

MINUTES
RURAL AND CRITICAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD RETREAT

March 23, 2023

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, John Maffei, Stodd McEwan, Lucia O’Farrell, Beek Webb

Absent: Ford Bartholow, Kenneth Frazier

County Council: Alice Howard, York Glover

Staff: Amanda Flake, Natural Resources Planner

Visitors: Kate Schaefer, BCOLT Director of Land Protection; Caylor Romines, BCOLT Director of Stewardship; Stefanie Nagid, Passive Parks Manager; Rob Merchant, BC Planning Director; Kristen Forbus, BC Long Range Planner; Chris DiJulio-Cook, BC Planning; Tom Keaveny, BC Attorney for Elected Official/Boards and Commissions

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Walter Mack called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.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 Vice-Chairman Baer, seconded by Mr. Bennett to approve the agenda. The vote: YAYS – Chairman Mack, Vice-Chairman Baer, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Maffei, Mr. McEwan, Ms. O’Farrell, and Mr. Webb. The motion passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 12, 2023

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Webb, seconded by Ms. O’Farrell to approve the agenda. The vote: YAYS – Chairman Mack, Vice-Chairman Baer, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Maffei, Mr. McEwan, Ms. O’Farrell, and Mr. Webb. The motion passed.

PRESENTATION ITEMS

Board Member 101 Training

Mr. Tom Keaveny, Beaufort County Attorney for Elected Officials/Boards and Commissions lead a discussion about Rural and Critical Land Preservation Board duties and responsibilities. He stated that the Rural and Critical Land Preservation Program was an amazing program that had been recognized as a leader in land preservation. So far 165 million dollars, including partnerships, had been spent to protect 29,000 acres within Beaufort County. This program was also a model for the new state greenspace program.

Passive Park Update

Ms. Stefanie Nagid updated the Board on passive park projects around the county. Some of those included completion of phase I of Whitehall Park, stabilization techniques for safety at Fort Fremont, and entering the planning stage of Okatie River Park.

Calendar Review

Ms. Kate Schaefer detailed some calendar dates that would be happening in the future. On April 13, 2023 Ms. Nagid would be hosting a site visit to Okatie Preserve where it had been listed as a part of the Old Growth Forest Network. On Friday, April 21, 2023 all were invited to the grand opening of Whitehall Park. The next Rural and Critical Land Preservation Board meeting would be held on Thursday, May 11, 2023 at Crystal Lake.

Review of 100+ Acre Map and Policy Discussion

Ms. Schaefer led a discussion about properties listed on the 100+ acre map that was discussed at last year's board retreat. The discussion detailed what of those properties were considered priorities and why based off of program criteria, urban/rural land use policies, and whether or not any of them would be a better fit for the new greenspace program.

Cotton Hall Fee Due Diligence Approval

Ms. Kate Schaefer presented this property located at 400 Cotton Hall Road. This was a Quarter 1 application for 231+ acres off Hwy 170 in the Town of Yemassee. This property contained agricultural fields, wetlands, impoundments (water access), old rice fields, and hardwood stands. It linked conservation areas between the ACE Basin and the Port Royal Sound. The total property was 736 acres, but only 231 acres were currently for sale. The Open Space Institute had an offer on this piece and would hold the property until Beaufort County had chance to get all approvals through the government time frame. If the 231 acres were acquired, it would allow an optional purchase of the remaining 344 acres. A separate 160 acre piece, that included a home, was not a

part of this project. Staff were looking for an approval of due diligence for purchase of the 231 acres fee simple as well as a future purchase of 344 additional acres.

It was moved by Mr. Maffei and seconded by Vice-Chairman Baer to recommend to the Community Service and Land Use Committee for due diligence of Project Cotton Hall Fee. YAYS – Chairman Mack, Vice-Chairman Baer, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Maffei, Mr. McEwan, Ms. O’Farrell, and Mr. Webb. The motion passed

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Maffei, seconded by Vice-Chairman Baer to adjourn the meeting at 1:05 pm. The vote: YAYS – Chairman Mack, Vice-Chairman Baer, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Maffei, Mr. McEwan, Ms. O’Farrell, 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: _____