

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 December 14, 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

Mr. Walter Mack
Ms. Gail O’Kane
Ms. Denise Sullivan
Mr. Richard Walls

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ms. Dorothy Scanlin

STAFF PRESENT:

Ms. Amanda Flake, Beaufort County Natural Resources Planner
Ms. Barbara Holmes, Beaufort County Open Land Trust

GUESTS PRESENT:

Mr. Eric Larson, Beaufort County Director of Environmental Engineering
Ms. Andrea Atherton, Beaufort County CIP Construction Manager
Mr. Chris Inglese, Beaufort County Assistant Attorney
Mr. George Vaveris, Heroes on Horseback Board Member
Mr. Bob Lee, Heroes on Horseback Executive Director
Ms. Laura Kinsey, Heroes on Horseback Equestrian Director
Ms. Kate Schaeffer, Coastal Conservation League

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mike Mathews called the meeting to order at 2:58 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 9, 2017 Board meeting. Hearing none, Ms. O’Kane made a motion and Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion to accept the Minutes as written from the November 9, 2017 Board meeting. **The motion was carried unanimously to accept the minutes as written from the November 9, 2017, Board meeting** (FOR: Mathews, Baker, Bender, Fripp-Gordon, Hill, Mack, O’Kane, Sullivan, Walls).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Chairman Mike Mathews stated that Mr. Ed Riley had to resign from the R&C Board. His presence will be missed.

Heroes on Horseback

Executive Director Bob Lee stated that Heroes on Horseback (HOH) is a non-profit organization that uses equine assisted therapy for adults and children with physical, intellectual, and emotional disabilities. HOH has two staff members, himself and Ms. Laura Kinsey. Mr. Lee raises money for the program and Ms. Kinsey leads the horse rides and teaches the volunteers. HOH has about 100 volunteers in the Beaufort area and works with the special education classes with the Beaufort County School District. At HOH the staff learns what special needs the kids have and they work a horse program around it. Typically kids are there for four hours and there have been instances where kids were nonverbal before the program and became verbal after equine therapy. Currently HOH services 220 children and 20 adults. HOH is beginning to serve military personnel that have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Mr. Lee stated that HOH was in need of a new facility and first approached Beaufort County. Then after talking with Mr. Tony Criscitiello they found out about the Okatie Preserve Park and the possibility of it becoming an equestrian/pedestrian park. HOH was asked to help with the design of the equestrian portion of the park. It now contains an area with a paddocks, a round ring, a riding arena, and a barn with an apartment. HOH plans on having a person live on site and take care of the animals 24/7. HOH will pay for maintenance of the facility and grounds and help run the park for the County. They are also looking at ideas to help the County generate money from this park.

Financial Update

Ms. Amanda Flake stated that 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.

Passive Park Update

Mr. Flake stated that the Fort Fremont bid were currently being evaluated and once a decision was made the project would go to the Natural Resources Committee in January 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. Some more interviews for the Park Stewardship Manager position will be held in January 2018.

2018 Meeting Dates

Ms. Flake presented a list of meeting dates for 2018. Ms. Terry Hill made a motion and Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion to accept the 2018 Board meeting dates. **The motion was carried unanimously to accept the 2018 Board meeting dates** (FOR: Mathews, Baker, Bender, Fripp-Gordon, Hill, Mack, O'Kane, Sullivan, Walls).

TPL Economic Study

Ms. Holmes stated that the TPL Economic study was at the printer and should be delivered mid-January. The study will first be presented to County Council on January 22, 2018 at 6:00 pm. Chairman Mathews encouraged all Board members to attend the meeting to show support for the R&C Program. On January 23, 2018 there will be two stakeholder meetings, one north of the Broad River and one south of the Broad River. The times and meeting places for these meetings have not been determined yet but Ms. Holmes will let the Board members know as soon as possible. Also if any Board members have ideas of stakeholders to invite to the meetings please let Ms. Holmes know.

Bond Referendum Discussion

Chairman Mike Mathews stated that the Trust for Public Land (TPL) has been working on the feasibility study and the public poll to determine if there was still public support for another bond referendum. Because of the workload of the feasibility study, the public poll may not be done until March or April. TPL representatives then expect to report to the R&C Board in April on whether or not to proceed with another bond referendum. There was discussion about if the TPL Study and could be added to the February County Council meeting agenda. Staff will look into this request.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Mathews entertained a motion by Ms. Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Hill, to adjourn the Open Session at 4:09 p.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, Hill, Mack, O’Kane, Sullivan, Walls).

Chairman Mathews adjourned Executive Session and convened Open Session at 4:42 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chairman Mathews entertained a motion at 4:42p.m. from Ms. Sullivan, seconded by Vice-Chairman Baker, to adjourn the meeting. **The motion was approved unanimously** (FOR: Mathews, Baker, Bender, Fripp-Gordon, Hill, 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: _____