



Minutes
Regular Meeting of the St. Johns County
Land Acquisition and Management Program Conservation Board

Tuesday, August 8th, 2023 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, August 8th, 2023 at 1:30pm in the County Auditorium at the St. Johns County Auditorium located at 500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, Florida.

Members Present: Wayne Flowers, Elizabeth Guthrie (Chair), Irene Kaufman, Travis Minch, Shorty Robbins, Hawley Smith III, Jimmy R Watson

Members Absent: Michael D Adams, JB Miller (Vice Chair)

Commission Member: Absent

Staff Present: Ryan Mauch, Hali Barkley, Kyrsten Gage, Kealey West (Sr. Asst County Attorney)

Public Attendees: Stephen Glidden, Jen Lomberk

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- Call meeting to order at 1:30pm
 - General public comment for items not on the agenda
(02:28)
 - Public Speakers:
 - Steve Glidden** (10690 County Road 13 N, St Augustine 32092) Owns the CR 13 North Picolata Forest Group property of 457 acres that is being considered by the LAMP board. Mentioned that the County wants it, yet it is too expensive. Suggested the Board might like to consider a smaller portion of 57 acres at \$30,000/acre, costing \$1,710,000 or 30 acres at \$900,000.
 - Guthrie:** Commented that the board rated this application very highly. Would like to see this property conserved, yet the Board is restrained by current funding. Asked if the smaller parcel concept was resubmitted for consideration of the Board.
 - Glidden:** Advised it was not. Yet would submit again if the Board advised him to do so.

(06:11)

- **Motion by Robbins, seconded by Minch, carries 7/0, to approve meeting minutes from the June 13, 2023 meeting.**

Guthrie: Advised that Agenda Item 2, for 605 Faver Dykes Road Property has been removed from the agenda, and removed from the LAMP program.

(07:44)

- **Motion by Kaufman, seconded by Smith, carries 7/0, to approve the amended agenda items for this meeting.**

AGENDA ITEMS:

(08:20)

1. 4250 Popolee Road Property Evaluation and Discussion

Staff (Mauch): Presented an update on this property. Advised there was an additional FDEP (Florida Department of Environmental Protection) application that was not submitted by the property owner. There is another interested party in purchasing the property, who are doing their due diligence to see what they could potentially do with the property. Current property owner is still interested, and a willing seller, to the LAMP program. The survey that was submitted has a dotted line. Suggested it may be a small surface water feature or ditch that interfaces with the St Johns River. Explained there is a small right-of-way or easement that approaches this property that is 25 feet wide, where you would access this property. Staff followed up with Parks and Recreation who advised this property appears to be very wet, and would cause issues for any park use or boat ramp.

Further discussion occurred between Board members and Staff. Questions arose with regard to the neighbor's dock and if it is on the property.

Staff (Mauch): Advised the dock would be investigated by the County during the due diligence phase. There would need to be some type of use agreement between the County and the other property owner if a portion of the dock is on the property.

Board questioned where the access road is.

Staff (Mauch): Advised this is off the Popolee Road extension that is oriented North/South. Board also asked about the width standards of the access road for public access.

Board also mentioned that this property, if acquired by the County, would provide a better quality of life for those living in the area and currently not having water access. Discussion occurred between the Board and Staff around the price of the property and grant funding.

Staff (Mauch): Advised that the list price is \$850,000 with a market value of \$101,400 from the appraiser's office. Grant funding would be up to the LAMP Board to pursue for grant funds. This property is not on any State list, and public support is unknown. Likelihood of development proposed is low based on the extent of wetland in the area.

Kaufman: Advised the Board that she recently attended a Living Shorelines Permitting workshop. Suggested this property maybe suitable for the Living Shorelines Installation that can be suitable for grant funding. May boost the score from an educational value.

Minch: Questioned the market value line on the evaluation and its relevance. The location is highly desirable from a real estate assessment. That it is highly likely to be developed. Suggests the Board look at what programs exist that have funding to support an acquisition such as this.

Robbins: Parks and Recreation is not overly interested as it does not look like it would be able to be developed as a parks site for public benefit.

Flowers: Advised would like to have the market price as listed information. Understands that the appraisal is ultimately going to determine what the LAMP can pay. Agrees with Staff that this property will be difficult to develop from a permitting stand point and the cost of mitigation.

Robbins: Mentioned that the Jacksonville Preservation Project developed Freedom Commerce Center. If the City of Jacksonville had not saved the Reserve we would see that developed too. Agreed that this property would be hard to develop, yet it still may.

Smith: Agrees with Mr. Flowers that there is an opportunity for a boardwalk with the upland on the western part of the property. Prefers to see the market value listed. Considers that the list price is high.

Guthrie: Some Board members would like to have the market value remain on the evaluation sheet.

(24:17)

Board members were invited to undertake a ranking score for the property, that will be tailed up and averaged across the Board members. Then added to the ranking list for future consideration by the Board of County Commissioners.

Watson: 48

Robbins: 45

Flowers: 41

Guthrie: 33

Smith: 47

Kaufman: 60

Minch : 75

2. 605 Faver Dykes Road Property Evaluation and Discussion (This item was withdrawn for consideration by the applicant.)

(25:04)

3. Conceptual Management Plan Discussion for properties to be acquired

- a. 2310 County Road 13 South – McCullough Creek
- b. County Road 13 South / Atlantic Road – Riverdale
- c. State Road 312 / Fish Island Road – Anastasia Lakes

3. a. 2310 County Road 13 South - McCullough Creek

Staff (Mauch): Advised the property had made its way through the County Real Estate negotiation process and we are getting close to an agreement between the County and property owner. If it gets to the agreement stage, it then goes to the Board of County Commissioners hearing for a purchase and sale agreement. LAMP ordinance requires that prior to acquisition, these conceptual plans, that are set for a sales and purchase agreement be discussed, to determine what was written so far, and what needs to be amended.

The plans are conceptual in nature. The timing has to be by departmental objectives and funding.

Minch: Referred to the Conceptual Management Plan on page 2 that says " *provide property acquisition criteria from the evaluation form*" Asked Staff if any certain criteria be attached to property acquisition that is outlined in the management plan.

Staff (Mauch): Advised this was if anything stood out during the evaluation of the property, that we would want to have implemented in the future concept of the property. Then we would need to make sure that was included in the conceptual management plan.

Further discussion occurred within board members with regard to identifying and listing biodiversity, protected species, ecological diversity and habitat on the properties.

Public comment: None

(33:40)

Motion by Flowers , seconded by Robbins , carries (6/1 dissent Minch) , to approve the Conceptual Management plan for the 2310 County Road 13 South McCullough Creek Property.

3. b. County Road 13 South / Atlantic Road – Riverdale

Staff (Mauch): Referred to an aerial site plan that showed the three (3) parcels for consideration. Advised Staff had a Passive Park view for these three (3) properties or even just a preservation area for the location. Parks and Recreation stated there is potential for recreation use and noted the lot separation and how wet the parcels are. A wetland delineation would need to be undertaken to confirm where the wetlands are. Visited the property and a majority of the wetland areas are confined to the eastern properties. As one heads westward there is a more upland pine flatwoods community.

Guthrie: Under the purpose of acquisition section, there is reference of the potential to utilize the parcel for wetland mitigation credits for future projects within regulatory mitigation basin eight. That is not technically a purpose that the LAMP board evaluates properties for. Understands the value to the County to being able to mitigate for County projects. Explained that if that language was adjusted to say *“if all other mechanisms have been exhausted”*. Explained that when addressing the criteria that the LAMP considers in ranking properties, wetland mitigation should not be one.

Various discussion and agreement occurred within the Board in relation to mitigation credits; that mitigation may just be a side benefit and not part of the property evaluation. Members discussed this parcel is surrounded by agricultural land. Hence, could possibly be used as a farmer’s market and that recreational trails didn’t make sense at this time.

Smith: Asked Staff if the lots to the North are platted lots.

Staff (Mauch): Confirmed that those lots are vacant forested platted residential lots in the Riverdale area. If they get access available to them, they can potentially be used for residential use if they meet county standards. They are part of the historic “Riverdale” subdivision.

Further discussion occurred between the Board members and Staff in regard to connectivity of the two parcels to the one parcel and if there was a right-of-way or a sidewalk there.

(49:12)

A motion was put forwards by Minch, but not seconded, to have Staff look towards rewording the Conceptual Management plan with the changes to the mitigation credits wording.

Guthrie: Asked Staff with regard to the timeline for that request to update language in the conceptual management plan and the feasibility.

Staff (Mauch): Advised that this property is still in the negotiation phase. Will be speaking on this property under staff reports. The Riverdale property is set for the Board of County Commissioners meeting on September 5th. We can amend whichever sentence that the Board feels pertinent today, for its inclusion in that BCC meeting. We can look to legal for that advice.

Staff (West): This is just conceptual. It is part of the acquisition. What is going before the Board is just the purchase and sale agreement. The acquisition would come later. You have time to work on that if you so choose. You have two phases. You have your conceptual plan, which you are working on right now. When things are solidified, there will be the finalized conceptual plan that will go to the Board of County Commissioners for approval.

Minch: If we are going to delete certain lines, there is probably more comments to be made. If we move forward with the Conceptual Plan, do the Board of County Commissioners decide whether to acquire it based on the Conceptual Plan or do they look for the finalized plan before they decide on purchase?

Staff (West): The Conceptual Management Plan helps identify the use of the Property. The acquisition is completely separately negotiated. The Management Plan is being looked at concurrently. You can delay the Conceptual Management Plan at this time and still move forward with the acquisition.

Minch: I would want to see the Management Plan finalized before the BCC decides whether or not they are going to purchase the property.

Staff (West): The actual acquisition is coming up on August 15 (*Revised later to September 5th*). So if that is the desire of the Board you probably need to take action. This is the first stage, the Conceptual Management Plan, not the full finalized Management Plan. You would need to take some action today in order to have accompany the acquisition.

Guthrie: Explained the acquisition is not contingent upon this Management Plan. This is a component of what goes forth to the Board of County Commissioners. If we choose to delay it, this is fine. The acquisition is moving forward. The motion we have on the table right now, is to approve this conceptual Management plan, and incorporate the edits we have today and address the Conceptual Management Plan at a future LAMP Board meeting.

(48:18 – 59:31)

Motion by Flowers, seconded by Kaufman, carries (5/2, Watson, Smith dissent) to bring back this conceptual Management plan and incorporate the edits we have today, and address the Conceptual Management Plan at a future LAMP Board meeting.

Public Comment: None

Smith: Agreed to not evaluate for mitigation, yet acknowledge that it is in County interest, in their investment, to have that as an option. We need to have that in our report and can see it needs amendment.

(54:07)

Staff (Mauch): Just wanted to list the different alterations that have been suggested for this plan. Firstly, delete the sentences about the mitigation. There was an additional comment about a farmers market, and removing the potential Park use as a conceptual plan. Requested clarification on these changes.

Guthrie: Those are currently the only adjustments that we have made as a board. So don't feel we need to delay to another meeting.

Robbins: Asked what is the down side to leaving the mitigation language in the plan.

Guthrie: Explained the issue with mitigation language by going back to the purpose of the LAMP program. The wetland mitigation is not one of the direct purposes. It is not a criteria for which we evaluate the property. Not totally opposed to that being a potential option.

Further discussion arose between the board members with regard to wetland mitigation.

(1:00:03)

3. c. State Road 312 / Fish Island Road – Anastasia Lakes

Staff (Mauch): Provided an overview of the property. Advised that this was heard by the Board of County Commissioners on August 1st, 2023. The BCC voted to approve it for a purchase and sale agreement. That will continue with the real estate process to acquire this property. This Conceptual Management plan is less intensive. Not a lot of management and concepts involved, other than keeping exotics out of the salt marsh area. There has been an issue with increasing presence of Brazilian Pepper on the island. This area is part of a contiguous 240-acre salt marsh area that is connected to the intracoastal waterway to the west.

Various discussion occurred amongst board members relating to species listed or not listed in the management plan.

Board had further discussion with regard to wetland mitigation credits and the removal of them in the Conceptual Management plan.

Public Comment:

Jen Lomberk, (292 Cubbedge Road, St Augustine Fl 32080) Advised she supports Ms. Guthrie for the removal of the wording for wetland mitigation credits in the Management Plan. Explained that the purposes of the LAMP program are to increase ecological value and protect hydrology. If the County is using these properties to mitigate for wetlands that they are impacting elsewhere that means they are not protecting additional properties. Therefore resulting in a net gain of wetlands that are being protected.

Staff (West): Advised the board the correct procedures for making amended motions.

(1:06:23)

Motion by Kaufman, seconded by Robbins, carries (6/1 Watson dissent), to amend, and remove the language in relation to mitigation credits in the Conceptual Management Plan.

Further discussion was undertaken by the Board with regard to the removal of wetland mitigation credits in the Management Plan. That St. Johns County can still use the mitigation credits if they wish after acquiring a property.

(1:09:50)

Motion by Kaufman and seconded by Robbins, carries (6/1 Minch dissent) to approve the amended Conceptual Management Plan for State Road 312 / Fish Island Road to incorporate the edits we have today, and address the Conceptual Management Plan at a future LAMP Board meeting.

4. Submission of New Properties Discussion

Guthrie: Explained that Staff had included some information from the Real Estate Department about properties that are available and listed online. They are examples of properties that are out there that the LAMP members could potentially look at to adding additional properties to the pipeline. Recommended board members look at adding additional properties. If we stick to the current schedule and enter in the list of approved properties to go to the BCC before the end of the year, they could be considered in January. That there are just two more LAMP meetings this year, October and December. Suggested it would be helpful for Staff to give the Board some language to approach property owners with.

Staff (Mauch): Agreed to assist with appropriate wording for Board members to approach property owners. County Real Estate department recommended Homes.com as a website that is updated with properties with willing sellers regularly. We would not recommend one site over another, this is just a sampling of what is out there. In July we pulled out 45 properties available for sale in St Johns County on this website. I distilled it down to 6 good candidates. That is in the package provided to you. You also have additional aerials on these properties.

Guthrie: Suggested the board members try to be more proactive with outreach and try to add a few more properties on the LAMP list. Offered to personally reach out to a local Land Trust and the Water Management District to see if any properties are not making it though their programs.

Minch: Suggested the LAMP board look at context as to what to buy and why to buy it. Suggested the Board coordinate with the Planning Division and Parks and Recreation Division to determine what we are trying to achieve as an outcome. The struggle for the LAMP board is that it lacks context. Suggest we zoom out a bit and look at what we are trying to achieve to help guide us.

Further discussion occurred with Board member with regard to bringing a few properties to the LAMP board before the October meeting or to reach out to some landowners before that meeting.

Minch: Suggested someone in the County approach the property owner who owns the Outpost off Neck Road. It was proposed for development a couple of years ago. It was a well-attended public hearing with many in support of conserving that land.

Staff (Mauch): Staff has had discussions with the property owner of the Outpost for enforcement reasons and there is not a willing seller at this time. It is up to LAMP board members to reach out to property owners to see if properties are for sale.

Further discussion occurred between the Board and Staff with regard to the Board being provided a one page template so members can approach potential property owners.

Various members mentioned they will reach out to various property owners and coordinate with Staff, through the Chair, to ensure there is no duplication.

(1:21:32)

Staff Report (Mauch):

Noted that JB Miller, the LAMP Board member had requested information on the Brinkhoff properties that the board considered previously. The LAMP board voted to dismiss the properties. Mr. Miller asked if Parks and Recreation had a response on those properties. Their response was that if there was a potential to connect to Treaty Park if something could be worked out with the Treaty Oaks development. Staff's response is that there is an intervening wetland and conservation easement area which would require modification to the Treaty Ground PUD and permitting for impacts to wetland areas for that connection. It would also require the release of the conservation easement. There are various interested parties in that property.

Provided an update on the LAMP Budget. At an August 2023 BCC meeting, the LAMP budget was increased from \$500,000 to \$2 million for the fiscal year of 2024. This will increase the current balance to almost \$3.5 million after October 1st, 2023. This budget increase is only for the fiscal year of 2024. It will not automatically renew annually like the \$500,000 initially secured to the LAMP Board. The LAMP budget will be revisited by the BCC for the fiscal year of 2025.

Provided an update on the consent items for Staff to enter into the purchase and sale agreement. This included:

1. Fish Island property on August 1. BCC voted to direct Real Estate Staff to continue with that Sale Agreement for Anastasia Lakes with due diligence that may last 60 to 90 days.
2. On August 15th (*later updated to September 5th*) there is another BCC meeting for the purchase and sale agreement for the Riverdale Property.
3. McCullough Creek property is still in the negotiation process and will be set for a future BCC meeting.

Advised that Staff has received two recent property applications. One is for a vacant forest property located on CR 16A. The other is on Don Manuel Road. Will provide data sheets and maps on these properties at the October 10th LAMP meeting.

Commissioner Dean mentioned there is a vacant piece of property in Menendez Park Subdivision, located immediately adjacent to Anastasia State Park. Adjacent residents reached out to Commissioner Dean with regard to their concerns. It is currently in private ownership.

Various discussion occurred between Board members with regard to the budget increase and how the funds were to be spent on acquiring properties that may exceed the allocated budget. Discussed that the LAMP board role is to recommend properties to the BCC. That it is up to the BCC to decline what properties they acquire. LAMP Board role is to also to seek additional funding through various grant opportunities. If the BCC chooses

to move forward with an acquisition cost that is higher than what the LAMP has in the budget, that it is incumbent on the County to find funds from other sources or reserves.

(1:30:12)

Board Member Reports:

Robbins: Governor has approved the budget. There are opportunities for LAMP to apply for grant funding.

Flowers: Asked if the Board would reconsider the National Seashore Program.

Guthrie: Advised that the National Seashore Program is outside the purview of the LAMP board. Would entertain the idea of a brief overview on that program if Staff is willing to do so.

Advised she will investigate some additional funding sources offered by State and Federal entities.

Smith: Suggested the Board look at the various offers being submitted on the Picolata Forest Group property when they are officially resubmitted.

Minch: Agreed that the National Seashore Program is not in the realm of the LAMP Board. Yet would welcome having Mr. Slavin from the public give a presentation to the board on that issue. Suggested the Board look at the property evaluation matrix for the public support criteria. Recommended a sign go up on properties being evaluated so local residents are aware that the LAMP board has it under consideration.

Staff (West): Advised that when requests are made by Board members to Staff, that the Board needs to obtain a consensus, or a vote, for that request.

Guthrie: Advised that discussion for signage on LAMP properties can be addressed at the October meeting.

(1:43:45)

Motion by Minch, seconded by Flowers, denied 5/2 (dissent Guthrie; Kaufman; Robbins; Smith, Watson) to invite Mr. Ed Salvin to give a 10 minute presentation on the St Augustine National Seashore Program at the October LAMP meeting.

(1:44:55)

Motion by Flowers, seconded by Kaufman , carries 7/0 , to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:15 pm.

Minutes approved on the 10th day of October, 2023.

Elizabeth Guthrie, Chair
Land Acquisition and Management Program

Clerk, Growth Management

*For more detailed Minutes, please visit the St. Johns County GTV video recording:

<http://www.sjcfl.us/GTV/WatchGTV.aspx>