



RURAL AND CRITICAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD

Thursday, November 9, 2017

3:00 pm

Beaufort Jasper Water and Sewer Authority

Conference Room

6 Snake Road, Beaufort, SC 29909

Phone: (843) 255-2140

Members:

Michael Mathews, District 9 (Chair)
Mark Baker, District 8 (Vice-Chair)
Bob Bender, District 4
Susie Fripp-Gordon, District 1
Terry Hill, District 6
Walter Mack, District 3
Gail O' Kane, District 11
Edward Riley, District 5
Dorothy Scanlin, District 10
Denise Sullivan, District 2
Richard Walls, District 7

Staff:

Anthony Criscitiello, Planning Director
Amanda Flake, Natural Resources Planner

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME
2. REVIEW OF AGENDA
3. REVIEW OF MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 12, 2017 ([backup](#))
4. GENERAL DISCUSSION
 - A. Financial Update (Holland)
 - B. Passive Park Update (Criscitiello)
 - C. TPL Economic Study Update (Holmes)
 - D. Bond Referendum Update (Mathews/Holmes)
5. OTHER
 - A. Next Meeting: December 14, 2017, 3:00 P.M. at Beaufort Jasper Water and Sewer Authority (BJWSA) Conference Room, 6 Snake Road, Okatie, SC 29909
6. ADJOURNMENT

BEAUFORT COUNTY RURAL AND CRITICAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD RETREAT

The Beaufort County Rural and Critical Land Preservation Board (hereafter known as the Board) was held on October 12, 2017, at the Crystal Lake Park Conference Room at 3:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Mike Mathews (Chairman)
Mr. Mark Baker (Vice-Chairman)
Mr. Terry Hill
Mr. Walter Mack

Ms. Gail O’Kane
Ms. Dorothy Scanlin

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Bob Bender
Ms. Susie Fripp-Gordon
Mr. Ed Riley
Ms. Denise Sullivan
Mr. Richard Walls

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:

Mr. York Glover, Beaufort County Councilman
Ms. Kate Schaeffer, Coastal Conservation League
Ms. Cindy Baysden, Beaufort County Open Land Trust

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mike Mathews called the meeting to order at 3:07 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 August 10, 2017 Board meeting. Hearing none, Ms. O’Kane made a motion and Mr. Hill seconded the motion to accept the Minutes as written from the August 10, 2017 Board meeting. **The motion was carried unanimously to accept the minutes as written from the August 10, 2017, Board meeting** (FOR: Mathews, Baker, Hill, Mack, O’Kane, Scanlin).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Trust for Public Land Webinar/Bond Referendum Process

Mr. Will Abberger with the Trust for Public Land (TPL) gave a webinar about the bond referendum process and the history of working with Beaufort County. Mr. Abberger stated that TPL worked with Beaufort County and the Beaufort County Open Land Trust (BCOLT) during the 2012 bond referendum. If the R&C Board decided to move forward with a bond referendum for 2018, TPL will partner with BCOLT and poll the public about funding a future referendum. Mr. Abberger showed positive data that the public still votes for conservation funding nationally. He talked about some key variables in measure design such as the funding mechanism, amount and duration, purposes and uses of funds, timing, and management/accountability of the funds. He also discussed that some key steps to a successful ballot measure were feasibility research, program recommendations, ballot language, public opinion survey, and the campaign. In 2012, TPL and BCOLT conducted a poll that showed 63% of the public was in favor of the bond referendum. TPL recommends doing another poll for the 2018 bond referendum. Currently TPL is engaging in an economic study that will estimate the value provided by parks, trails, and conserved spaces within Beaufort County. It was asked that Mr. Abberger provide a timeline for the feasibility research, poll, and ballot to the Board members.

Financial Update

Chairman Mike Mathews stated that the financial report had not changed much from last month. There was a balance of \$13.7 million with \$9 million reserved for park infrastructure and \$4.7 million for property purchase.

Passive Park Update

Mr. Tony Criscitiello stated that the Fort Fremont bid opening will be next Thursday, October 19, 2017. The bid will include the construction of the interpretive center and pavilion. Okatie Preserve Park permits are being finalized by the Town of Bluffton. The project managers are working out details such as water and sewer. Once permits are obtained the County will put this project out to bid. Mitchellville Park is in the works as well as New Riverside and Widgeon Point. The Park Stewardship Manager position has been narrowed down to three applicants that will be interviewed by Mr. Eric Larson, Ms. Shannon Loper, and Mr. Criscitiello. 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.

TPL Economic Study

Ms. Holmes stated that the working group received the first draft and have been very impressed. The document is highly professional and seems to be based on sound data. It provides the public with a snapshot in time of annual benefits that land conservation has provided to Beaufort County and how the investment of the R&C Program has benefited the County. It is filled with complex numbers and data but will be summarized in a two page sheet. The study is on track as far as the timeframe is concerned and should be available to the public by mid-January. Ms. Kate Schaeffer stated that the Coastal Conservation League is in support of this study and is willing to help advocate for a new bond referendum for the R&C Program.

Bond Referendum Discussion

Ms. Holmes distributed information to the Board members about the feasibility study and poll that was performed by TPL and BCOLT in 2012. Last month Mr. Josh Gruber suggested the Board consider polling the public to see if there is still support for the R&C Program. The poll and feasibility study must be performed by a non-profit organization like the Beaufort County Open Land Trust. Mr. Baker made a motion and Ms. Scanlin seconded the motion to support Beaufort County Open Land Trust to move forward with funding for a feasibility study to bring forward a bond referendum request for the 2018 ballot. **The motion was carried unanimously to support Beaufort County Open Land Trust to move forward with funding for a feasibility study to bring forward a bond referendum request for the 2018 ballot.** (FOR: Mathews, Baker, Hill, Mack, O’Kane, Scanlin).

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chairman Mathews entertained a motion at 4:53 p.m. from Ms. Scanlin, seconded by Ms. O’Kane, to adjourn the meeting. **The motion was approved unanimously** (FOR: Mathews, Baker, Hill, Mack, O’Kane, Scanlin).

Submitted by: Amanda Flake, Natural Resources Planner

Approved: _____
Mike Mathews, Chairman,
Beaufort County Rural and Critical Land Preservation Board

Date: _____