



Land Acquisition & Management Program

Minutes
Regular Meeting of the St. Johns County
Land Acquisition and Management Program
Conservation Board
Tuesday, June 11th, 2024 at 1:30 pm

The regularly scheduled public meeting of the St. Johns County Land Acquisition and Management Program Conservation Board was held on Tuesday, June 11th, 2024 at 1:30pm in the County Auditorium at the St. Johns County Administrative Complex located at 500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, Florida.

Members Present: JB Miller (Acting Chair), Michael D Adams, Shorty Robbins, Wayne Flowers, Hawley Smith III, Lauren Howington

Members Absent: Elizabeth Guthrie, Anila Lahiri, Irene Kaufman

Commission Member: Absent

Staff Present: Ryan Mauch; Kealey West (Sr Asst County Attorney)

Public Attendees: Craig Cunningham; Jen Lomberk; Ramesh Bush

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- **Miller:** Called meeting to order at 1:30pm
 - **Public Speakers:** (Items not on the agenda)
(2:28)

Jen Lomberk (291 Cubbedge Road St Augustine, Fl 32080) Requested the LAMP board extend a formal request the BCC to increase the LAMP funding to \$5 million annually. Explained that the County is in the annual budget process and has only earmarked \$500,000 for LAMP. Explained that LAMP board has a list of priority properties submitted earlier this year of over 300 acres of land and that an increase to \$5million has been publicly supported by Commissioner Dean.

(03:44)

- **Motion to approve the meeting minutes April 9th, 2024 by Flowers, seconded by Adams, carries 6/0 .**

(04:05)

Miller: Recommend to include Ms. Lomberk's suggestion as an Agenda item 1 (a).

(04:41)

- **Motion by Flowers, and seconded by Robbins , carries 6/0 , to approve the Agenda as amended to include a letter to the BCC.**

AGENDA ITEMS:

1.a. BCC Letter requesting to increase LAMP funding to \$5 million annually

Board members discussed the procedures and content of the letter.

Staff (Mauch): Advised members that a letter will be forwarded to Board members for a request for \$5 million and sent to the BOCC. A similar letter of request for \$5 million by the SJC Civic Round Table was sent to the LAMP Board members.

Staff (West): Advised Board they can give direction to staff to draft a letter based on the discussion today, with the recommendation of \$5 million, and have it for the Chair signature. As LAMP does not meet again until August, this Board could, based on this discussion, have Staff craft a letter for the Chair signature.

(10:26)

Motion by Robbins, seconded by Flowers, carries, 6/0, for Staff to draft a letter for the Chair's signature to request the BCC provide LAMP \$5 million for the 2025 budget.

1. b. 3775 US 1 South- Moultrie Creek Property - First review Application for this property was submitted in April 2024 . It is an existing commercial property located on Moultrie Creek. There is a 50 foot undisturbed buffer, required along the salt marsh. There is a historic structure on the property. It was known as Moultrie Manor or Moultrie Post Office at various times. It is eligible for designation and is most likely a significant cultural resource. It was built in 1910 to the East of the current location. It was moved to the current location around 1920.

It has historic associations with the prohibition era. It is an example of framed vernacular style, structural systems, on poured concrete footing foundation with a dropped siding exterior. There is an existing parking area and an open grass area and tree canopy surrounding the structure.

Application states the property would be an outstanding location for a potential park with access to Moultrie Creek. There is 275 feet frontage to Moultrie Creek, 300 feet frontage on US 1, 275 feet on Creekside Drive. The historic building is 3760 square feet and currently serves as the Law offices of Jeffrey Monroe.

The Parks and Recreation Department reviewed the site and stated the house could be converted to County Offices if found to be in good condition. Parks and Recreation did say the second parcel is small and no recreational amenities could be provided there. The parcel does not connect to the waterway to allow for public access. One could potentially be installed to provide access if it was to go through the environmental resource permitting process.

(15:09)

Applicant: Craig Cunningham (Real Estate Broker, 42 Ocean Ct, St Augustine Beach Fl 32080) Explained the property was on the market for approximately a year. It was withdrawn. Would be a great location for a park. Building is in fair condition, yet will need a new roof over time and is well set up for offices.

Various discussion occurred between the presenter and the board members, in particular with regard to the location, and possible negotiation on the price. Members asked Staff as to what density is allowed under Residential C.

Staff (West): Advised the allowed density is 6 per acre.

Further discussion occurred between Board members with regard to the property location being close to US1 and having water access, the intended use of the property and if the County were to obtain this historic structure. It was noted that it would be expensive to maintain.

(21:35)

Motion by Flowers, seconded by Robbins, carries 6/0, to move 3775 US1 South – Moultrie Creek Property to the next stage for further consideration.

Robbins: Requested to hear some community support, via email, on this property for the next meeting, with suggestions as to what the potential uses may be.

Smith: Requested Staff to outline the evaluation process for this property.

Staff (Mauch): The next stage, at the August meeting, you will do a second round of reviews to include scoring of the property. Post scoring you gain a consensus to add the property to the recommendations list. That list will then go forward to the BCC for approval.

2. Discussion on less-than-fee-simple acquisitions via conservation easement

(23:45)

Staff (West): Explained the process. Provided a list of benefits to the County and benefits to the landowner. Read the key points for the Conservation Easements document. Explained the difference between Conservation Easements and Fee-Simple acquisitions. Provided a Baseline Documentation Report. Also explained the prohibited uses on conservation easements.

Valuation involves looking at the property's fair market Value (FMV) before an easement, and comparing it to the FMV after an easement designation. An appraiser will determine the value base on the difference between the two numbers.

Monitoring and Enforcement:

1. No management plan required. The County has a right to inspect and staff would do a yearly inspection to monitor the property.
2. The private landowner manages their property consistent with existing activities and allowed activities under the Conservation Easement.

(31:11)

Flowers: Mentioned that at the Water Management District level it has been questioned as to when a CE is to be released. Asked if the County currently has any ordinances or other regulations as to the circumstances under which a CE will be released.

Staff (West): We do not have an ordinance with regard to that. This presentation has initiated discussion in our Real Estate Division. Explained that the County has not sought to acquire Conservation Easements in the past.

Various discussion occurred between the Board members and the presenter with regard to an example of the County purchasing a Conservation Easement. It was explained that a CE is in perpetuity, especially as it is being purchased with land acquisition dollars. Confirmed that purchasing of a CE is written into the ordinance that governs the LAMP Board.

Miller: Questioned if Staff would write the baseline documentation report.

Discussion occurred between the Staff presenter and the Board with regard to a policy that says the County could purchase less-than-fee. The County has the opportunity to partner with other agencies so they would hold the CE and the County would receive a third party right of enforcement through monitoring inspection.

Robbins: The scoring would end up much differently. The Board could add more points because it costs less to acquire, yet would lose points because it has no public access.

Staff (Mauch): Explained the Board can still use the same scoring sheet with everything that OCA has provided for less-than-fee simple acquisitions.

Miller: You would use the same scoring matrix. Then compare Conservation Easements in terms of scoring, and full-fee with less-than-fee.

(44:43)

3. Finalization of conceptual management plans for Shores Blvd, Bishop Estates Rd, 5960 Don Manuel Rd and 8805 A1A South

Staff (Mauch): Presented the Conceptual Management plans for the four properties. Mentioned that they are living documents that are amended from time to time, even post acquisition. Explained that all of the concepts from the last meeting have been complied for the Shores-Matanzas Estuary Buffer property, Bailey Ranch-Bishop Estates Rd, 5960 Don Manuel Rd and 8805 A1A South properties.

1. Shores Blvd. Commissioner Dean would like to rename this property to Matanzas Estuary Buffer. The Chair has compiled all the concepts for this property as well as the following properties from the 2023 recommended properties list.

2. The Bailey Ranch on Bishop Estates Road. This was discussed recently at an internal staff meeting as there was further information from the applicant to include on the Conceptual Management plan. With a County acquisition, the Parks and Recreation Department will consider maintaining the existing structures and on-site activities.

3. 5960 Don Manuel Road

A small property adjacent to a large conservation area managed by the Water Management District. There is not a lot of management objectives other than spot checking for invasive species. Staff will do inspections to see if there is any trespassing. List price is relatively low.

Discussion occurred within board members and staff to make an amendment in the Conceptual Management plans for 5960 Don Manuel Road, the Shores Blvd, as stating that the Water Management District have indicated they are open to assisting the County in managing these properties.

4. 8805 A1A South

No further updates on this property.

(58:16)

Motion by Flowers, seconded by Adams, carries 6/0, to approve the conceptual plans as amended here today.

(59:10)

Staff Reports(Mauch)

LAMP Budget as of June 2024 is \$3,316,629

Explained that Staff within the County's Legislative Affairs Department will work through various grant opportunities.

Public Speaker: Ramesh Bush, Director for the Land Trust (843 W Monroe Street, Jacksonville, FL 32202) Spoke on Item 2 Conservation Easement acquisitions. Explained that easements are designed to be flexible for all parties involved. Need to draft the documents so it also includes future landowners of properties. Explained how a Board needs to have a good understanding of the conservation value around a particular piece of property. Need to know what can be protected with an easement or if a less-than Fee Simple acquisition is needed to protect the property. Explained how Conservation Easements have been scored by the Land Trust.

Various discussion occurred between the Board and the Speaker, in particular as to whether or not a Conservation Easement can be granted public access at a future date.

(1:13:00)

Board Member Report

Adams: Mentioned he found a parcel of 450 acres near Colee Cove on CR 13 South. A call was placed to the Real Estate Agent to determine the sellers time lines and interest in having the County purchase the land.

Motion by JB Miller to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:45pm

Minutes approved on the _____ day of _____ 2024.

Elizabeth Guthrie, Chair
Land Acquisition and Management Program

*For more detailed Minutes, please visit the St. Johns County GTV video recording:
<http://www.sjcfl.us/GTV/WatchGTV.aspx>