



CONSERVATION AND GREENBELT ADVISORY COMMISSION

500 N. MAIN STREET
SUMMERVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA 29483

MINUTES
DORCHESTER COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES BUILDING
COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, SUMMERVILLE
September 4, 2024
5:30 PM

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, a notice was posted on the bulletin board 24 hours before the meeting, and the following media outlets were notified:
The Eagle-Record, The Summerville Journal Scene, The Post and Courier,
WCBD Channel 2, WCIV Channel 4 and WCSC Channel 5.

PRESENT: Mr. Daniel Prohaska, Chairman (Participated via Phone Call)
Mr. Ray Walsh, Vice Chairman
Ms. Phyllis Hughes
Ms. Catherine Brownlee
Ms. Rhonda Pereira
Mr. Edsel Taylor
Mr. Bryan Havir, Asst Administrator for Community Services
Ms. Kiera Reinertsen, Director of Planning and Zoning
Ms. Carolina Gomez-Bello, Conservation/Greenbelt Planner

ABSENT: Mr. Joel Wells

Mr. Ray Walsh called to order the meeting of the Dorchester County Conservation and Greenbelt Advisory Commission at 5:30 p.m. Ms. Hughes also gave the invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES

1. On the motion of Ms. Hughes seconded by Ms. Pereira., the Commission voted 6-0, to adopt the minutes from the June 5, 2024, Conservation and Greenbelt Advisory Commission Meeting.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The meeting commenced with a motion by Ms. Brownlee to amend the agenda to include an executive session to discuss contractual matters. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hughes and approved by the Commission with a 6-0 vote.

Mr. David Ray of the Lowcountry Land Trust then presented the Ashley River Barry Tract Project, for which the Lowcountry Land Trust has applied for Dorchester County Greenbelt funding. Mr. Ray shared several maps of the property, highlighted its topographic and ecological features, and provided a financial breakdown of the matching fund contributors and the total amount of Greenbelt funding requested. He emphasized the vulnerability of the property due to the significant threat of development if it is not protected.

Two potential grants are pending for the Barry Tract, including \$1,000,000 from the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants Program and \$100,000 from the South Carolina Conservation Bank. Additionally, Atlantic Packaging has committed \$100,000, and the Dorchester Trust Fund has committed \$25,000 toward the property's purchase. The Lowcountry Land Trust is requesting \$975,000 from the Dorchester County Greenbelt Program for the property acquisition and an additional \$15,000 for transactional costs. Mr. Ray explained that, once purchased, the property would be developed into a passive recreation park owned and operated by Dorchester County, a plan supported by the Dorchester County Parks and Recreation Department.

Mr. Hunter Allen, also from the Lowcountry Land Trust, gave a presentation on the 225-acre Young's Farm Tract, owned by Mr. Melvin and Ms. Rita Young, for which the Trust has also applied for Greenbelt funding. Mr. Allen shared maps detailing the property's topographical and ecological features and explained the proposed conservation easement. The easement would allow for continued agricultural practices and animal husbandry while limiting the property to two residential structures, 50,000 square feet of impervious surface, and prohibiting subdivisions.

The property is appraised at \$557,000, but the landowners are donating \$357,000 of this value. One pending grant from the South Carolina Conservation Bank is for \$100,000. The Lowcountry Land Trust is requesting \$100,000 in Greenbelt funds for this property. The conservation easement will be managed by the Lowcountry Land Trust, with the landowners retaining ownership. No public access will be allowed.

At approximately 6:12 p.m., Ms. Brownlee motioned for the Commission to enter an executive session to discuss contractual matters related to the Barry Tract and Young's Farm Tract projects. The motion was seconded by Ms. Pereira, and the Commission voted 6-0 to proceed to executive session.

At approximately 6:42 p.m., Mr. Ray Walsh brought the Commission out of executive session and back into regular session, stating that the two contractual matters had been discussed, but no actions were taken.

Upon the motion of Mr. Taylor, seconded by Ms. Pereira, the Commission voted 5-0 with one abstention from Mr. Prohaska to recommend that County Council approve the Lowcountry Land Trust's request for \$975,000 in Greenbelt Program funds for the purchase of the Ashley River Barry Tract and an additional \$15,000 for transactional costs, contingent upon the approval of all currently pending matching grants.

Upon the motion of Ms. Brownlee, seconded by Mr. Prohaska, the Commission voted 6-0 with no abstentions to recommend that County Council approve the Lowcountry Land Trust's request for \$100,000 in Greenbelt Program funds for the Young's Farm Tract Project, contingent upon the approval of all currently pending matching grants.

Finally, Ms. Gomez-Bello discussed the creation of an ordinance laying out a framework for the Greenbelt Program funds, as currently, no official ordinance exists that outlines these terms. Mr. Prohaska expressed interest in developing this through collaboration with County Council, and the Commission decided they would think more on this subject and readdress the topic at a later meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

On the motion of Ms. Pereira seconded by Mr. Taylor, the Commission voted 6-0 in favor to adjourn at approximately 6:48 p.m.