

CONSERVATION LANDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CLAC)

The Indian River County (IRC) Conservation Lands Advisory Committee (CLAC) met at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, November 19, 2009, in the County Administration Building, Building A, Room A1-411, 1801 27th Street, Vero Beach, Florida. You may hear an audio of the meeting; review the meeting agenda, backup material and the minutes on Indian River County website www.ircgov.com/Boards/CLAC/2009. Please note listed next to each agenda item refers to time on the recorded minutes.

Present were members: Chairman Jens Tripson, Pelican Island Audubon Society Representative (PIAS); Ken Grudens, Indian River Land Trust Representative (IRLT); Tim Glover, Friends of St. Sebastian River Appointee; Joseph Carroll, Eugenia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society Representative; Sheila O'Connell, Alternate, University of Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory Representative (FMEL); Rich Wilson, Alternate, Indian River Mosquito Control District Appointee and Heather Stapleton, Environmental Learning Center.

Absent were Vice Chairman Jorge Rey, FMEL and Doug Carlson, Indian River Mosquito Control District Appointee

Also present was IRC staff: Bob Keating, IRC Community Development Director; Roland DeBlois, Chief of IRC Environmental Planning; Non-voting Commissioner Liaison Peter O'Bryan; Beth Powell, IRC Conservation Manager and Terri Collins-Lister, Commissioner Assistant, District 4. Others present: Ruth Stanbridge, County Historian, Joanna Webb, Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge Ranger, Dr. David Cox and Richard Baker, PIAS.

Call to Order

Chairman Tripson called the meeting to order.

Approval of October 15, 2009 Minutes (00:01:50)

Mr. Carroll suggested having the October 15, 2009 minutes reflect the following language be included in the IRC Trail Maintenance Policy, which was discussed under the heading "Report on Management Activities on County Conservation Lands":

“When thorny plants need to be trimmed, for example the Hog Plum, the branches and trimmings should not be “dropped in place”. Instead the cuttings should be moved off the trail about three feet so the thorny materials are not underfoot.”

ON MOTION BY Mr. Carroll, SECONDED BY Ms. Stapleton, the members voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the minutes of October 15, 2009, to include the recommendation for language to be added to the Indian River Trail Maintenance Policy.

Review of Proposed Landscape and Signage Improvements to the North Jungle Trail Entrance to the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge
(00:02:14)

Mr. DeBlois introduced Ms. Joanna Webb, Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge Ranger and stated she had contacted the County to coordinate some proposed improvements at the north end of Jungle Trail. Ms. Webb detailed the proposed improvements such as: use of signage to increase visibility at the entrance to the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, along with clearing of vegetation and landscaping. Mrs. Stanbridge expressed her concern that the improvements would disturb the midden along the entrance. Mr. DeBlois noted that prior efforts of the County included soil placement on the midden areas and clearing vegetation by clipping it to the ground.

Mr. DeBlois summarized the points made on the proposed landscape and signage improvements to the North Jungle Trail Entrance:

- Avoid root removal on midden
- Create an overburden, capsule the midden for planting versus planting into existing ground level
- Signage indicating entrance into the Historic Jungle Trail as well as the Pelican Island Refuge.

A lengthy discussion ensued on the location of the signage on Highway A1A. Chairman Tripson felt that the signage indicating entrance signage should be presented before the Historic Resources Advisory Committee.

ON MOTION BY Mr. Grudens, SECONDED BY Mr. Glover, the members voted unanimously (7-0) to conceptual approve the proposed landscape and signage improvements to the North Jungle Trail Entrance to the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge pursuant to approval from the Historic Resources Advisory Committee and County Staff, as well as working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the details of the proposed improvements.

Mrs. Stanbridge raised a question on the walkover at the Archie Carr Refuge located at the end the Sea View Development. A discussion followed on the walkway.

Review of Draft Evaluation Appraisal Report (EAR) Based Revisions to the Conservation Element of the Indian River County Comprehensive Plan
(00:58:36)

Mr. DeBlois reviewed the information contained in his memorandum and PowerPoint Presentation on the Conservation Element of the Indian River County Comprehensive Plan, a copy of which is on file in the Commission Office. He mentioned a topic of discussion was the concept of requiring any new oceanfront development to connect to public sewer where available and noted it could be costly for homeowners in some areas of the coastal counties with lift stations.

Mr. DeBlois focused on Objective 12 relating to the Conservation Lands Management and noted the County was currently looking at formalizing a policy in the Comprehensive Plan allowing private off-site mitigation on County conservation lands, subject to certain parameters in order to guarantee the success of the projects.

Mr. DeBlois asked the members to review the policies in the draft EAR based revisions to the Conservation Element of the Indian River County Comprehensive Plan and forward any comments to him prior to CLAC's meeting in January, 2010.

Report on Management Activities on County Conservation Lands – Ms. Beth Powell, IRC Conservation Manager (01:35:30)

Ms. Powell reviewed the information contained in her Management Status Report, a copy of which is on file in the Commission Office.

Mr. Roland DeBlois discussed the status of the Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area (ORCA) where the Audubon had proposed an educational center. He recalled in October 2008, the County went through a bid process for a two-year maintenance and herbicide treatment agreement within the price range of \$16,000 and \$38,000. He added Commissioner Liaison O'Bryan had suggested staff obtain new bids for maintaining the ORCA site, as well as meet with Mr. Joe Baird, IRC County Administrator, to review funding. A discussion followed on the ORCA site.

ON MOTION BY Ms. Stapleton, SECONDED BY Mr. Grudens, the members voted (7-0) to direct staff to proceed with the bid process for a two-year maintenance agreement for the Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area Site.

Ms. Powell concluded she had sent a Gopher Tortoise Grant Application to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission which could assist the County in pushing the grove at the Cypress Bend Community Preserve, formerly known as the Russell Grove parcel.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 21, 2010 at 10:00 a.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.