vote on Chairman and Vice-Chairman as part of a yearly Board requirement.

Review of Rural and Critical Retreat Agenda

Chairman Mathews handed out a draft retreat agenda to all Board members. Back in November 2016 Chairman Mathews asked for comments and suggestions from Board members for the retreat. He wanted to address some of these comments even though they are not listed in the draft agenda. Ms. Norma Stewart asked if the TPL Economic Benefits Analysis Study would be available to discuss and it will not as it is just getting started. Ms. Stewart also asked if there was a way to find other grant money to oversee maintenance of the passive park properties. Chairman Mathews said that the County is currently looking into this issue and trying to find a solution. Ms. Dorothy Scanlin asked if the Board could get the CEO of First Shore to come and speak at the retreat. This company helps groups figure out what amenities draw users across the nation to certain parks. Chairman Mathews suggested that the Board look do a little more research on this topic and bring it back for discussion during a future meeting.

Chairman Mathews then reviewed the draft retreat agenda stating that the first half would be typical items; financial review, approval of meeting minutes, passive park update, with an


executive session to be determined. Then there would be a working session to discuss where the R&C Program should go in the future and how best to spend the remaining funds. To that point Vice-Chairman Baker requested a two-year vision of the goals and objectives for use of the fee simple lands from Mr. Tony Criscitiello as an added agenda item for the retreat. Chairman Mathews would like the Board to review some items for homework before the retreat; The Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan Chapters 4 (Future Land Use), 5 (Natural Resources Element), and 6 (Cultural Resources Element), as well as the narrative on the Greenprint. He would also like all Board members to try and meet with their County Council member to get an opinion of priority areas within their district. The next session of the agenda would be discussion of whether or not another bond referendum would be required for the R&C Program. The retreat will be held from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M at the Beaufort Jasper Water and Sewer Authority Board Room.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chairman Mathews entertained a motion at 4:24 p.m. from Ms. Stewart, seconded by Vice-Chairman Baker, to adjourn the meeting. **The motion was approved unanimously** (FOR: Mathews, Baker, Bender, Fripp-Gordon, O'Kane, Riley, Scanlin, Sullivan, Stewart).

Submitted by: Amanda Flake, Natural Resources Planner

Approved:



Mike Mathews, Chairman,
Beaufort County Rural and Critical Land Preservation Board

Date: 3/9/17