

**Pima County Conservation Acquisition Commission Meeting**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Building  
3500 West River Road  
Thursday, March 6, 2014  
2:00 p.m.**

**MOTIONS**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Commissioner Pettis to approve the September 12, 2013 meeting minutes. Motion approved 7-0 (Commissioners Gardner, Prouty and Sheridan were absent).

**MOTION:** Commissioner Marian moved, seconded by Commissioner Pettis to accept the 2004 Semi Annual Bond Program report for Fiscal Year 2013/2014. Motion approved 7-0 (Commissioners Gardner, Prouty and Sheridan were absent).

**MOTION:** Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Commissioner Marshall to welcome Mr. Huckelberry's proposal to increase his recommendation to the \$110 million amount. Motion approved 7-0 (Commissioners Gardner, Prouty and Sheridan were absent).

**MOTION:** Commissioner Marshall moved, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to direct staff to look at both Tier 1 and 2 lands on the Habitat Protection Priorities list to see what has been accomplished and review the outstanding properties to evaluate and affirm their continued priority status, and to determine how the Commission arrived at the original request of \$285 million. Motion approved 7-0 (Commissioners Gardner, Prouty and Sheridan were absent).

**SUMMARY OF MEETING**

1. Roll Call

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

The Chairman noted that Commissioner Robert Black was replaced by Chris Laria as the new Supervisorial District 1 appointee to the Commission, but was not present at the meeting as he'd just been appointed earlier that week and had not yet received his oath of office paperwork.

Commissioners Present  
Les Corey  
Trevor Hare  
Jan Johnson, Vice-Chair  
James Marian  
Rob Marshall  
Chuck Pettis  
Bill Roe, Chairman

Commissioners Absent  
Helen Gardner  
Tim Prouty  
Tom Sheridan

2. Executive Session

None.

3. Approval of the September 12, 2013 Meeting Minutes

**MOTION:** Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Commissioner Pettis to approve the September 12, 2013 meeting minutes. Motion approved 7-0 (Commissioners Gardner, Prouty and Sheridan were absent).

4. Update on 2004 Conservation Bond Program Expenditures

Nicole Fyffe said there were no changes, with \$5 million still remaining in the 2004 program. Of that amount, \$3.5 million is for the City of Tucson earmarked for Painted Hills, and \$1.5 million remaining for Sahuarita, which had been earmarked for State Trust land, of which \$17,000 was expended for due diligence. There has been a change in the funding of this acquisition, which would be discussed later in the meeting.

5. Accept the 2004 Semi Annual Bond Program Report

Twice a year the Commission is tasked with reviewing and accepting the bond program update reports. Nicole Fyffe presented the Semi Annual report. Materials are available online and on cd. The Commission received the brochure and the open space portion of the report for review and approval.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Marian moved, seconded by Commissioner Pettis to accept the 2004 Semi Annual Bond Program report for Fiscal Year 2013/2014. Motion approved 7-0 (Commissioners Gardner, Prouty and Sheridan were absent).

6. Future Pima County Bond Election Planning

Nicole Fyffe provided a brief overview of the Bond Advisory Committee's (BAC) bond planning and last meeting. At their February 21, 2014 meeting the BAC recommended to the Board of Supervisors that a bond election be held in 2014 for the Pima County Animal Care shelter improvements for \$22 million as a single item on the ballot. The Board will hear this item at their March 18, 2014 meeting. With regard to planning for a future 2015 comprehensive bond election, the BAC opted to not take action on proposed projects until at least June. For the next scheduled meetings, the Committee will hear presentations through June and in the Fall will likely begin deliberating on which projects to the Board. The BACs March 21 meeting will include a review of open space project proposals. Currently, the BAC has received about \$1 billion in project requests. They already heard Libraries, Community Facilities and Museums.

In 2007, the Conservation Acquisition Committee recommended a bond request of \$285 million to the BAC. The BAC tentatively approved \$110 million for Habitat Protection Priorities (HPP) and \$10 million for Community Open Space. In September, the County Administrator recommended decreasing that amount to \$96 million based on what is left for the County to acquire. Ms. Fyffe said that typically County bond programs are 10 to 12 years. The County Administrator proposed that if the bond program years were extended to a 15 year program, it would allow for a larger total bond package from about \$500 to \$600 million to a possible \$700 to \$800 million bond

package. With more capacity, the County Administrator would be willing to consider increasing his recommendation to the \$110 million amount for OS2.

Carolyn Campbell said that if the Marley Ranch was purchased, it would only leave \$20 million for a program of 15 years. She said that even the \$285 million is not enough, but it is reasonable at this point. Ms. Fyffe responded that the remaining two options for the Marley acquisitions total \$64 million and therefore if \$110 million was approved, about \$46 million would be available for other acquisitions. In addition, bond programs typically overlap for a couple of years (i.e. County was still purchasing 1997 bond funded property while also purchasing 2004 bond funded properties) and therefore it would be more like 10-12 years without a bond election. Ms. Campbell said the amounts needed are great for both Habitat Protection Priorities and Community Open space, and asked if the Conservation Acquisition Commission would like to revise and resubmit a recommendation to the BAC. Ms. Campbell did note that given the number of bond requests received by the BAC to date totaling about \$1 billion, the \$285 million may not be achievable.

Chairman Roe welcomed the County Administrator's increased recommendation and noted that the BAC should also be re-educated on the Commission's recommendation.

Commissioners discussed the need for an update and prioritization of the HPPs and information on how the Commission arrived at the \$285 million recommendation in 2007. They asked if the County had assessed how much land was still needed for acquisition. Ms. Fyffe responded that for the County's federal Section 10 permit, staff calculated that the County still needs about 5,000 acres, which the Marley Ranch acquisition would satisfy. The Commissioners said that the program was not based on mitigation only, and that the Conservation Lands System was more of the guide. Commissioner Hare also asked that staff review State Trust lands identified on the map, possibly by comparing them to State land identified in past reform efforts, and any properties that may have been missed in the Northwest. Jim Marian offered assistance in updating property value estimates.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Commissioner Marshall to welcome Mr. Huckelberry's proposal to increase his recommendation to the \$110 million amount. Motion approved 7-0 (Commissioners Gardner, Prouty and Sheridan were absent).

**MOTION:** Commissioner Marshall moved, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to direct staff to look at both Tier 1 and 2 lands on the Habitat Protection Priorities list to see what has been accomplished, review the outstanding properties to evaluate and affirm their continued priority status, determine how many properties are left and their size distribution, and determine how the Commission arrived at the original request of \$285 million. Motion approved 7-0 (Commissioners Gardner, Prouty and Sheridan were absent).

## 7. General Updates

A. Proposed Development Activities on Bond Parcels: Sherry Ruther updated the table, which was provided to the Commission. Three property development proposals were heard by the Board of Supervisors for comprehensive plan updates in the northwest. Mitigation will be required at the rezoning stage.

- B. Painted Hills: No update.
- C. State Trust land application and State Parks grant application for Tucson Mountain properties: Arizona State Parks has approximately \$700,000 remaining in their Growing Smarter matching grant program. The County will apply for matching funds for the 2014 grant cycle for two remaining API lands adjacent to Tucson Mountain Park. Both parcels total 100 acres, and the County has already submitted an application to the Arizona State Land Department.
- D. Land conservation efforts within the Town of Sahuarita: The County applied to the Arizona State Land Department for the purchase of 300 acres around the County's Green Valley Wastewater Treatment Facility in Sahuarita and Santa Cruz River to serve as a buffer around the facility and open space for the Anza Trail along the river. Originally, open space bond funds earmarked for the Town of Sahuarita, County Flood Control District (RFCD) funds and County Regional Wastewater and Reclamation (RWRD) funds were going to be used towards this purchase. However, the County later decided that it would fund the entirety of the purchase with RWRD funds, and that RWRD funds did not impact the ability to keep the majority of the land as open space, develop the Anza Trail and a possible trailhead. Town and County staff will be meeting soon to discuss the remaining open space bond funds allocated to the Town.
- E. Catalina/Tortolita Wildlife Corridor
- State Trust land applications: The County acquired 800 acres in the Tortolita Phase II expansion acquisition at auction in December 2013 from the Arizona State Land Department. This acquisition further expands on the 1,416 acres acquired last year at auction from the Arizona State Land Department. The County received Growing Smarter matching grants from Arizona State Parks for both acquisitions.
- The second State Trust land application is for the purchase of an easement over 13 acres along Oracle Road to serve as footholds for the wildlife land bridge to be constructed as part of ADOT's Oracle Road widening road project. The auction is scheduled for March 11, 2014.
- Kelly Ranch – Desert Springs Oro Valley General Plan Amendment: The project proposal has been formally withdrawn.
- F. Avra Valley-Interstate 10 Tucson-Tortolita Mountain Wildlife Corridor: A new retail outlet center is being proposed for this site and modifications to the Development Agreement were approved in December 2013. These changes could result in the generation of upwards of \$80 million to spend on the corridor. Currently, the Town of Marana is also permitting another retail outlet center which would be competing with the one proposed at this site. Only one will go forward.
- G. Marley Ranch: In 2012, the County re-negotiated two options to acquire the remainder of the ranch. The first option is for 6,000 acres and the second option is for 11,000 with leases and water rights coming to the County in the second option. The options expire in December 2015 and 2017 respectively and total approximately \$64 million. Without a bond election before 2015, it is likely that the County will again pursue extension of these options. In the interim, Freeport

McMoran Sierrita Mine purchased some of the County's option and lease lands as part of their effort to mitigate a sulfate plume and develop an additional tailings pile.

- H. Recent offers to sell to the County: The County recently received an offer of sale for Primavera property in Cochie Canyon. The County was also contacted by Mr. Mumford to donate his Agua Verde Creek ranch to the County for conservation.
- I. Rosemont Mine: A copy of the County's formal objections to the Final EIS and the Record of Decision is available. Vice-President of Hudbay met with the County Administrator to better understand the County's issues.
- J. Saguaro National Park Boundary Adjustment Act H.R. 715: No update.
- K. SunZia Transmission Line Project: No update other than to say that the study that was requested to see what impacts the transmission line would have on the White Sands facility has not been released as of yet.
- L. Sierrita Pipeline (formerly known as Sasabe Lateral Project): The Notice for Availability for the Final EIS has been expedited and moved up to March 28, 2014 from April 18, 2014. The County has submitted information to Kinder Morgan on the mitigation the County would like to offset impacts from the pipeline cutting across Altar Valley. The County has also filed as an intervener in the FERC process.
- M. Pima County Multi Species Conservation Plan Update: The Fish and Wildlife Service is still reviewing the comments submitted for our Final EIS. It is estimated that a decision will be made in the fall.
- N. Proposed Interstate 11: The Intermountain West Corridor is the current incarnation of the original Canamex Corridor designated by Congress in 1995. Details of the current study can be found at <http://i11study.com/wp/>. The initial joint study with Nevada is in the final stages with a report due this summer. No road alignments in Pima County have been determined and will not be determined until the Environmental Impact Study is completed, which would likely be a number of years from now.

#### 8. Next Commission Meeting

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be scheduled in June, followed by a meeting in August or September. Deseret Romero will send a target date of June 5<sup>th</sup> to Commissioners for availability.

#### 9. Call to the Public

No one spoke at this time.

#### 10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

DRAFT