

## **BEAUFORT COUNTY RURAL AND CRITICAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD RETREAT**

The Beaufort County Rural and Critical Land Preservation Board Retreat (hereafter known as the Board) was held on March 9, 2017, at the Beaufort Jasper Water and Sewer Authority Board Room from 9:00 am to 3:00 p.m.

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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

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

### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mr. Bob Bender

### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Mr. Tony Criscitiello, Beaufort County Planning Director  
Ms. Amanda Flake, Beaufort County Natural Resources Planner  
Ms. Lisa Lord, Beaufort County Open Land Trust

### **GUESTS PRESENT:**

Ms. Alice Howard, Beaufort County Councilwoman  
Mr. York Glover, Beaufort County Councilman  
Mr. Tom Keaveny, Beaufort County Attorney  
Mr. Eric Larson, Beaufort County Director of Environmental Engineering and Land Management  
Mr. Rob Merchant, Beaufort County Planning Department  
Ms. Heather Spade, Beaufort County Planning Department  
Ms. Cindy Baysden, Beaufort County Open Land Trust  
Ms. Trish Irwin, Beaufort County Open Land Trust  
Mr. Bob Semmler, Beaufort County Planning Commission  
Ms. Rikki Parker, Coastal Conservation League  
Mr. Doug Bostick, South Carolina Battleground Trust  
Mr. Terry Hill

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Mike Mathews called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.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 February 9, 2017 Board meeting. Hearing none, Vice-Chairman Baker made a motion and Mr. Riley seconded the motion to accept the Minutes as written from the February 9, 2017 Board meeting. **The motion was carried unanimously to accept the minutes as written from the February 9, 2017, Board meeting** (FOR: Mathews, Baker, Bender, Fripp-Gordon, Mack, O'Kane, Riley, Scanlin, Sullivan, Stewart, Walls).

## **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

### **Financial Update**

Chairman Mike Mathews stated that the financial report online showed a balance of \$4,747,849.00 with \$1.3 million in restricted funds as of February 28, 2017. It was requested that a new balance for March be sent to the Board members once it is published.

### **Passive Park Update**

Mr. Tony Criscitiello stated that Crystal Lake is about 99.9% finished and the tenants should be moving in soon. Fort Fremont was almost ready to go to bid to build the Interpretive Center and pavilion. Fort Fremont should cost around \$839,000.00. Beaufort County staff was still in the process of obtaining permits from the Town of Bluffton for Okatie Preserve. The cost for Okatie Preserve would be around \$1.6 million. Chairman Mike Mathews had requested these numbers from Mr. Criscitiello to determine how much money would be left over to buy property once the passive parks were built.

### **TPL Economic Study**

Ms. Lisa Lord stated that a stakeholder meeting was held on February 22, 2017 and twenty people attended. After the meeting she met with the core team that would work on the study. Ms. Lord announced the start of this study to the Natural Resources Committee on February 27, 2017 and also presented the 2016 R&C Program update.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chairman Mathews entertained a motion by Ms. Sullivan, seconded by Ms. Fripp-Gordon, to adjourn the Open Session at 9:28 a.m. and convened Executive Session for the purpose of discussing matters associated with property acquisitions. **The motion was carried unanimously to enter into Executive Session** (FOR: Mathews, Baker, Bender, Fripp-Gordon, Mack, O'Kane, Riley, Scanlin, Sullivan, Stewart, Walls).

**Chairman Mathews adjourned Executive Session and convened Open Session at 10:35 a.m.**

Ms. Scanlin made a motion; seconded by Ms. Stewart, to recommend to the Natural Resources Committee of County Council to deny Parcel 2017C under the terms and conditions as recommended by Beaufort County Open Land Trust, as discussed in Executive Session. **The motion was carried unanimously to recommend to the Natural Resources Committee of County Council to deny Parcel 2017C under the terms and conditions as recommended by Beaufort County Open Land Trust, as discussed in Executive Session.** (FOR: Mathews, Baker, Fripp-Gordon, O’Kane, Riley, Scanlin, Sullivan, Stewart, Walls. ABSTAIN: Bender, Mack).

**Chairman Mathews called for a 10 minute break at 10:39 a.m.**

**Chairman Mathews convened Open Session at 10:49 a.m.**

#### **2017/2018 Priorities and Focus**

Chairman Mathews stated that based off of the financial report and Mr. Criscitiello’s passive park report, the R&C Program had about \$12 million left in funds. Ms. Lord handed out some paperwork detailing how the R&C Program currently operates. When the Beaufort County Open Land Trust (BCOLT) came on board as the consultant for the R&C Program, a thematic approach emerged around strategic focal areas within Beaufort County such as protecting farmland, economic strengths, waterway health, and cultural character. By the end of 2016 the R&C Program had protected 109 projects and brought in \$38 million dollars in partner funding. Ms. Lord gave a summary of the current lands that had been protected and the Board members discussed where the focus for the R&C Program should be for the future.

**Chairman Mathews called for a break for lunch at 12:00 p.m.**

**Chairman Mathews convened Open Session at 12:47 p.m.**

#### **2017/2018 Priorities and Focus Continued**

The Board members considered some additional criteria when ranking properties such as weighting historic significance higher, including sea level rise data, adding linear trail info, environmental issues, etc. It was also discussed that the Board members could negotiate these issues during executive session and not change anything on the ranking sheets.

#### **Future Bond Referendum**

Ms. Lord presented a PowerPoint that detailed the background of all the bond referendums for this Program to date. She stated that the ballot question phrasing was very important and had been based on prior polls to the public. The language in the ballot question needed to be clear. The referendum campaign was typically run by a non-profit group like BCOLT or a citizens group like VOTE YES. Mr. Tom Keaveny, Beaufort County Attorney, discussed the role of the Board members in reference to a new bond referendum. He stated that Board members could provide information to the public explaining the rationale for the referendum, provide a description of the referendum including cost, tax, impact, and scope of proposal, answer questions, develop, print, and distribute fact sheets, sponsor and hold general information meetings to the general public, and provide voter registration information. Board members could


not promote or oppose the referendum, solicit yes or no votes, collect funds to support a vote, print, copy, or email materials advocating a vote, wear promotional shirts or buttons, or display signs on public property. Mr. Keaveny said that the following critical milestones needed to be considered by the Board; determine the referendum amount and composition, forward the ballot question to the Natural Resources Committee by the February 2018 Retreat, if approved send the ballot question to County Council for three readings, then send it to the state for approval 60 days prior to the election. Ms. Lord suggested that by August 2017 the Board should have the information for the referendum finalized and the Board agreed.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, Chairman Mathews entertained a motion at 2:23 p.m. from Ms. Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Riley, to adjourn the meeting. **The motion was approved unanimously** (FOR: Mathews, Baker, Bender, Fripp-Gordon, Mack, O'Kane, Riley, Scanlin, Sullivan, Stewart, Walls).

**Submitted by:** Amanda Flake, Natural Resources Planner

**Approved:**

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

Date: 8/10/17