

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CONSERVATION
COLLIER LAND ACQUISITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Naples, Florida, March 12, 2007

LET IT BE REMEMBERED, that the Conservation Collier Land
Acquisition Advisory Committee in and for the County of Collier, having
conducted business herein, met on this date at 9:00 a.m. in REGULAR
SESSION at Administrative Building F, 3rd Floor Collier County
Government Center, Naples, Florida, with the following members present:

Chairman: Bill Poteet
Michael Delate (excused)
Marco Espinar
Wayne Jenkins
Kevin Kacer
Will Kriz
Tony Pires (absent)
Stan Weiner
Mimi Wolok

ALSO PRESENT: Alexandra Sulecki, Conservation Collier Coordinator
Cindy Erb, Sr. Property Acquisition Specialist
Christal Segura, Conservation Collier Land Manager
Jennifer Belpedio, Assistant County Attorney
Roosevelt Leonard, Collier County Real Estate Appraiser
Amanda Townsend, Public Services Division

I. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bill Poteet at 9:02 a.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum established. Mike Delate, Tony Pires and Mimi Wolok were not present at roll Call. Mike Delate had provided an advance request to be excused for reasons of family illness.

II. Introduce new staff member Linda Sujevich

Alex Sulecki welcomed Dennis Vasey, Supervisor, Seat 3, District Board of Supervisors, Collier Soil and Water Conservation District (CSWCD) and noted that Conservation Collier Committee member Stan Weiner is also the Chairman of the CSWCD, but would not be acting in that capacity at this meeting. She then introduced the new County staff member Linda Sujevich.

III. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Espinar moved to approve the agenda. Second by Mr. Kriz. Motion carried unanimously 6-0.

IV. Approval of February 12, 2007 Minutes

Mr. Kriz moved to approve the minutes for February 12, 2007. Second by Mr. Weiner.

Wayne Jenkins noted that he had arrived to the meeting late and therefore should not have been marked “absent”.

Motion carried unanimously 6-0.

V. Old Business

A. Partnership Proposal – Collier Soil and Water Conservation District

Mr. Vasey read an introductory statement thanking Conservation Collier for allowing him to be part of the meeting and reviewed the history of how Florida’s water flow was set up years ago to drain instead of allowing standing water and how it is now a goal to reestablish the historic hydrology.

Mimi Wolok joined the meeting at 9:09 a.m.

Mr. Poteet brought out that a letter written to the Board of County Commissioners from the CSWCD mentioning that they did not want Conservation Collier purchasing lands within Winchester Head.

Marco Espinar asked how the Big Cypress Basin (BCB) and CSWCD work together.

Mr. Vasey mentioned that the purpose of CSWCD is to conserve water. South Florida Water Management District and BCB are state agencies. , CSWCD is a sub agency but all entities work together. CSWCD suggested that Conservation Collier purchase the lands from the 22 willing sellers within Winchester Head. The issue about purchasing the lands is whether the cost is reasonable. CSWCD efforts in the future will have more communication with the County. He suggested meeting together periodically.

Kevin Kacer asked whether the CSWCD still desires Conservation Collier to cease acquisitions in Winchester head, noting that staff has 23 willing sellers.

Mr. Vasey stated that he does not want competition in buying lands.

Kevin Kacer requested that the CSWCD rescind the letter.

Mr. Vasey responded that the issue is price of land and that we may be paying 4 times as much for the land as it is worth. He wants an “honest” price. He conceded that it may not be true that we have paid too much. He suggested that the Conservation Collier Land Acquisition Advisory Group can appoint a member to the CSWCD.

Mr. Kriz advised that Conservation Collier wants to cooperate and coordinate but that the letter to the BCC is an impediment and requested a new letter be written rescinding the previous letter

Ms. Wolok added that the letter has halted purchase of lands within the area. She does not see Conservation Collier and Collier Soil and Water Conservation District goals as incompatible. She suggested that acquisition of lands should get back online. Ms. Wolok also noted that the practical aspects of terracing may upset neighbors and that it was necessary to get the biological and process details in order to get acquisition online.

Mr. Vasey responded that the two groups do agree on many points, but noted that a timeline for goals started in the 1970's and there is need to address water issues. He agreed to place the issue of a new letter as an agenda item on the CSWCD Thursday meeting to clarify the original concerns.

Wayne Jenkins noted that the letter blocked acquisition and that the two organizations do have compatible goals. He also asked what kind of budget the CSWCD has for purchases.

Mr. Vasey Responded that Lands are purchased through grants and marketing. He believes that Collier Soil and Water Conservation District does not have to own the land, they just want to be part of managing the land.

Bill Poteet asked what about management.

Mr. Vasey responded that They would want to do management that conforms with the Collier County Land Development code and would probably not be able to dig.

Marco Espinar advised that Conservation Collier is always looking for partners and that the letter was unexpected, a “shot over the bow,” and had a negative impact. He also disagreed with the letter’s personal attack on County staff.

Mr. Vasey responded that he believed that if there were problems of agreement, it was appropriate for CSWCD to approach the BCC directly as this constituted communication between elected bodies.

At this time, **Alex Sulecki** (speaking to problems of agreement) noted from a staff perspective that Mike Ramsey had come to the Conservation Collier Committee in 2004 with a similar proposal. The committee had asked for details but these were never subsequently provided.

Wayne Jenkins stated that the letter had really stopped us and requested that it be rescinded. He said that we were not at odds.

Bill Poteet asked Mr. Vasey how we could partner so we do not lose 23 willing sellers.

Mr. Vasey stated that the request for a new letter would need to be an agenda item and that CSWCD could come back to Conservation Collier with a plan.

Bill Poteet asked about public access.

Mr. Vasey advised that lands would be posted and it may be necessary to close at times for public health and safety. He advised that lands would be open for access if suitable and discussed some potential uses like fishing and duck hunting.

Marco Espinar asked if there were other areas in the County where CSWCD has an interest.

Mr. Vasey responded that all lands held by the public in Collier County we of potential interest and that CSWCD would like to be the manager of all these lands.

Marco Espinar asked for clarification that the CSWCD is looking at management and not acquisition?

Mr. Vasey responded "Right."

Public Speakers-

Brad Cornell, Collier County Audubon Society raised the issue that what the CSWCD is proposing, i.e., technically engineering the lands to hold water, is not natural and therefore not compatible with Conservation Collier.

Pat Humphreys a resident of Golden Gate Estates spoke, noting that her property was flooded last year. She would like to know what a Conservation Collier acquisition of Winchester Head will do to eliminate the flooding.

Bridget Washburn, Conservancy of Southwest Florida expressed concern with Winchester Head properties being altered beyond their natural capacity to treat water.

Staff Speaker

Roosevelt Leonard, County Real Estate Appraiser demonstrated maps for sales during 2004, 2005, and 2006 in Winchester Head. Conservation Collier was competing against other buyers for both improved and unimproved properties. Conservation Collier started out paying around \$26,000 an acre and ended with paying around \$39,000 an acre. The price for land outside of the wetlands was around \$100,000 to \$125,000 an acre. It is a good time to purchase lands now because the market is down to \$20,000 an acre. Anyone that can purchase this land with the ability to negotiate may be able to get a lower price.

Marco Espinar noted that the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regulates permitting and that permitting in Winchester Head has stopped essentially due to the high cost of developing wetlands.

Roosevelt Leonard added that now wetland properties in Collier are marketed with a DEP report to demonstrate that there are buildable uplands.

B. Real Estate Services Update

Ms. Erb gave an update on the following properties:

Cycle Four- appraisals are underway; they should be complete by the end of March.

Oetting- An offer of \$50,000 for the two properties has been made.

Mr. Kriz moved to approve the “Agreement for Sale and Purchase” of the Oetting property. Second by Mr. Kacer.

Mr. Espinar left the meeting at 9:10 a.m. ? He left in the middle of the vote?

Motion carried unanimously 6-0.

C. Contracts/Agreements

D. Conflict of Interest

Michael Delate will read his conflict of interest at the next meeting, since he is not available today.

E. Gawn Fishin’ partnership proposal staff update

Mr. Espinar rejoined the meeting at 9:11 a.m.

Amanda Townsend, Public Services Division mentioned that they continue to pursue acquisition of the Gawn Fishin’ parcel. Staff is working on due diligence and appraisal, which has been ordered. A letter of intent has been signed by the BCC and staff is seeking buy-in from Sammy Hamilton, Mayor of Everglades City. An environmental assessment has been ordered, which is needed to continue pursuit.

Roosevelt Leonard, Real Estate Services Dept. advised that it will be about 45 days for the appraisal.

Bill Poteet stated that we do not want to buy the development rights.

Mimi Wolok requested that the wetland area be broken out of the appraisal.

Mr. Leonard agreed that it can be broken out.

Marco Espinar asked about existing permitting, asking why Conservation Collier should use its funds for an area potentially needed for conservation on the site anyway under permit requirements.

Alex Sulecki read Section 6(1)(g) of the Conservation Collier ordinance, which requires approval from the governing body of a municipality before

acquiring lands located within that municipality's boundary, noting that the Gawn Fishin' property is within the municipal boundary of Everglades City.

The item will be brought back as more information is received.

F. Starnes property update

Cindy Erb reported that Mr. Starnes and his wife own 50% of the property while 1/8th and 3/8th are owned by others.

Alex Sulecki confirmed with Ms. Erb that there are "no surprises" in the recent title search done on Starnes.

VI. New Business

A. Review of submitted applications to determine whether they meet criteria and goals.

Ms. Sulecki demonstrated the location of the Bailey Trust property. It is part of the flood plane for the Gordon River. Its estimated value is \$139,629.00. She feels it would be excellent access for the adjacent Conservation Collier property.

Ms. Wolok moved to move the property forward. Second by Mr. Espinar. Motion carries unanimously 7-0.

B. Outstanding Advisory Committee Member Program

Mr. Poteet will be honored at tomorrow's Board of County Commissioners meeting.

C. Program General Report

Christal Segura showed photographs of the Otter Mound Grand Opening Ceremony, held March 13, 2007. Around 100 persons were in attendance including the media.

D. Subcommittee appointments

Kevin Kacer agreed to stay on the Lands Evaluation and Management Subcommittee.

Mimi Wolok volunteered to join the Outreach Subcommittee.

VII. Subcommittee meeting reports

A. Outreach – Tony Pires, Chair

The next meeting will be May 20th, 11:00 a.m. at Building ‘W’ conference room.

B. Lands Evaluation and Management – Marco Espinar, Chair

The final draft of Railhead Scrub was received. The next meeting is tentatively set for the 30th at 9:00 a.m.

C. Ordinance Policy and Procedures – Will Kriz, Chair

A meeting date needs to be set before the next full Committee meeting. Once set, an agenda can be emailed to each Committee Member.

VIII. Chair Committee Member Comments

Mr. Espinar thanked Collier Soil and Water Conservation District for coming to the meeting.

IX. Public Comments

Brad Cornell, Collier County Audubon Society suggested looking at an ordinance change to be able to go forward with purchasing within other agency’s acquisition areas where the other agency is no longer actively pursuing purchase.

X. Staff Comments

None

There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was adjourned by the order of the Chair at 10:39 a.m.

CONSERVATION COLLIER LAND ACQUISITION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Chairman Bill Potet

March 12, 2007

**These Minutes approved by the Board/Committee on _____,
as presented_____or as amended_____.**