

# MINUTES

## Green Space Advisory Committee

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*July 26, 2024, 10:30 AM, Executive Conference Room, Beaufort County Administration Building*

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Vice-Chair Howard called the meeting to order at 10:32 AM. Vice-Chair Howard confirmed with Mark Davis that public notification of the meeting had been published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the SC Freedom of Information Act.

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Timothy Evans  
Alice Howard, Vice-Chair  
T. Peter Kristian (virtual)  
Carmen Avon Manning  
Michael McShane, Chair  
Laurel Rhoten

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Senator Tom Davis

### **STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Chuck Atkinson, Assistant County Administrator, Development/Recreation  
Mark Davis, Deputy Director, Beaufort County Planning and Zoning Department  
Thomas Keaveny, County Attorney Elected Officials  
Robert Merchant, Director, Beaufort County Planning and Zoning Department  
Juliana Smith, Long-Range Planner, Beaufort County Planning and Zoning Department  
Graeme Philp, Graybill, Lansche & Vinzani (virtual)  
Jeff Vinzani, Graybill, Lansche & Vinzani (virtual)

### **GUESTS PRESENT:**

Mary Ryan Krieger, Deputy Community Plans and Liaison Officer, MCAS; Caylor Romines, Director of Stewardship, Beaufort County Open Land Trust; Kate Schaefer, Director of Land Protection, Beaufort County Open Land Trust; and Kristin Williams, Executive Director, Beaufort County Open Land Trust.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Carmen Avon Manning made a motion to approve the agenda. Laurel Rhoten seconded. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

***APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JUNE 3 AND 7, 2024:***

Tim Evans said on page 7 of the June 3 minutes, his name was spelled wrong. Carmen Avon Manning made a motion to approve the minutes as amended for the June 3 meeting and the minutes as submitted for the June 7 meeting. Laurel Rhoten seconded. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

***ANNUAL ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR:***

Vice-Chair Howard made a motion to elect Mike McShane as chair. Laurel Rhoten seconded. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous. Chair McShane abstained. Tim Evans made a motion to reelect Alice Howard as vice-chair. The motion was approved by acclamation.

Chair McShane said the purpose of today's meeting is to discuss a specific application, but before that, there are some announcements.

Kate Schaefer said the Open Land Trust (OLT), together with its partners, are pleased to announce that the first project for Green Space Program that was awarded funding, Gregorie Neck, has closed and the conservation easement was recorded yesterday. This protects 4,409 acres at the headwaters of the Port Royal Sound, including 13.5 miles of river frontage. The Nature Conservancy has granted an easement to be held by the OLT and the Department of the Navy. This is the first grant from the Green Space Program and the first out of county grant. This project secured the largest ever grant from the Department of Defense. The grant application would not have been as competitive without the Green Space pledge to the project. Matching funds matter so much. One of the great aspects of the project is that it involved so many partners. Kate thanked the Committee and staff for making the process predictable, efficient, and fair.

Kate said the other thing she wanted to share is that Jasper County has given third reading to a sales tax referendum that includes \$94 million for conservation. Kate said the Green Space Program helped encourage them. Chair McShane asked if Jasper County will establish a green space committee. Kate said we have encouraged them to do that, but it hasn't gotten to that detail yet. Eighty percent of the tax will go to transportation and 20 percent will go to conservation. Chair McShane said if the Jasper County referendum is successful, let's help them with their ordinance. Tom Keaveny said he has provided them with all our ordinances, applications, etc.

Kate Schaefer said the grant agreement between Beaufort County and the OLT and the grant agreement between the state Conservation Bank and OLT were recorded yesterday. These add additional layers of protection and public awareness that these grant monies were used on the property.

Chair McShane said we need to remember that the original landowner had multiple options and chose to take the option that produced less value to his family. This is generosity of the most genuine kind. This made the decision easier at the state level.

Tom Keaveny said he has asked the County public information officer to help get the word out of this important achievement.

***EXECUTIVE SESSION:***

Tim Evans made a motion to go into Executive Session pursuant to S.C. Code Section 30-4-70 (A) (2): discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements for fee simple application, Ulmer Road. Carmen Avon Manning seconded. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous. The Committee was in Executive Session from 10:50 AM to 11:19 AM.

***MATTERS ARISING OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION:***

There were no matters arising out of Executive Session to report.

***OTHER BUSINESS:***

Mark Davis provided an update on the Mitchelville property application. Mark reminded the Committee there had been a court action on the property. There had been a right of a minority party to exercise a 60-day due diligence. The Town of Hilton Head has been notified that the minority party is not going to pursue the purchase of the property. That means that Hilton Head is in their 30-day due diligence window and then will have 15 days to close. In an effort to be prepared if this occurred, staff has been doing a lot of work, including the necessary plat work to meet necessary deadlines. The Town as the purchaser would be the owner and secure fee simple title to the property. There will be a grant agreement and covenants and restrictions that will limit uses of the property and name the County as having an interest in the property.

It was agreed there would be a special called virtual meeting sometime in August so the Committee can review the final appraisal for the Mitchelville property.

The next regular meeting to review applications was set for Friday, September 6 at 10:30 AM.

Mark Davis said site visits were made to the Essex Farms and Trotters Loop properties. Tim Evans said that REPI funds have been approved for the Essex Farms property.

Tim Evans acknowledged that Chair McShane has been appointed as the Senior Advisory Vice President of Public Policy for Ducks Unlimited.

Chair McShane said the state Conservation Bank has gotten capital reserve dollars for the first time. Tim Evans said the value returned for the money spent is astounding. Chair McShane said for \$65 million invested, the state has protected ½ billion dollars in real estate.

***ADJOURNMENT:***

The meeting was adjourned at 11:47 AM.

Minutes compiled by Libby Anderson, Beaufort County Planning and Zoning Department