

**Pima County Conservation Acquisition Commission Meeting**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**The Manning House  
450 West Paseo Redondo  
Thursday, February 17, 2011  
2:00 p.m.**

**MOTIONS**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Smith moved, seconded by Commissioner Marian to approve the August 19, 2010 meeting summary. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioners Corey, Marshall and Prouty absent).

**MOTION:** Commissioner Johnson moved, seconded by Commissioner Gardner to accept the 1997/2004 Semi-Annual Bond Program Report for the first half fiscal year 2010/2011. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioners Corey, Marshall and Prouty absent).

**MOTION:** Commissioner Sheridan moved, seconded by Commissioner Hare to begin due diligence on the Robson parcels in, and adjacent to, the Town of Sahuarita. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioners Corey, Marshall and Prouty absent).

**MOTION:** Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Commissioner Gardner to begin working with the Town of Sahuarita and the State Land Department on the land north of the Robson parcels and adjacent to the Green Valley wastewater treatment plant. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioners Corey, Marshall and Prouty absent).

**SUMMARY OF MEETING**

1. Roll Call

The Commission meeting began at 2:07 p.m.

Commissioners Present

Bill Roe, Chairman  
Jan Johnson, Vice Chair  
Helen Gardner  
Trevor Hare  
James Marian  
Chuck Pettis  
Tom Sheridan  
Corey Smith (left at 3:30pm)

Commissioners Absent

Les Corey  
Rob Marshall  
Tim Prouty

2. Executive Session

None.

3. Approval of the August 19, 2010 Meeting Minutes

**MOTION:** Commissioner Smith moved, seconded by Commissioner Marian to approve the August 19, 2010 meeting summary. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioners Corey, Marshall and Prouty absent).

4. Update on 1997/2004 Conservation Bond Program Expenditures

Nicole Fyffe reported that the only funds remaining for the 2004 Conservation Acquisition Bond Program are the Jurisdictional Open Space monies. There is \$7.4 million remaining between the City of Tucson, the Town of Oro Valley and the Town of Sahuarita categories.

1.15 City of Tucson Agua Caliente - \$1.4 million remains

1.16 City of Tucson 36<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor - \$1.9 million remains

1.17 City of Tucson Habitat at Kino and 36<sup>th</sup> Street – Just under \$1 million remains

1.18 Town of Oro Valley Kelly Ranch - \$1.5 million remains

1.19 Town of Sahuarita Santa Cruz River - \$1.5 million remains

Ms. Fyffe said that there is \$7,000 left under the Community Open Space category and \$200 under Habitat Protection Priorities.

Ms. Fyffe further reported that the remaining balance for the 1997 Open Space Bond Program is \$234,000, which are the monies that had been set aside for litigation requirements for Dos Picos. If these monies are ultimately not needed, the monies would be transferred to the Northwest area.

5. Accept 1997/2004 Semi-Annual Bond Program Report

Ms. Fyffe noted that every six months a report is submitted to the Bond Advisory Committee and the Board of Supervisors on the status of all bond projects. The open space portion covers all of the acquisitions made under the 1997 and 2004 bond programs. The most recent updates include the Mission and 33<sup>rd</sup> Street property and the Tanque Verde and Houghton LLC property. Staff recommended that the Commission accept the end of year report.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Johnson moved, seconded by Commissioner Gardner to accept the 1997/2004 Semi-Annual Bond Program Report for first half fiscal year 2010/2011. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioners Corey, Marshall and Prouty absent).

6. Report: *Protecting Our Land, Water and Heritage: Pima County's Voter-Supported Conservation Efforts*

Diana Durazo discussed the completed report compiling in one document the County's past conservation efforts, current acquisitions under the 1997 and 2004 bond programs, assessment of recent efforts and economic benefits of conservation. Ms. Durazo briefly went over the major sections of the report and explained that it would be placed on the County's website for easy access by the public.

## 7. Status Update and Proposals for the Remaining Jurisdictional Open Space Bond Funds

### A. Town of Sahuarita – Santa Cruz River

Nicole Fyffe began by explaining that the bond ordinance limits the use of these funds to the acquisition of land along the Santa Cruz River or its tributaries. The majority of land in this area is owned by two private property owners, or is State Trust land. In addition, the land in this area has or is currently being used for agricultural purposes. This has made identifying acquisitions in this project area difficult. An IGA was developed between the Town and the County, where the County would purchase the land and deed it to the Town, while retaining a conservation easement over the land. Ms. Fyffe explained that the Town commissioned a study from the University of Arizona that prioritized lands along the river that would fit the Town's plan and be eligible for open space bond funds. Ms. Fyffe introduced Roger Anyon, with the County's Office of Historic and Cultural Resources, to address the Commission on the Anza Trail's progress, which will go through the Town and will likely link to the open space proposed for conservation along the river.

Mr. Anyon stated that one of the goals of the Anza Trail project is to establish an 18-mile trail along the Santa Cruz River, beginning from the County's Canoa Ranch. There is a 7-mile stretch from Elephant Head Road to Abrego, and there are trailheads at both locations. Currently, north of Abrego trailhead there is an easement down to the southern edge of the Town's boundary. There are two small gaps, one of which is on FICO land, and the other on Freeport land. Discussions are ongoing with both. Mr. Anyon noted that they would like to establish a commemorative trailhead in Sahuarita to celebrate 1775 encampment. The County has funds to construct the trailhead, but there is no easement or land at this time. If the Commission supports pursuing acquisition of the Robson parcels, as identified as highest priority by the University of Arizona, the Anza trail would go through the property and this would eliminate the need for Anza Trail monies to be spent on acquiring right of way for the trail. The Anza Trail is funded under the both the 1997 and 2004 bond programs.

Debbie Summers, Director of Parks and Recreation for the Town of Sahuarita, informed the Commission of the Town's planning efforts including the University of Arizona's study and priorities the Town has developed. In concurrence with the University's highest priority recommendation, the Town would like to make the three Robson parcels, totaling 72 acres, a priority for acquisition. The Robson parcels would connect the Anza Trail and could serve as a location for a future trailhead. This would be part of the Town's Masterplan to connect the parks within the Town. Ms. Summers explained that a future alignment of a road is planned through these parcels and a map was provided to the Commission.

Commissioner Gardner asked if the Town would construct the trailhead or if they would be restoring the entire parcel. Ms. Fyffe responded that when the County deeds the land to the Town, the County would draft language for the conservation easement the County would retain. The conservation easement retained by the County would include conditions for developing the road in the future in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Ms. Fyffe also noted that there is some State Trust land north of the Robson parcels the County may be interested in acquiring for multiple purposes. Ms. Fyffe said the

County would like to pursue due diligence on the Robson parcels, and continue discussions with the Town, Regional Wastewater Management staff and the State Land Department to see if the County can acquire land for the trail, open space, and buffer for the existing wastewater treatment plant located adjacent to the State Trust land and the River.

Ms. Fyffe explained that FICO requested to present to the Commission. Alex Stedman, with FICO, addressed the Commission on options FICO has been exploring for the Anza trail and trailhead to be placed on their property along the river. The Walden family is developing a plan that includes development and open space for the future (40-50 year plan). FICO owns 1/3 of the land within the Town, including 12-linear miles along the river. Mr. Stedman indicated that over the coming weeks they will formally discuss with the Town and County their plans. They would like a trailhead at the northeast corner of La Villita Road and Sahuarita Road, with a potential library site along the river.

Chairman Roe asked what the timeline was to get all of the pieces in place. The Walden's would like to donate land, but are not ready at this time. A temporary easement could perhaps be dedicated in the short term and then changed to the permanent easement when plans are finalized. Mr. Smith also asked what could be done to move this along faster.

Ms. Fyffe responded that at this time FICO has not formally submitted anything to the County. Mr. Stedman said they were not ready for a presentation yet of what their proposals could be. FICO will be submitting development plans to the Town and the County that will require FICO to dedicate trails, open space and parkland. Ms. Fyffe noted that the County Administrator is of the opinion that the County should not pay for what it can get for free. The difficulty is the timing, since the development will be a long time off. Frank Thompson, also representing FICO, said they would submit their development plans to the Town and the County in 30 days.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Sheridan moved, seconded by Commissioner Hare to begin due diligence on the Robson parcels in the Town of Sahuarita. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioners Corey, Marshall and Prouty absent).

**MOTION:** Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Commissioner Gardner to begin working with the Town of Sahuarita and the State Land Department on the land north of the Robson parcels and adjacent to the Green Valley wastewater treatment plant. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioners Corey, Marshall and Prouty absent).

The Commission asked staff to make this a priority and requested a handout be provided to the Commission from FICO.

#### **B. Town of Oro Valley – Kelly Ranch**

Ms. Fyffe reported that originally there was \$2.5 million allocated to this project area. But after efforts to negotiate with the owner of the 100-acre Kelly Ranch located at Tangerine and Oracle Road were unsuccessful, the Commission, the Town of Oro Valley, and the County agreed to amend the bond ordinance to allow almost \$1 million to be spent to acquire the 13 acre Treehouse properties along Oracle Road north of this location. Since then, the County suggested that the remaining monies be moved to acquire State land to expand Tortolita Mountain

Park. The Town indicated that they would still like to pursue acquisition of Kelly Ranch, with the second priority being the Tortolita expansion.

Kevin Burke, with the City Manager's Office for the Town of Oro Valley, said that the Town Council addressed this matter at their June meeting, and that Ms. Fyffe's summary of the Town's priorities is correct. Some of the new Council members have connections with the ranch owners. Mr. Burke commented that the ranch may cost \$5 million. The Council is trying to gap the difference.

Commissioner Hare asked if the ranch acquisition was more for aesthetic purposes or actually an important piece to the Park. Mr. Burke responded that the ranch contains a known Hohokam and other important cultural resources. Ms. Fyffe noted that the County did have a biological assessment conducted of property a few years ago and could send that to Mr. Hare.

Commissioner Marian indicated that if the owners were asking for \$5 million, he would advise that the County get a preliminary estimated budget number given the current market.

#### C. City of Tucson – Habitat at 36<sup>th</sup> and Kino

Diana Durazo reported that the County was approached with a proposal from Quivera Farms for a possible joint project at the 36<sup>th</sup> and Kino property. Quivera Farms is a subsidiary of the Civitan Foundation, and develops projects for special needs groups and low income areas. This past summer, representatives met with County Supervisor Valadez and City Councilmember Fimbres to discuss their project, which includes a community farm, which can then partner with the food bank, neighborhoods, farmers market, and would include educational facets within the project. Supervisor Valadez asked for more information on certain aspects of the project and requested that public outreach be done early on. Currently, the project proponents are working on new renderings for the project and other internal steps they need to take in the process before presenting the proposal formally to the Commission.

#### City of Tucson – 36<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor and Agua Caliente

The City would like the funds in the 36th Street project area, totaling \$1.4 million, and the funds remaining in the Agua Caliente project area, totaling \$1.9 million, to be reserved for the Painted Hills property. The 285-acre Painted Hills property is located between Anklam Road and Speedway along the eastern slopes of the Tucson Mountains. It was included in both the 1997 and 2004 bond program, but the County has never been able to reach an agreement with past owners to acquire it. More recently the City and County were in discussions with representatives of the owners and it appeared that discussions may have been moving in a positive direction. However, just recently the County was told that the owners, a public pension fund, were going through a reorganization, and therefore discussions are on hold. The bond funding remaining in these two project areas is not enough money to purchase the property and would have to be combined with other sources of funding. Use of this bond funding would also require a bond ordinance amendment.

Commissioner Hare pointed out that the Agua Caliente area contains more important habitat.

Chairman Roe asked about the Boa Sorte property and this funding. Ms. Fyffe responded that the owners of the Boa Sorte property made it clear that they were not interested in selling to the County.

## 8. General Updates

- Proposed Development Activities on Bond Parcels: Nothing new to report.
- Sweetwater Canyon Property: The County has negotiated an agreement with Compass Bank to acquire 187 acres adjacent to the County's Sweetwater Preserve property. This property acquisition will use Starr Pass Enhancement Fee monies. The property will expand the Preserve property and conserve the lower reaches of Sweetwater wash. The Board will hear this item on March 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Tanque Verde and Houghton LLC Property: This property closed in September 2010.
- Mission and 33<sup>rd</sup> Street Property: This property closed in September 2010.
- Arroyo Grande Conceptual Land Use Plan: Kevin Burke, with the Town of Oro Valley, said the Town has a meeting scheduled with the State Land Department in April.
- Dos Picos: The attorneys' fees litigation is ongoing.
- Avra Valley – Interstate 10 Tucson-Tortolita Mountain connection: TEP does not want to finalize the conservation easement until they have completed construction of their substation expansion, which is currently underway.  
Saguaro National Park Boundary Adjustment Act H.R. 715: No update.
- Catalina/Tortolita Connection: No update.
- Rosemont Mine: No update.
- SunZia Transmission Line Project: No update.
- 2012 Bond Election Update: The Bond Advisory Committee will meet on March 4, 2011, at the Manning House at 8:00 a.m.

The Commission asked that the BLM Solar Energy Zone EIS be added to the Updates section.

## 9. Next Commission Meeting

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for May 19, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. at the Natural Resources Parks and Recreation building on West River Road.

## 10. Call to the Public

Diana Durazo read a request received before the meeting from David Lutz, requesting that State Trust land parcels be included in the future open space bond program. Staff will do further research on the parcels.

## 11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.