

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

The Beaufort County Rural and Critical Land Preservation Board (hereafter known as the Board) was held on November 9, 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)  
Mr. Bob Bender  
Ms. Susie Fripp-Gordon

Mr. Terry Hill  
Ms. Gail O’Kane  
Ms. Denise Sullivan  
Mr. Richard Walls

## **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mr. Walter Mack  
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  
Mr. Eric Larson, Beaufort County Director of Environmental Engineering  
Ms. Alicia Holland, Beaufort County Director of Finance  
Ms. Kate Schaeffer, Coastal Conservation League

## **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 October 12, 2017 Board meeting and there were a couple of changes. Vice-Chairman Baker made a motion and Ms. O’Kane seconded the motion to accept the Minutes with modifications from the October 12, 2017 Board meeting. **The motion was carried unanimously to accept the minutes with modifications from the October 12, 2017, Board meeting** (FOR: Mathews, Baker, Bender, Fripp-Gordon, Hill, O’Kane, Sullivan, Walls).

## **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

### **Passive Park Update**

Mr. Tony Criscitiello stated that the Fort Fremont bid opening was two weeks ago. The bid included the construction of an interpretive center and pavilion. The bids were currently being evaluated and once a decision was made the project would go to the Natural Resources Committee for approval. The Crystal Lake building was now complete. Key fobs had been delivered to the tenants and the park was now ready for a Grand Opening which would be scheduled soon. Beaufort County staff was working on a final plan to finish the boardwalk around Crystal Lake. Okatie Preserve Park permits were being finalized by the Town of Bluffton. The project managers were working out details such as water and sewer. Once permits were obtained the County would put this project out to bid. Mitchellville Park was in the works as well as New Riverside and Widgeon Point. Interviews for the Park Stewardship Manager position happened last week and someone should be in that position soon. It was suggested by Chairman Mathews that the Heroes on Horseback be invited to the December Board meeting to discuss their interactions with Beaufort County and the Okatie Preserve Park.

### **Financial Update**

Ms. Alicia Holland presented the financial report to the R&C Board members. Currently there was a balance of \$13.5 million with \$3.5 million reserved for park infrastructure and \$10 million for property purchase and/or park infrastructure. Currently Ms. Holland was going through the history of acquisition of properties and trying to get all expenditures to match.

### **TPL Economic Study**

Ms. Holmes stated that the TPL Economic study was on track. The main report was in the layout stage and the working group should have a final draft soon. The study should be available to the public by mid-January with the first audience being County Council.

### **Bond Referendum Discussion**

Chairman Mike Mathews stated that he and Ms. Barbara Holmes met with County Councilman Brian Flewelling and County Councilman Tabor Vaux and told them about the TPL Economic Study and asked for a letter of support from County Council about the poll and feasibility study for another bond referendum. Last month the Board voted to move forward with the poll to see if there still was public interest in the R&C Program. Councilman Flewelling was able to get the letter signed by County Council so the poll and the feasibility study would begin soon. Ms. Holmes has lined up a polling firm and by late January the poll should be finished. At that point Mr. Will Abberger with the Trust for Public Land would come to the February County Council meeting and report the findings of the poll and feasibility study.

Chairman Mathews asked Councilman Flewelling if the Board decided to move forward with another bond referendum what would be the best format. Councilman Flewelling stated that the 2014 bond referendum version would be fine. He then asked the Board if they would be willing to consider a portion of the bond to be used for maintenance of the passive parks and the Board decided against it. Councilman Flewelling also requested that information be brought forward to the Natural Resources Committee, with the bond referendum discussion, about the County debts and debt services and how or if it was related to the R&C Program.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, Chairman Mathews entertained a motion at 4:41 p.m. from Ms. Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Bender, to adjourn the meeting. **The motion was approved unanimously** (FOR: Mathews, Baker, Bender, Fripp-Gordon, Hill, O'Kane, Sullivan, 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: \_\_\_\_\_