

**Pima County Conservation Acquisition Commission
Meeting**

**Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation
1st Floor Conference Room
Thursday October 29, 2009
2:00 p.m.**

MOTIONS

MOTION: Commissioner Marian moved, seconded by Commissioner Corey to approve the 1997/2004 Conservation Bond Program End of Year report. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioners Marshall, Pettis and Prouty were absent).

MOTION: Commissioner Marian moved, seconded by Commissioner Corey to recommend acquisition of the 72-acre Terra Rancho Grande property for \$1,375,000, located along Tanque Verde Creek near Speedway and Houghton. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioners Marshall, Pettis and Prouty were absent).

MOTION: Commissioner Sheridan moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson to recommend amending the 2004 Bond Ordinance to add the Treehouse Realty parcels to OS1.18 – Kelly Ranch project under the Town of Oro Valley Jurisdictional Open Space category. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioners Marshall, Pettis and Prouty were absent).

MOTION: Commissioner Johnson moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson to approve moving forward with due diligence on the Treehouse Realty parcels, totaling 13 acres, and located along Oracle Road south of Wilds Road. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioners Marshall, Pettis and Prouty were absent).

DIRECTION TO STAFF

For the Catalina/Tortolita wildlife corridor, bring an area map showing area land bridges and under passes and how it all fits together.

Research the possibility of acquiring additional land from the church located adjacent to the eastern Treehouse Realty parcel along Oracle Road.

Provide more information on the tentative plat submitted by Canoa Hills (south of Green Valley).

Provide a map showing the Avra Valley/I-10 wildlife corridor, including ownership and currently conserved properties.

Provide meetings dates for the first six months in 2010.

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting minutes for the October 29, 2009 meeting.

1. Roll Call

The Commission meeting began at 2:13 pm.

Commissioners Present

Les Corey
Trevor Hare (arrived at 2:20pm)
Jan Johnson, Vice Chair
James Marian
Bill Roe, Chairman
Tom Sheridan
Corey Smith
Helen Wilson

Commissioners Absent

Rob Marshall
Chuck Pettis
Tim Prouty

2. Executive Session

None.

Chairman Roe introduced Corey Smith, Supervisor Day's new appointment to the Commission to fill past Commissioner Wanda Shattuck's appointment. The Chairman also read a letter submitted by the County Administrator in appreciation of Ms. Shattuck's years of work and commitment to the residents of Pima County. Commissioner Smith introduced himself and said a few words about himself and his work.

3. Approval of the July 9, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve failed due to number of abstentions.

4. Update on 1997/2004 Conservation Bond Program Expenditures

Expenditures report will be sent at a later date.

5. Accept 1997/2004 Bond End of Year Report

Chairman Roe explained that due to the timing of the process, both the Bond Advisory Committee and the Board of Supervisors approved the end of year report. Per the Truth in Bonding Code, the Commission must also approve the report on the conservation portion of the 1997 and 2004 bond programs. Diana Durazo noted that if there were any revisions, they would be done administratively.

MOTION: Commissioner Marian moved, seconded by Commissioner Corey to approve the 1997/2004 Conservation Bond Program End of Year report. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioners Marshall, Pettis and Prouty were absent).

6. Terra Rancho Grande – Jurisdictional Open Space: City of Tucson – Agua Caliente Project Area

Diana Durazo reported that the County has negotiated an acquisition agreement to purchase the 72-acre Terra Rancho Grande property for \$1,375,000 (\$19,000 per acre), located along Tanque Verde Creek near Speedway and Houghton. The negotiated purchase price is 10% above appraised value. The property is eligible to be purchased using City of Tucson Jurisdictional Open Space monies for the Agua Caliente project area. Ms. Durazo explained that this is an area where historically it has been difficult to reach any agreements for acquisitions due to owners' high price expectations.

Kerry Baldwin said the property is surrounded by some development and the County will evaluate site security, which would include fencing. Currently, the property has very little disturbance.

MOTION: Commissioner Marian moved, seconded by Commissioner Corey to recommend acquisition of the 72-acre Terra Rancho Grande property for \$1,375,000, located along Tanque Verde Creek near Speedway and Houghton. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioners Marshall, Pettis and Prouty were absent).

7. New Application – Tortolita East Biological Corridor Area

Diana Durazo explained that the Commission had received an application in 2006 from this applicant for the sale of only one of the Treehouse Realty parcels, located along Oracle Road and south of Wilds Road. At the time, the applicant asked for \$1.95 million (\$300,000 per acre). The Commission voted 10-0 to recommend not taking any further action on this application, citing the purchase price and the findings of a group of biologists who recommended against pursuing acquisition of small private parcels in this area. Ms. Durazo noted that in 2008, the County granted the owner a conditional use permit for a self storage facility on the same 6.3-acre parcel, with a special condition requiring that 50% of the parcel be set aside as natural open space, and development be confined to the northern portion of the parcel.

The County has now received an application for sale of the two Treehouse Realty parcels, totaling 13 acres, for \$1.2 million (\$92,300 per acre). The parcels straddle Oracle Road, south of Wilds Road. Since the property is not currently eligible for acquisition, a bond ordinance amendment would be required prior to acquiring this property.

A. Amendment to the 2004 Bond Ordinance

Ms. Durazo reported that Carolyn Campbell, with the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection, has been in discussions with the owner and the Town of Oro Valley regarding the possible sale of the Treehouse Realty parcels and their contribution to the wildlife crossing. The Oro Valley Town Council passed a resolution in September supporting a bond ordinance amendment to transfer funds allocated to Kelly Ranch under the Town's Jurisdictional Open Space monies and apply them to the Treehouse Realty parcels.

Carolyn Campbell presented information on the parcels and a rendering of the proposed Arizona Department of Transportation land bridge project on Oracle Road that is recommended for funding under the Regional Transportation Authority. The Treehouse Realty parcels are important due to their proximity to the land bridge and their contribution to the corridor. Ms. Campbell noted that the eastern portion is surrounded by development, but is important to acquire the parcels as a package. Ms. Campbell further stated that she intended to speak with the church adjacent to the eastern parcel to explore ways to have the church keep some open space adjacent to the parcel.

Kerry Baldwin said that the biologists who felt that this area was not a feasible corridor in 2005, have changed their opinions due to the land bridge changing the viability of this area as a corridor. These private pieces would in fact be pieces of the puzzle.

Staff was asked to bring an area map showing area land bridges and how it all fits together.

MOTION: Commissioner Sheridan moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson to recommend amending the 2004 Bond Ordinance to add the Treehouse Realty parcels to OS1.18 – Kelly Ranch project under the Town of Oro Valley Jurisdictional Open Space category. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioners Marshall, Pettis and Prouty were absent).

B. Treehouse Realty Property Application

Staff recommended that the Commission approve due diligence to begin on the Treehouse Realty parcels.

MOTION: Commissioner Johnson moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson to approve moving forward with due diligence on the Treehouse Realty parcels, totaling 13 acres, and located along Oracle Road south of Wilds Road. Motion approved 8-0 (Commissioners Marshall, Pettis and Prouty were absent).

8. Updates

- Proposed Development Activities on Bond Parcels: A spreadsheet was provided to the Commission with information on active development activity on bond parcels. One of these includes the Canoa Hills development. A tentative plat was submitted and is currently under review. Commissioner Hare asked that more information on this be provided.
- Arroyo Grande Conceptual Land Use Plan – This was already discussed under item 7.
- Valencia Archaeological Site – Both the Bond Advisory Committee and the Board of Supervisors approved the bond ordinance amendment to add this property to the 2004 City of Tucson's 36th Street Corridor project area as eligible for acquisition. The City approved a resolution supporting this amendment. The County was awarded the Arizona State Parks Growing Smarter matching grant in September for acquisition of the Valencia Site property. The appraised value for the property is \$940,000, of which 50% percent will be paid by the matching grant. The State Land Department has scheduled the public auction on November 24, 2009, at 10:30am, at the Transamerica Building.
- Empirita/Cortaro and Hartman/Bloom – The County closed on these Empirita, Cortaro and Hartman and Bloom properties on August 14, 2009.
- Dos Picos – Payment was issued in July. Other aspects of the property are still under litigation.
- Clyne Ranch – Both the Bond Advisory Committee and the Board of Supervisors approved the bond ordinance amendment to add this property to the 1997 RW-14 Cienega Creek project as eligible for acquisition, and to transfer monies from SD-5 Tortolita Mountain Park to RW-14 to acquire the Clyne Ranch. The Commission supported this ordinance amendment at the July meeting. In October, the County closed on the first phase, which was funded using 2004 bond monies. The second phase, funded using 1997 bond funds, is scheduled to close in January 2010.
- Stonehaven – Discussions ongoing.
- Saguaro National Park Boundary Adjustment Act H.R. 715: No update.
- Catalina/Tortolita Connection: Discussed under item 7. Chairman Roe asked about the Avra Valley/I-10 Connection item, which was inadvertently not included in the list. Kerry Baldwin said that there has been much effort working on both the west and east sides of this corridor. One of the pieces of the puzzle is the TEP parcel on the east. The County worked with them and reached a possible agreement for a conservation easement on the southern portion of their property.

However, the Town of Marana interjected their interests in to the discussion. TEP ultimately said that they would work with the County on getting this done.

Carolyn Campbell added that discussions with Cascada continue and there is a possibility of more lands being included for conservation. Ms. Campbell further stated that she has been in discussions with Marana and ADOT about designing a land bridge in this area. Staff was asked to provide a map showing the Avra Valley/I-10 corridor, including ownership and currently conserved properties.

- Rosemont Mine: The County Administrator recently spoke in Green Valley regarding the recent comments the County submitted to the Service regarding the mine. Commissioner Hare added that the Service was sued to force the validity of the mining claims. The EIS was pushed back to March 2010.
- 2010 Bond Election Update: The Bond Advisory Committee met on October 16th, and the meeting focused on the fiscal analysis the County Administrator prepared. The Administrator discussed the County's current fiscal position, issuance of debt and financial outlook. Considering the current economy, the Administrator recommends a bond package of \$500 million, with debt issuance of \$40 million per year. At the meeting, the Committee moved on tentatively recommending all projects where the County Administrator and the Subcommittees' recommendations were the same. Commissioner Hare expressed his disappointment at PR262 Altar valley Watershed Restoration project not being supported by the Administrator.

9. Next Commission Meeting

The next scheduled Commission meeting is on November 19, 2009, at 2 p.m. There will be no December meeting. Staff was asked to provide the Commission with dates for the first six months in 2010.

10. Call to the Public

Carolyn Campbell announced Maeveen Behan was not doing very well, and efforts are underway to recognize her work. On Tuesday, the Board of Supervisors will hear a resolution to rename the Conservation Lands System to the Maeveen Marie Behan Conservation Lands System, in honor of her extraordinary work.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 pm.

Reminder:

Scheduled Conservation Acquisition Commission meeting dates:

March 4, 2010	County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Building (3500 W. River Road)
May 13, 2010	TBD
August 12, 2010	TBD