

**MINUTES**  
**RURAL AND CRITICAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING**

**September 9, 2021**

Crystal Lake Park/Webex

The electronic and print media duly notified in  
accordance with the State Freedom of Information Act.

**ATTENDANCE**

Present: Chairman Walter Mack, Vice-Chairman Art Baer, Mac Bennett, Chris Marsh,  
Tom Murray, Gail O’Kane, Ryan Stefonick, Beek Webb

Absent: John Maffei

County  
Council: Alice Howard, York Glover

Staff: Rob Merchant, Interim Planning Director; Amanda Flake, Natural Resources  
Planner

Visitors: Kate Schaefer, BCOLT Director of Land Protection; Kristin Williams, BCOLT  
Executive Director; Patrick Moore, Open Space Institute

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Kate Schaefer called the meeting to order at 2:34 p.m.

Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and distributed in compliance  
with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion:** It was moved by Ms. O’Kane, seconded by Mr. Murray to approve the agenda as  
presented. The vote: YAYS – Chairman Mack, Vice-Chariman Baer, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Marsh, Mr.  
Murray, Mrs. O’Kane, Mr. Stefonick, and Mr. Webb. The motion passed.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**July 8 and 29, 2021**

**Motion:** It was moved by Vice-Chairman Baer, seconded by Mr. Murray to approve the minutes  
as presented. The vote: YAYS – Chairman Mack, Vice-Chariman Baer, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Marsh,  
Mr. Murray, Mrs. O’Kane, Mr. Stefonick, and Mr. Webb. The motion passed.

## **PRESENTATION**

### **Open Space Institute**

Mr. Patrick Moore presented information about the Open Space Institute which is a land trust based in New York that is almost fifty years old. This organization holds conservation easements as well as fee simple properties that are available to the public. Themes for acquisition range from habitat protection to growth management. The Open Space Institute is involved in a local project called the Southern Coastal Biodiversity Project. It involves 17,000 acres within Hampton, Beaufort, and Jasper counties. The Open Space Institute does not currently hold any conservation easements in South Carolina but is willing to be a possible partner in future easements with the R&C Program.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **R&C Monthly Notes and Updates**

Ms. Schaefer welcomed the newest Board member, Mr. Tom Murray from District 6. Ms. Schaefer stated that applications are submitted quarterly and the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter closed at the end of September 2021. Third quarter inquiries were from Hilton Head and Bluffton areas. Ms. Schaefer is expecting appraisals back from first quarter projects and second quarter projects are beginning due diligence. She would like to try and schedule some field trips for the Board in the fall.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Motion:** It was moved by Ms. O’Kane seconded by Vice-Chairman Baer to approve to go into Executive Session. The vote: YAYS – Chairman Mack, Vice-Chairman Baer, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Marsh, Mr. Murray, Mrs. O’Kane, Mr. Stefonick, and Mr. Webb. The motion passed.

**Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements for acquisition of potential projects and application status**

## **MATTERS ARISING OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Motion:** It was moved by Ms. O’Kane, seconded by Mr. Bennett, to NOT recommend approval of Project Middle Road as presented in executive session. The vote: YAYS – Vice-Chairman Baer, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Marsh, Mr. Murray, Ms. O’Kane, Mr. Stefonick, and Mr. Webb. ABSTAIN – Chairman Mack. The motion passed

**Motion:** It was moved by Vice-Chairman Baer, seconded by Ms. O’Kane, to NOT recommend approval of Project Linden as presented in executive session. The vote: YAYS – Vice-Chairman Baer, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Marsh, Mr. Murray, Ms. O’Kane, Mr. Stefonick, and Mr. Webb. ABSTAIN – Chairman Mack. The motion passed

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion: Motion:** It was moved by Ms. O’Kane, seconded by Mr. Murray to adjourn the meeting at 4:13 pm. The vote: YAYS – Chairman Mack, Vice-Chairman Baer, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Marsh, Mr. Murray, Mrs. O’Kane, Mr. Stefonick, and Mr. Webb. The motion passed.

**Submitted by:** Amanda Flake, Beaufort County Community Development  
Natural Resources Planner

**Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Walter Mack, Chairman  
Beaufort County Rural and Critical Lands Preservation Board

Date: \_\_\_\_\_