

LAND ACQUISITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (LAAC)

The Indian River County (IRC) Land Acquisition Advisory Committee (LAAC) held a meeting on Wednesday, March 25, 2009 at 1:50 p.m. in Room "B1-501" of the County Administration Building B, 1800 27th Street, Vero Beach, Florida. You may hear an audio of the meeting; review the agenda and the minutes on the IRC website - www.ircgov.com/Boards/LAAC/2009.

Present were members: **Dr. Richard Baker**, Pelican Island Audubon Society (PIAS); **Bonnie Veron** and **Talmage Rogers**, Members-at-Large; **Grant Withers**, Indian River Land Trust (IRLT); **Judy Orcutt**, Sierra Club; **Councilmember William Troxell**; Alternate, Town of Orchid; **Janice Broda**, Mosquito Control District; **Joel Tyson**, City of Fellsmere; and **Councilmember Gerald Weick**, Town of Indian River Shores.

Absent were members: **Michael Walther**, IRC Chamber of Commerce; **Kevin Doty**, Civic Association; **Leroy Smith**, Member-at-Large; **Denise Waddell**, IRC Historical Society; **Councilmember Andrea Coy**, City of Sebastian; **Councilmember Bud Oatway**, Town of Orchid; **Jim Granse**, Taxpayers' Association; **Sabin Abell**, City of Vero Beach; **Lois Work**, Board of Realtors; and **Commissioner Peter O'Bryan**, IRC Commissioner Liaison (all excused).

Also present were: **Marian Fell**, IRC Senior Assistant County Attorney; **Roland DeBlois**, IRC Chief of Environmental Planning; **Beth Powell**, Conservation Lands Manager; and **Terri Collins-Lister**, Commissioner Assistant, District 4. Others present were: **Matt Sexton**, The Conservation Fund; **Henry Stephens**, Press Journal; **Ken Grudens** and **Ralph Monticello**, IRLT; **David Cox**, PIAS and **Bob Emerson**, Volunteer, Captain Forster Hammock Preserve.

Call to Order

Chairman Broda called the meeting to order at 1:50 p.m. and introductions were made.

Approval of the January 28, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Chairman Broda requested the January 28, 2009 meeting minutes reflect the following change in the third paragraph on page 3 as follows:

*"Chairman Broda asked if staff could review the project list and bring back to the next LAAC meeting, additional backup on the sites as well as look at already acquired properties for which bond funds could be used for **initial** improvements".*

ON MOTION BY Mr. Rogers, SECONDED BY Councilmember Tyson, the members voted unanimously (9-0) to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 28, 2009 as amended.

Summary Report on Lands Acquired under the County Environmental Lands Program

Mr. Roland DeBlois, IRC Chief of Environmental Planning, went over the information contained in his memorandum regarding the Summary Report on Lands Acquired under the County Environmental Lands Program and the following attachments: Acquired Sites Purchase Information Summary Table, Environmental Lands Program Site Acreage Table and Location Maps of Acquired Properties, all of which are on file in the Commission Office.

Consideration of Staff Ranking of LAAC Sites and Imposition of an Acquisition Freeze Pending Anticipated Cost-Share Reimbursement for the Sebastian Harbor Preserve Purchase

Mr. DeBlois reviewed the information contained in his memorandum regarding the Consideration of Staff Ranking of LAAC Sites and Imposition of an Acquisition Freeze Pending Anticipated Cost-Share Reimbursement for the Sebastian Harbor Preserve Purchase, a copy of which is on file in the Commission Office. He pointed out two corrections on Attachment 4 of the draft update of the 2009 Indian River County Conservation Lands Capital Improvements: 1) Cost Estimates under the Conservation Area, Lost Tree Islands, the location should be the Town of Indian River Shores instead of Town of Orchid and 2) on the second page of Attachment 4 under Conservation Area, South Prong Preserve, the associated cost estimate should be \$100,000 instead of \$1,000,000.

Mr. DeBlois went over the current available monies in the Land Acquisition Fund and noted there was one active negotiation which was the Orca South Link (remainder) in the amount of \$130,000.

A discussion ensued on the Sebastian Harbor Preserve application with cost share reimbursement funds of approximately \$5.5 million. Mr. DeBlois stated the deadline for the submittal of the application for the funding cycle was May 2009.

Mr. Rogers referred to the LAAC Site List, Staff Draft Ranking Sheet and proposed adding 10 project excellence points to the already 45 points for the ORCA South Link (remainder) project and eliminate any project under 50 points.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY Mr. Rogers, SECONDED BY Mrs. Orcutt, to add 10 project excellence points to the ORCA South Link (remainder) and eliminate any project under 50 points.

UNDER DISCUSSION, Dr. Baker felt the LAAC Site List was not realistic and if projects less than 50 points were removed from the list and additional funding became available those projects eliminated would not be considered.

Mrs. Orcutt withdrew her second. A discussion followed on the LAAC Site List.

ON MOTION BY Mr. Rogers, SECONDED BY Mr. Tyson, the members voted (3-6) to award 10 project excellence points to the ORCA South Link (remainder) project and eliminate any project under 50 points. THE MOTION FAILED.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY Mr. Weick to award 10 points for the ORCA South Link (remainder) project and establish a threshold of 50 points or more. THE MOTION DIED FOR LACK OF A SECOND.

ON MOTION BY Mr. Weick, SECONDED BY Mr. Rogers, the members voted unanimously (9-0) to award 10 points to ORCA South Link (remainder) project.

A lengthy discussion ensued on the point system and excellence points. Ms. Marian Fell, IRC Senior Assistant County Attorney, went over staff's recommendation.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY Dr. Baker to award 10 excellence points to the High Pointe Scrub project. THE MOTION DIED FOR LACK OF A SECOND.

ON MOTION BY Mr. Rogers, SECONDED BY Mr. Tyson, to eliminate the Sebastian Village Scrub project from the LAAC Site List.

UNDER DISCUSSION, Dr. David Cox, PIAS, told the committee that any property which has known scrub jays located on the property brought forward for potential acquisition being on the LAAC Site List may serve the purpose for another source of funding to acquire the property. Ms. Beth Powell, IRC Conservation

Lands Manager, mentioned the Sebastian Village Scrub and High Pointe Scrub Projects would be eligible for Section 6 funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife for support of scrubs jays.

THE CHAIRMAN CALLED FOR THE QUESTION and the vote was 2-7 to eliminate the Sebastian Village Scrub. **THE MOTION FAILED.**

A discussion ensued on the properties on the LAAC Site List that could receive funding through Florida Communities Trust (FCT) or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife. Mr. DeBlois mentioned the Ten Mile Ridge Project had been recently annexed into the City of Fellsmere.

ON MOTION BY Mrs. Veron, SECONDED BY Mr. Tyson, to eliminate the Ten Mile Ridge Project.

UNDER DISCUSSION, Mr. Rogers felt the committee should approach the Anisn's on the Ten Mile Ridge to see if there was some way the property could be used as a tax offset. Dr. Baker felt before eliminating the Ten Mile Ridge Project, the County should try to get other agencies to look at the property or approach the state on the importance of some of these properties.

THE CHAIRMAN CALLED FOR THE QUESTION and the vote was 2-7 to eliminate the Ten Mile Ridge. **THE MOTION FAILED.**

Chairman Broda entertained a motion on staff's recommendation that the County "freeze" acquisition of new LAAC sites, with the exception of the ORCA South Link remainder that is under negotiation, pending anticipated cost-share reimbursement from the FCT for the Sebastian Harbor Preserve.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY Mrs. Orcutt, SECONDED BY Mr. Weick, the members voted unanimously (9-0) on staff's recommendation that the County "freeze" acquisition of new LAAC sites, with the exception of the ORCA South Link (remainder), the Russell Grove Conservation Area and the Soule Riverfront Parcel pending anticipated cost-share reimbursement from the Florida Communities Trust for the Sebastian Harbor Preserve.

A discussion ensued on the process for deciding how and when the initial improvements are made on acquired properties. Dr. Baker suggested the committee discuss initial improvements to already acquired properties at a future LAAC meeting.

Other Business

Mr. Bob Emerson, a volunteer for the Captain Forster Hammock Preserve spoke on the removal of exotics and a premier citrus property next to the Preserve.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:12 p.m.