

March 8, 2023

MINUTES OF THE CONSERVATION COLLIER LAND ACQUISITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Naples, Florida, March 8, 2023

LET IT BE REMEMBERED, the Conservation Collier Land Acquisition Advisory Committee in and for the County of Collier, having conducted business herein, met on this date at 1:00 P.M. in REGULAR SESSION at Administrative Building “F”, 3rd Floor, Collier County Government Complex Naples, Florida with the following members present:

CHAIR: Michele Lenhard
VICE CHAIR: Brittany Patterson-Weber
Gary Bromley
David Corban (Excused)
Karyn Allman
Ron Clark
Rhys Watkins
John Courtright
Corey McCloskey

ALSO PRESENT: Summer Araque, Conservation Collier Program Coordinator
Sally Ashkar, Assistant County Attorney
Melissa Hennig, Environmental Specialist I
Mitchell Barazowski, Environmental Specialist I
Clif Maehr, Environmental Specialist I
Jennifer Belpedio, Manager, Real Property Management

1. Roll Call

Chair Lenhard called the meeting to order at 1:00P.M. Roll call was taken and a quorum was established with 8 Members present.

A. Approval of CCLAAC Members attending the meeting remotely

All Members were present in the Boardroom.

B. Welcome to new member Corey McCloskey

Ms. McCloskey was welcomed as a new Member on the Committee.

2. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Clark moved to approve the Agenda. Second by Ms. Allman. Carried unanimously 8 – 0.

3. Approval of February 1, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Patterson-Weber moved to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2023 as presented. Second by Ms. Allman. Carried unanimously 8 – 0.

4. Old Business

A. Acquisition Cycle 10 Updates

Ms. Araque noted:

- Cycle 10 - 19 properties acquired for a total of 321 acres; properties of 71 additional acres are in process of closing. 22 parcels in the multi parcel project areas are moving forward because of letters sent to owners by the County determine their interest in selling their property.
- Cycle 11A – The County is in the process of obtaining appraisals for the parcels.
- Further updates will be provided at the April meeting when the program’s Annual Plan is reviewed by the Committee.

Speaker

Rich Blonna, City of Marco Island recommended Staff consider developing a simplified form on the status of acquisitions for members of the public who are interested in the program – *Ms. Araque noted the status of properties is available on the website however the updates are difficult as the status changes frequently. She recommended if a party is interested in the real time status of an application, they contact Staff who can provide the information.*

B. Revised Purchasing Policy implementation (Real Property Management)

Ms. Belpedio presented the PowerPoint “*Purchasing Policy Update*” for information purposes noting:

- Resolution 2023-10 amending the program’s purchasing policy was approved by the Board of County Commissioners on January 10, 2023.
- The policy allows the offer amount for a parcel be determined by Staff but be no more than the appraised value.
- The policy will allow Staff to address market changes and consider other factors including physical and legal access, presence of exotic vegetation, size, shape and topography of the parcel, proximity to other preserves, environmental cleanup requirements, zoning, etc.
- The goal is to maintain confidentiality in the acquisitions however the Committee will be notified of the estimated value during evaluation process which may incorporate any factors including those identified above.

During Committee discussion, the following was noted:

- All properties under consideration for acquisition will be subject to the new process with each parcel evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- The new process should not significantly delay the timing of acquisitions as it is not intended to be a time-consuming effort.
- Even though the process provides confidentiality, any information on the purchase will be available after the transfer has been completed.
- 15 – 17 properties have been subject to the new process and 4 applicants did not accept the County's offer.
- The appraisals are subject to in house review and the appraiser may be contacted if issues are identified which may want to be considered in the evaluation.

Speakers

Nancy Ruben, Winchester Head landowner noted she was offered the appraised value for her property by the County in the Fall of 2022, however, was recently notified a new offer would be less than the original one. She turned down a private party offer equal to the appraised value in December as she was relying on the County to complete the acquisition under the terms offered. She sent a letter to the County on the issue and did not receive a response – *Ms. Belpedio noted she would review the issue, but applicants should be aware no acquisition agreement is final until approved by the Board of County Commissioners.*

Brad Cornell, Audubon of the Western Everglades noted it is important for the County to ensure a clear message on the purchase policy is provided to the public so applicants are aware of the County's process and timelines. He also agreed with Mr. Blonna's comments on a simplified acquisition status form being developed by Staff.

The Committee requested Staff to the post information on the new purchasing policy on the program's website.

C. Rosbough Estate Initial Screening Criteria Update

Ms. Araque reported:

- The Committee previously directed Staff to move the Rosbough Estate property forward in the acquisition process.
- The property contains a residence which potentially could be used for law enforcement housing in exchange for park ranger the Conservation Collier properties in the area.
- After inspection of the property Staff determined the residence is not suitable for the program due its size and concerns over the ongoing maintenance expenses for property. They are recommending the property not be acquired by the County.

Ms. Hennig presented the *"Initial Screening Criteria – Rosbough Estate Update"* for consideration. She noted the home is adjacent to Trafford Lake and 5,000 – 6,000 square feet in size and there are also outbuildings on the site.

Mr. Bromley moved to reconsider the previous action by the Committee approving moving the parcel forward in the acquisition process. Second by Ms. Patterson-Weber. Carried unanimously 8 – 0.

Ms. Patterson -Weber moved to not consider the parcel for acquisition and for Staff not to prepare an Initial Criteria Screening Report for the property. Second by Mr. Courtright. Carried unanimously 8 – 0.

5. New Business

A. Land Management Plan reviews

i. HHH Ranch Review & Naming Proposal

Mr. Barazowski presented the “*HHH Ranch Preserve Land Management Plan - February 2023 – February 2025*” for consideration and the PowerPoint “*HHH Interim Management Plan*” for information purposes. He noted:

- The purpose of the plan is to provide management direction for the Preserve.
- The plan consists of 5 major elements: Vegetation Management, Wildlife Management, Recreation Management, Preserve Safety and Security and Additional Resource Management.
- The plan covers a 2-year span when in 2025 the final management plan will be developed.
- Funding for exotics removal is available from the State which the County seeks when appropriate.

Speaker

Brad Cornell, Audubon of the Western Everglades noted the area has been subject to over drainage due to influences from manmade canals in the area. The condition makes the parcels vulnerable to wildfires and he recommended hydrologic restoration of the lands be considered especially given the ongoing RESTORE (Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act) project across the highway. Partnerships could also be sought from the Florida Department of Transportation, South Florida Water Management District, Collier County Stormwater and Transportation Departments, etc. Concepts could include the use of spreader swales from the Golden Gate Main Canal which would reduce the water currently diverted to Naples Bay. Other concerns include ensuring adequate fencing and wildlife crossings are utilized during any future Wilson Blvd. Extension projects.

Chair Lenhard recommended Staff incorporate Mr. Cornell’s recommendations on hydrologic restoration into Section 6.3.4 of the plan.

Chair Lenhard noted she provided recommendations to Staff via email on language to be incorporated into the Executive Summary provided to the BCC in conjunction with the proposed plan. Discussion occurred between the Committee and Staff on the details of the wording and consensus was reached on the language.

Mr. Watkins moved for Staff to incorporate the following language into the Executive Summary to be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners when they consider the HHH Ranch Preserve Land Management Plan – February 2023-February 2025:

7.1.4 Wildlife Management Concerns: The conceptual Alignment of the Wilson Blvd extension, in addition to development of the Collier Parcel to the west and the mining operation to the north, could have an impact on the preserve. Fragmentation of habitat could isolate and restrict wildlife dispersal of species such as the Florida panther, Florida black bear, eastern diamondback rattlesnake, and red-cockaded woodpecker. See Figure 7.1.5 Wildlife Spatial Data.

7.3.1 Habitat Improvements: Additional roads and development will reduce the window of opportunity to conduct the prescribed burns necessary to restore and maintain fire dependent habitat and to reduce fuel loading. Alternatives to prescribed fire, such as mechanical removal, are more costly and less beneficial to the habitat.

7.3.2 Connectivity: The proposed conceptual Wilson Blvd extension poses a major threat to wildlife in the area unless mitigated with a series of fencing and under/overpasses.

CCLAAC offers these important considerations when evaluating the conceptual Wilson Blvd. road alignment as the Exceptional Benefits Ordinance process is not applicable on the HHH property.

Second by Mr. Clark. Carried unanimously 8 – 0.

Mr. Courtright moved to recommend the Board of County Commissioners name the Triple HHH Ranch Preserve the “North Belle Meade Preserve.” Second by Ms. Allman. Carried unanimously 8 – 0.

Ms. Patterson-Weber moved to recommend the Board of County Commissioners approve the “HHH Ranch Preserve Land Management Plan - February 2023 – February 2025” subject to Staff adding language regarding the potential for hydrologic restoration of the site. Second by Mr. Bromley. Carried unanimously 8 – 0.

ii. Winchester Head

Mr. Maehr presented the “Winchester Head Extended Interim Management Plan - Fifth Extension” for consideration and PowerPoint “Winchester Head Interim Management Plan Updates” for information purposes. He noted the multi-parcel project currently contains 95.8 acres of the 157.53 acres identified for potential acquisition with 70 of the 114 targeted parcels acquired. The main objective of the management plan involves addressing nonnative plants and has an annual budget of \$20,000.

Ms. Patterson-Weber moved to recommend the Board of County Commissioners approve the “Winchester Head Extended Interim Management Plan - Fifth Extension” as presented by Staff. Second by Mr. Bromley. Carried unanimously 8 – 0.

B. Cycle 12A Initial Criteria Screening Report(s)

i. Rosbough Enterprises

Ms. Hennig presented the ICSR “Conservation Collier Land Acquisition Program Initial Screening Report for the Rosbough Enterprises.” The 13 parcels are in the Pepper Ranch Preserve Mailing area (Cycle 11), 111.02 acres in size, received a score of 233 out of 400 and have an assessed value of \$660,120. She noted the parcels received a low score for accessibility as public access to the parcels will be difficult.

ii. HHH Ranch TPMA parcels

Ms. Hennig presented the ICSR “Conservation Collier Land Acquisition Program Initial Screening Report for HHH Ranch TPMA - Murawski Trust and Volpe Trust.” The 2 parcels are in the HHH Ranch Target Protection Area, a total of 13.37 acres in size, received a score of 221 out of 400 and have an assessed value of \$100,850. She noted landowners in the target area will not be contacted regarding the potential sale of their properties to the County during Cycle 12 as

Staff is coordinating with the Growth Management Department to determine which parcels may be advantageous to target given their designation as “sending lands.”

6. Subcommittee Reports

A. Lands Evaluation & Management – Chair, Ron Clark - upcoming meetings April 12, 2023, and September 21, 2023

Mr. Clark reported the Committee met on February 12, 2023 and reviewed on provided recommendation for the HHH and Winchester Head Land Management Plans.

B. Outreach – Chair, Brittany Patterson-Weber –last meeting January 20, 2023
No recent update necessary.

C. Ordinance Policy and Rules – Chair, Michele Lenhard - last meeting June 1, 2022
No recent updates necessary.

7. Coordinator Communications

A. BCC Items - *Ms. Araque provided the update as listed below:*

- i.** February 28 – Cycle 11B Ranking.
- ii.** Upcoming (tentatively March 28th) review of Rattlesnake Hammock Final Land Management Plan.
- iii.** Cycle 12 TPMA and review of Annual Plan slated for April 25th.

B. Miscellaneous Items
None

9. Chair and Committee Member Comments

Mr. Watkins expressed his appreciation to the Members of the public for attending the meeting.

10. Public General Comments

None

11. Staff Comments

None

12. Next Meeting – April 5, 2023

There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was adjourned by order of the chair at 3:31P.M.

Conservation Collier Land Acquisition Advisory Committee

Michele Lenhard, Chair

These minutes approved by the Board/Committee on _____ as presented _____ or as amended _____.