

**Pima County Conservation Acquisition Commission
Meeting**

**Manning House
Thursday, November 8, 2007
2:00 p.m.**

MOTIONS

MOTION: Commissioner Pettis moved, seconded by Commissioner Marian to approve the revised September 13, 2007 Meeting Summary. Motion approved 7-0 (Commissioners Shattuck, Marshall, Prouty and Johnson absent).

MOTION: Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Commissioner Pettis to approve the October 11, 2007 Meeting Summary. Motion approved 7-0 (Commissioners Shattuck, Marshall, Prouty and Johnson absent).

MOTION: Commissioner Pettis moved, seconded by Commissioner Corey to recommend approval of the acquisition of Diamond Bell Ranch, located south of Ajo and east of Sasabe Highway, adjacent to both the County-owned Buckelew Farm and King 98 Ranch properties. The acquisition would be for 191 deeded acres, 29,904 acres of State grazing lease and 798 acres of BLM grazing lease, for \$897,000. Motion approved 9-0 (Commissioners Shattuck and Marshall absent).

MOTION: Commissioner Sheridan moved, seconded by Commissioner Marian to recommend approval of the acquisition of the 22-acre Cortaro Farms Land property, located south of Cortaro Farms Road and the Camino de Oeste alignment, for \$1.32 million (\$60,000 per acre). Motion approved 7-2 (Commissioners Prouty and Johnson voting no; Commissioners Shattuck and Marshall absent).

DIRECTION TO STAFF

Find alternative dates other than November 16th for the State Trust Lands Study Session.

Ms. Fyffe will re-send the memo from the County Administrator regarding the timing of future bonds.

Post the report on the Tortolita Fan study to the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan web-page and follow-up with a link to the Commissioners.

Keep Tumamoc Hill on the Updates section of the Conservation Acquisition Commission agendas.

Include a list of those applying for Growing Smarter Funds to the Updates section of the agenda.

SUMMARY OF MEETING

The following is a summary of the November 8, 2007 meeting. Audiotapes of the meeting are available upon request.

1. Roll Call

The Commission meeting began at 2:10 pm.

Commissioners Present

Les Corey
Trevor Hare
Jan Johnson, Vice Chair (arrived at 2:20pm)
Jim Marian
Chuck Pettis
Tim Prouty (arrived at 2:15 pm)
Bill Roe, Chairman
Tom Sheridan
Helen Wilson

Commissioners Absent

Rob Marshall
Wanda Shattuck

2. Executive Session

None.

3. Approval of the revised September 13, 2007 and the October 11, 2007 Meeting Summaries

MOTION: Commissioner Pettis moved, seconded by Commissioner Marian to approve the revised September 13, 2007 Meeting Summary. Motion approved 7-0 (Commissioners Shattuck, Marshall, Prouty and Johnson absent).

MOTION: Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Commissioner Pettis to approve the October 11, 2007 Meeting Summary. Motion approved 7-0 (Commissioners Shattuck, Marshall, Prouty and Johnson absent).

4. Update on the 1997/2004 Conservation Bond Program Expenditures

Nicole Fyffe summarized the expenditures for the 2004 and 1997 Conservation Bond Programs. For 2004, \$72,743,000 has been expended with 56% of the authorization remaining. For 1997, a little over \$10,000 has been expended since the last update, with \$3.2 million remaining.

5. Acquisition of Diamond Bell Ranch: Altar Valley Project Area – Habitat Protection Priority: Secondary Priority State

Nicole Fyffe reported that the County has negotiated an acquisition agreement for Diamond Bell Ranch, located south of Ajo and east of Sasabe Hwy., adjacent to the County-owned Buckelew Farm and King 98 Ranch. The acquisition includes 191 deeded acres, 30,000 State grazing leases and 700 BLM grazing leases. One of the benefits is the ability to conserve Pima Pineapple Cactus (PPC).

Kerry Baldwin gave a brief overview of the biological assessment. Mr. Baldwin reported that PPC was found throughout the property, with the highest density being in the southern portion of the ranch. The ranch provides a large part of the puzzle for movement of wildlife into the Baboquivaris and down south to the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge. The ranch has been well-managed for a long time and not heavily stocked.

Ms. Fyffe said Mr. Chilton is willing to sell at appraised value, \$897,000, and that staff recommends approval.

MOTION: Commissioner Pettis moved, seconded by Commissioner Corey to recommend approval of the acquisition of Diamond Bell Ranch, located south of Ajo and east of Sasabe Highway, adjacent to both the County-owned Buckelew Farm and King 98 Ranch properties. The acquisition would be for 191 deeded acres, 29,904 acres of State grazing lease and 798 acres of BLM grazing lease, for \$897,000. Motion approved 9-0 (Commissioners Shattuck and Marshall absent).

6. 22-Acre Cortaro Farms Land Property (Northwest)

Nicole Fyffe reported that the property does not meet any of the three criteria used by the County to support purchase of the last four Northwest properties. The Commission had approved due diligence, and the appraisal was for \$1.32 million or \$60,000 per acre. The owners paid \$44,000 per acre one year ago. The appraisal for the adjacent 36-acre Tricar property came in at \$49,000 per acre. The County Administrator disagrees with the appraisal, in that he does not believe that the owners being in escrow with a church for 5.6 acres of this property would raise the price this significantly. Ms. Fyffe said the memo sent by the County Administrator to the Board of Supervisors was in response to comments made on Tuesday on the lack of purchases in the Northwest. The memo stated that \$24 million has been spent in the Northwest since 1996. The last four recent purchases have been in the Northwest.

The Commission commented on the difficulty of the market today and its implications on appraisals. Comments on the possibility of a conservation link to Arthur Pack Park from this property were also made.

Carolyn Campbell, with the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection, spoke in strong support of this acquisition. Ms. Campbell stated that the parcels to the north of this 22-acre property are owned by 2 different owners and that they are interested in conserving their properties, which would provide a linkage to Arthur Pack Park.

Commissioners Prouty and Johnson commented on the lack of certainty in the northern parcels being sold to the County.

MOTION: Commissioner Sheridan moved, seconded by Commissioner Marian to recommend approval of the acquisition of the 22-acre Cortaro Farms Land property, located south of Cortaro Farms Road and the Camino de Oeste alignment, for \$1.32 million (\$60,000 per acre). Motion approved 7-2 (Commissioners Prouty and Johnson voting no; Commissioners Shattuck and Marshall absent).

7. Presentation of Findings of the Tortolita Fan Study

Suzanne Shields, Director of the Pima County Regional Flood Control District, gave a presentation on the findings of the Tortolita Fan study. The area has very active fans and is extremely flood prone. The land is predominantly State Trust land. The proposal is to see if it meets federal nexus criteria for National Monument, National Park, or National Conservation Area status. The report submitted to Congressman Grijalva's office promotes the cohesive, distinct landscape of the area, and the substantial archaeology being intrinsically linked with the alluvial fan.

Commissioners requested that the report be posted to the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan web-page and a link be sent to them.

Dr. Paul Fish, with the Arizona State Museum, addressed the Commission and presented some archaeological findings in this area. Linda Mayro spoke briefly on the extensive cultural resources in the study area and the efforts to place it on the National Historic Register.

(Commissioner Prouty left meeting at 3:45pm)

8. 320 Acres of State Trust Land on Tumamoc Hill

Nicole Fyffe reported that the Board of Supervisors held a hearing on Tuesday, November 6th on the 320 acres of State Trust land on Tumamoc Hill proposed for public auction. The State Land Department required a Board resolution before accepting the County's application. Everyone, except for one speaker, was in support of the County moving forward. The resolution was approved, and the application will be submitted to the State Land Department. Ms. Fyffe stated that the auction could be scheduled for mid-summer. Congressman Grijalva will be making an amendment to HR3617 to add the federal take of Tumamoc Hill. The County would prefer that Tumamoc Hill be conserved through this federal legislation.

9. Report on Bond Advisory Committee Meeting – 2008 Conservation Bond Program

(Item heard out of sequence after agenda item 4)

Ms. Fyffe reported that Chairman Roe was not able to attend the meeting, but Carolyn Campbell gave the presentation to the Bond Advisory Committee. Vice-chair Johnson was also present and followed up with comments. The public that spoke was in support of moving forward with a bond election in 2008. Meetings dedicated to each of the topic areas are going to be scheduled during January through March.

Ms. Fyffe will re-send the memo from the County Administrator on the timing of a future bond election.

10. Updates

- Sneed Property (Sabino Creek area): AOLT has not been able to come to an agreement with the owner.
- Boa Sorte Property (Brawley Wash): Negotiations continue.
- Bloom Property: This property is included in HR3617
- Los Morteros: No update.
- Avra/I-10 Wildlife Connection (TEP, Cascada, Union Pacific, ADOT): No update.
- Green Valley Hills: Sherry Ruther will provide further information.
- Las Cienegas Enhancement and Saguaro National Park Boundary Adjustment Act S. 1341: Congressman Grijalva will amend HR3617 in the next couple of weeks.
- Resolution Copper Exchange: The bills are HR3301 and S.1862. The decision was to not move forward until further questions have been answered.
- Catalina/Tortolita connection: State Land Department is continuing work on conceptual land use planning for this area. Draft will be submitted for staff review.
- Rosemont Mine: No update.

- Buenos Aires Inholding (PDR): State Land Department expressed that the County may be able to buy this property at public auction.
 - Davidson Canyon (PDR): No update.
 - First United/Sopori Ranch Property: The Planning and Zoning Commission of Santa Cruz County has scheduled this hearing for November 15, 2007.
- Proposed Development Activities on Bond Parcels: Sherry Ruther provided information on several projects coming through the development process. The Kettenbach property project has withdrawn the cluster subdivision option and will pursue development through a conservation subdivision option instead. Green Valley Hills was approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission with 70% open space. North of the County's Canoa Ranch, the Canoa Preserve II development is seeking a cluster subdivision option for 153 lots with 67% open space. This plan is still being reviewed.

10. Next Commission Meeting

The next scheduled Commission meeting will be on January 10, 2008 at 2:00 pm at the Manning House. The Study Session will need to be rescheduled.

11. Call to the Public

No one spoke at this time.

12. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:10 pm.