

July 12, 2021

MINUTES OF THE CONSERVATION COLLIER LAND ACQUISITION  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Naples, Florida, July 12, 2021

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 9:00 A.M. in REGULAR SESSION at Administrative Building "F", 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Collier County Government Complex Naples, Florida with the following members present:

CHAIRMAN: Bill Poteet

VICE CHAIRMAN: Michele Lenhard  
Michael Seef (via Zoom)  
Gary Bromley  
Brittany Patterson-Weber  
Thomas J. Iandimarino  
Hannah Rinaldi  
David Corban (Excused)  
Carl Kuehner (via Zoom)

ALSO PRESENT: Summer Araque, Conservation Collier Program Coordinator  
Jennifer Belpedio, Assistant County Attorney

*Any persons in need of the verbatim record of the meeting may request a copy of the video recording from the Collier County Communications and Customer Relations Department or view online.*

**I. Roll Call**

**Chairman Poteet** called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. Roll call was taken and a quorum was established by those present in person.

*Mr. Iandimarino moved to allow Mr. Kuehner and Mr. Seef to participate via Zoom due to an extraordinary circumstance. Second by Ms. Lenhard. Carried unanimously 6 – 0.*

**II. Approval of Agenda**

*Mr. Lenhard moved to approve the Agenda. Second by Mr. Iandimarino. Carried unanimously 8 – 0.*

**III. Approval of May 10, 2021 minutes**

*Ms. Patterson-Weber moved to approve the minutes of the May 10, 2021 meeting as presented. Second by Mr. Iandimarino. Carried unanimously 8 – 0.*

**IV. New Business**

**A. Acquisition Cycle 10**

**1. Big Hammock Initial Criteria Screening Report (ICSR)**

**Ms. Araque** presented the “*Big Hammock Initial Criteria Screening Report Updated from 2009 & 2018 Reports - Staff Report Date: July 2021*” for informational purposes.

Property Owner: Barron Collier Partnership, LLC

Property Location: South of Pepper Ranch

Parcel size: Area I – 235 acres; Area II – 799.4 acres; Total = 1,034.4 acres

She noted that the lands were evaluated in Cycle 9 and ranked at 8 and 9 for potential acquisition. The Report presented today is the same as the one reviewed during Cycle 9.

The following was noted during Committee discussions:

- That the properties are in Stewardship Sending Area #13 (SSA 13) of the Rural Lands Stewardship Area, a voluntary landowner program in the County designed to protect environmentally sensitive lands (Sending Areas) while allowing development in other suitable areas (Receiving Areas).
- The Sending Areas allow development credits to be obtained by dedicating the lands to conservation and transferring the credits to areas allowed for development. Four credits are eligible when a Restoration Plan is filed for the lands (R1) and an additional 4 are garnered when the Restoration has been completed (R2).
- A Restoration Plan was filed for lands in Area II which enabled development credits of 4 units per acre (R1) for the 261 eligible acres. The restoration required has not yet been completed and the 4 credits per acre are held in escrow for potential use by the landowner in the future.
- If the County acquires the properties, the developer intends to retain the credits obtained for development.
- The current appraisal identified in the ICSR is from 2019 and if the County moves forward with the purchase, a new appraisal would be sought.

**Austin Howell, Barron Collier Partnership, LLC** reported:

- That all acreage eligible for restoration in Area II is included in the plan filed by the owner.

July 12, 2021

- They would be willing to waive any oil and gas “surface rights” which allow a party to install equipment or fixtures on the property for oil and gas exploration/extraction.
- When Pepper Ranch was purchased by the County, the landowner retained the credits due to him under the program.
- If the County acquires the properties, they will be retaining an easement through the property for restoration purposes and access to other lands they own adjacent to these parcels.
- The intent is to also retain the rights to any Panther Habitat Unit Credits available on the lands.
- All lands in SSA #13 are owned by Barron Collier Partnership, LLC.

**Speaker**

**Meredith Budd, Florida Wildlife Federation** supports acquisition of the lands but expressed concern over the County acquiring the property at market value and allowing the owner to retain the land use credits. The acquisition of the Pepper Ranch property brought this issue to light, and she recommended that if the owner retains the R1 credits, a maintenance endowment be provided to the County. If the R2 credits are realized, the owner provides maintenance of the area as required under the plan into perpetuity.

The other option which should be considered if the credits are retained by the owner, the market value of the lands be adjusted to reflect retention of the credits. It would be unfair to the taxpayers if the properties are purchased at current market value without some form of value adjustment or endowments.

*Mr. Iandimarino moved the application forward for full analysis. Second by Ms. Patterson-Weber. Carried unanimously 8 – 0.*

Discussion occurred on whether the current report is the final analysis for the property and if the approval should have been subject to the outstanding items being addressed by the applicant (i.e., the status of the credits should the County acquire the property).

**Ms. Araque** reported that the current ICSR is the final analysis for the properties however, they will be reporting back to the Committee on the outstanding items discussed today.

**Mr. Seef** expressed concern on moving the application forward to the ranking process given the outstanding items and the ICSR may need to be amended based on the owner’s responses.

**Ms. Belpedio** noted that she is requesting the owner provide responses to questions raised today. **Mr. Howell** noted that he could report back to the Committee in August on outstanding items.

*Ms. Lenhard moved to accept the ICSR report. Second by Ms. Rinaldi.*

**Mr. Seef** recommended that the motion be subject to the outstanding items raised in today’s meeting being addressed.

**Chairman Poteet** noted that the items will be discussed at the August meeting.

*Motion carried 7 “yes” – 1 “no.” Mr. Seef voted “no.”*

**Cycle 10 Update**

**Ms. Araque** provide the update noting 18 applications have been filed as follows: In the area of Panther Walk Preserve – 7; In the area of the Robert H. Gore, III Preserve – 2; In the area of Rivers Road Preserve – 4 and in the area of Shell Island Preserve -1. In addition to those, 3 were heard at May’s meeting (preliminary reports for Rivers Road 19.4 acres parcel, Bethune Road/ Sanitation Road properties and the HHH Ranch Section 33) and 1 today for Baron Collier Partnership, LLLC Big Hammock lands.

**2. Multi-Parcel projects Appraisal**

**Ms. Araque** provided updated maps for the Red Maple Swamp and Winchester Head multi-parcel projects and the report “*Real Estate Appraisal Report – June 12, 2021, Red Maple Swamp and Winchester Head*” for informational purposes. She queried if the Committee desires staff to send out a letter to landowners in the project areas to determine their interest in selling their property to the County.

**Speaker**

**Brad Cornell, Audubon of the Western Everglades** expressed support for the multi-parcel projects and recommended acquisitions continue as the lots are not suited for development due to their wet conditions.

**Ms. Araque** noted that the lots located within the boundaries of the projects may be considered for acquisition at any time and are not part of the Cycle/Ranking process.

*Mr. Seef moved to direct staff to contact the property owners via US mail to determine if they are interested in selling their lands to the County. Second by Ms. Lenhard. Carried unanimously 8 – 0.*

**V. Old Business**

**A. Railhead Scrub Preserve updates**

**1. School site coordination**

**Ms. Araque** reported that a site plan has been developed which depicts 6 parking spaces allocated to Railhead Scrub Preserve, in the area of the proposed Sheriff’s housing on the property where the new high school will be constructed. The spaces are adjacent to the Preserve which will allow visitors to park and enter the site on foot.

**2. Veterans Memorial Boulevard**

**Ms. Araque** provided a copy of the Transportation Department’s PowerPoint “*Collier County Project #60198 Veterans Memorial Boulevard Extension FDOT PD&E Coordination Meeting June 10, 2021*” for informational purposes. She noted Phase I is under construction at 32 percent completion. Construction for Phase II, connecting the school entrance road to US41 is anticipated to initiate in 2023 with completion estimated for the summer of 2025. Phase II includes an asphalt roadway, bike path, sidewalks and a stormwater retention pond.

**Speaker**

**Meredith Budd, Florida Wildlife Federation** addressed the Committee noting that she met with representatives of the Transportation Department to address the Gopher Turtles in the area, and discussions are underway for construction of a wildlife underpass for the roadway to provide connectivity to the two areas utilized by the species. Fencing is also under consideration to deter the species from crossing the roadway.

**VI. Coordinator Communications**

**A. BCC Items**

Ms. Araque noted that the Board of County Commissioners approved:

- Gore Memorandum of Understanding Amendments.
- Filing grant applications for State funding to assist in exotics removal on preserves in 2022.
- The new Camp Host Agreement for Pepper Ranch effective in the Fall of 2021.

**B. Preserve Updates**

Ms. Araque provided the following updates:

Rattlesnake Hammock Preserve – A workday was held on June 19<sup>th</sup> where County staff, FGCU students and other volunteers assisted with projects on the property. Construction of the fencing is on hold due to the increase in construction costs.

Pepper Ranch – A survey of the deer population was conducted, and it is estimated the current population is 84. Staff is monitoring the sunflower plants to determine the feasibility of holding the Sunflower Festival in the Fall.

**C. Move meetings for 2022**

Mr. Araque reported that staff is requesting the Committee's regular meeting day be changed as Monday's make it difficult for them to prepare for a meeting as it needs to be done 1 – 2 days in advance given the items which may arise just prior to the meeting. This timeframe currently encompasses a weekend due to a Monday meeting.

At this point, the following days have been tentatively identified for the meeting:

*1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month – 1pm.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month – 1pm.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month – 9am.*

*3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month.*

Committee Members noted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday and 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday are not feasible based on scheduling conflicts and Ms. Araque noted she would review the input and notify the Committee of the new date.

**D. Miscellaneous Items**

None

**VII. Subcommittee Reports**

**A. Lands Evaluation & Management** – Chair, Bill Poteet

The next meeting is anticipated to be convened on September 8, 2021.

**B. Outreach** – Chair, Brittany Patterson-Weber

The last meeting was held on March 24, 2021.

**C. Policy and Rules** –

Chair to be selected at next meeting; meeting July 28, 2021.

**VIII. Chair Committee Member Comments**

None

**IX. Public General Comments**

None

July 12, 2021

X. Staff Comments  
None

XI. Next Meeting Date  
August 9, 2021

There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was adjourned by order of the chair at 10:40 A.M.

Conservation Collier Land Acquisition Advisory Committee

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Potteet, Chairman

These minutes approved by the Board/Committee on 8/9/21 as presented  or as amended \_\_\_\_\_.

(804)