

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

The Beaufort County Rural and Critical Land Preservation Board (hereafter known as the Board) was held on August 10, 2017, at the Beaufort Jasper Water and Sewer Authority Conference Room at 3:00 p.m.

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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

Ms. Gail O'Kane  
Ms. Denise Sullivan  
Mr. Richard Walls

### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mr. Bob Bender  
Mr. Terry Hill  
Mr. Ed Riley  
Ms. Dorothy Scanlin

### **STAFF PRESENT:**

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

### **GUESTS PRESENT:**

Ms. Alice Howard, Beaufort County Councilwoman  
Ms. Cindy Baysden, Executive Director Beaufort County Open Land Trust  
Ms. Kate Schaeffer, Coastal Conservation League

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Mike Mathews called the meeting to order at 3:02 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 May 11, 2017 Board meeting. Hearing none, Ms. Sullivan made a motion and Ms. O'Kane seconded the motion to accept the Minutes as written from the May 11, 2017 Board meeting. **The motion was carried unanimously to accept the minutes as written from the May 11, 2017, Board meeting** (FOR: Mathews, Baker, Fripp-Gordon, Mack, O'Kane, Sullivan, Walls).

## **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

### **New Member**

Chairman Mike Mathews introduced Ms. Barbara Holmes, Director of Land Protection with the Beaufort County Open Land Trust. She is replacing Ms. Lisa Lord as the consultant for the Beaufort County Rural and Critical Land Preservation Program.

### **Financial Update**

Ms. Amanda Flake stated that the financial report showed a balance of \$13.7 million with \$9 million reserved for park infrastructure and \$4.7 million for property purchase.

### **Passive Park Update**

Mr. Tony Criscitiello stated that Crystal Lake is finished and the tenants, Beaufort County Open Land Trust and the Beaufort Soil and Water Conservation District, have occupied the building. To date the cost of running the park and the revenue from the rent are about even. With the addition of the solar panels, SCE&G is actually sending the County a check for producing energy. The Grand Opening will be soon.

Fort Fremont will be out for bid next week to build the Interpretive Center and pavilion. Fort Fremont should cost around \$850,000.00. The Friends of Fort Fremont will be signing an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with Beaufort County to run and maintain the park.

On August 22, 2017, Okatie Preserve will be reviewed by the Town of Bluffton for conceptual permit approval. Once permits are obtained the County will put this project out to bid.

Beaufort County has met with Town of Hilton Head representatives to begin discussions on Mitchellville Park. Cost estimates for this park run from \$850,000 to \$1 million.

As of 2:00 pm today the Park Stewardship Manager position was posted online. This person will run and maintain the passive parks and fee simple properties within the R&C Program. Chairman Mathews had some concerns about the new stewardship manager position and how the referendum funding will be coordinated. He suggested that this person be in close contact with the R&C Board and that the funding may need to be separated.

### **TPL Economic Study**

Ms. Holmes stated that a conference call with the TPL team, assessments, and data collection were done this summer on nine different areas. This data is complete and being analyzed. She expects to have the first preliminary numbers by September. There will be some review cycles and the final report should be available by February 2018.

### **Future Bond Referendum Discussion**

Chairman Mathews recapped that during the last few Board meetings there had been discussions on whether or not another bond referendum was warranted. Mr. Criscitiello stated the Mr. Josh Gruber suggested the Board consider polling the public to see if there is still support for the R&C Program. In the past years this has demonstrated to County Council that the public was still in


favor of the program. The poll must be performed by a non-profit organization like the Beaufort County Open Land Trust. The Board needs to analyze a time frame of doing the poll and sending a bond referendum recommendation to County Council. Ms. Holmes said she would look into the history of the polling program and report back to the Board next month. The Board entered a discussion on specific language to include in the bond referendum request. The Board would like to see some information on how much property the program has purchased in the past few years and how it correlates with the Greenprint. They would also like to see an outline of previous timelines for bond referendum referrals. Ms. Kate Schaeffer stated that advocacy groups, such as the Coastal Conservation League, support the idea of preserving land and would also be interested in information on timelines for past bond referendum referrals. Chairman Mike Mathews requested that the last bond referendum language be sent to all the Board members for review. This discussion will continue next month.

#### ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chairman Mathews entertained a motion at 4:50 p.m. from Ms. O'Kane, seconded by Mr. Walls to adjourn the meeting. **The motion was approved unanimously** (FOR: Mathews, Baker, Fripp-Gordon, Mack, O'Kane, Sullivan, Walls).

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

**Approved:**

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

Date: October 12, 2017