

**Pima County Conservation Acquisition Commission
Meeting**

**Manning House
450 West Paseo Redondo
Thursday April 21, 2005
3:00 p.m.**

A. Motions at the April 21 Meeting

MOTION: Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Johnson, to move forward with due diligence on the Merodius parcels (Catalina/Tortolita connection across Oracle). Motion approved 9-0

MOTION: Vice-Chair Johnson moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, to move forward with due diligence on the properties prioritized for conservation easements (Catalina/Tortolita connection across Oracle). Motion approved 9-0.

MOTION: Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner Corey, to ask staff to provide an estimate of value for the parcels identified northwest of Arthur Pack Park, and to seek willing sellers. Motion approved 9-0.

MOTION: Commissioner Sheridan moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, to approve the acquisition of the Belvedere Estates property (78 acres at the west end of 36th Street) via and assignment of option to purchase from Arizona Open land Trust to the County. Motion approved 9-0.

MOTION: Commissioner Arnold moved, seconded by Commissioner Sheridan, to approve the acquisition of the Diocese-Los Morteros Parcel, and recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the County participate in the auction with a not-to-exceed bid amount to be determined by the Board of Supervisors during executive session. Motion approved 9-0.

MOTION: Commissioner Corey moved, seconded by Commissioner Arnold, to order appraisals for South Corridor parcels with contingent acquisition agreements. Motion approved 9-0.

B. Direction to Staff

Ms. Fonseca stated that she could use some assistance in working with ADOT to ensure that Oracle Road improvements include wildlife underpasses/crossings at locations that match up with these acquisitions.

The County still needs to contact Tucson Electric Power Company regarding their parcel on the east side of the underpass in the Avra I-10 corridor.

Chairman Roe asked that notification to the Pasqua Yaqui and Tohono O'odham tribes regarding Pima County's conservation activities in this area be placed on a future agenda.

Commissioner Hare requested that staff check to make sure the owners of Rancho Grande know about the County's acquisition program.

SUMMARY OF MEETING

The following is a summary of the April 21, 2005 meeting. Audiotapes of the meeting are available upon request.

1. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 p.m. with a quorum.

Commissioners Present

Bill Arnold
Les Corey
Trevor Hare
Jan Johnson, Vice-Chair
Chuck Pettis
Bill Roe, Chair
Wanda Shattuck
Tom Sheridan
Helen Wilson

Commissioners Absent

Rob Marshall
Tim Prouty

2. Conservation Opportunities in Connection Analysis Areas, combined with Agenda Item 11: Conservation Opportunities in the Northwest and in the area of Arthur Pack Park.

A subcommittee of the Science Technical Advisory Team met on March 10, 2005 to prioritize potential acquisitions in the Catalina/Tortolita connection, the Avra-I10 connection, and around Arthur Pack Park. Julia Fonseca presented these recommendations to the Conservation Acquisition Commission.

A. Catalina/Tortolita Connection

The highest priority for Habitat Protection Priorities in the Tortolita sub region (Category of lands in the 2004 bond program) are the Merodius parcels adjacent to Oracle Road on the east side. Several other parcels on the east side and one on the west were also recommended. These secondary parcels were not identified as Habitat Protection Priorities in the 2004 bond program but were identified as Community Open Space Parcels under the Catalina Conservation Easements project area.

Vice-Chair Johnson offered to lead a tour of these properties.

Ms. Fonseca stated that she could use some assistance in working with ADOT to ensure that Oracle Road improvements include wildlife underpasses/crossings at locations that match up with these acquisitions.

MOTION: Commissioner Hare moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Johnson, to move forward with due diligence on the Merodius parcels (Catalina/Tortolita connection across Oracle). Motion approved 9-0

MOTION: Vice-Chair Johnson moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, to move forward with due diligence on the properties prioritized for conservation easements (Catalina/Tortolita connection across Oracle). Motion approved 9-0.

B. Arthur Pack Park

Regarding other Habitat Protection Priorities in the Tortolita Sub Area, the subcommittee of the Science Technical Advisory Team, assigned secondary priority after the Merodius parcels to two clusters of parcels located northwest of Arthur Pack Park. Via acquisition and low density development in this area, these parcels contribute to a corridor between Arthur Pack Park and State Trust Land in the Tortolita Fan.

MOTION: Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner Corey, to ask staff to provide an estimate of value for the parcels identified northwest of Arthur Pack Park, and to seek willing sellers. Motion approved 9-0.

C. Avra I-10 Connection

For parcels in the Avra Valley sub region, the sub committee of the Science Technical Advisory Team had previously ranked the Avra I-10 Parson's parcel adjacent to the underpass as highest priority. This parcel was not included in the 2004 bond program. Via letters to and from Marana, Marana's Town Manager has directed Marana staff to require the preservation of the wildlife corridor on this parcel when reviewing any development proposals for this parcel.

At the March 8, 2005 Commission meeting, the Commission approved due diligence on the northern 15 acres of the Continental Ranch parcels ranked second and third priority for this sub area. These parcels are located just south of the underpass and the Parson's property. These 15 acres were identified in the 2004 bond ordinance as Habitat Protection Priorities.

Mr. Parson, representative of the Parson's parcel addressed the Commission. Chairman Roe requested a site visit to better understand the wildlife corridor issues. The County still needs to contact Tucson Electric Power Company regarding their parcel on the east side of the underpass.

D. Garcia Strip/CAP Canal Connection

The Commission discussed six parcels west of Saguaro National Park West, along the Brawley Wash. The parcels are surrounded by Flood Control District land, and Bureau of Reclamation lands. This is one of the few places wildlife can cross under the CAP canal from Saguaro National Park West. Purchase of these parcels would also maintain Brawley Wash floodplain processes and important riparian habitat. These parcels are

identified as Habitat Protection Priorities in the 2004 bond ordinance. They are also good candidates for the Floodprone Land Acquisition Program.

Chairman Roe asked that notification to the Pasqua Yaqui and Tohono O'odham tribes regarding Pima County's conservation activities in this area be placed on a future agenda. It was also requested that these lands/or CLCs in general be placed on future agendas under the updates section.

3. Conservation Easements and Taxes

A sub committee of this Commission met on March 3rd to discuss property tax benefits currently available to those with conservation easements on their property and future state legislation that could decrease assessment ratios for properties with conservation easements. Staff has been asked to draft a short fact sheet on potential tax benefits as incentives to donating or selling conservation easements. A draft of this will be provided to the Commission before the next meeting.

4. Follow up on the March 30th Joint Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting

Chairman Roe summarized the meeting and the steps County staff will take to assure to the extend possible that owners are aware of the open space application process, and that owners have chosen not to pursue that option by the time a development project gets to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

5. Approval of February 10 Meeting Summary

Meeting summary was approved 9-0.

6. Update on 1997/2004 Conservation Bond Program Expenditures

The Commission previously received an update of the 1997 and 2004 Conservation Bond Program Expenditures as of March 31, 2005.

7. Belvedere Estates Acquisition

MOTION: Commissioner Sheridan moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, to approve the acquisition of the Belvedere Estates property (78 acres at the west end of 36th Street) via and assignment of option to purchase from Arizona Open land Trust to the County. Motion approved 9-0.

8. Acquisition of Diocese Parcel – Los Morteros

MOTION: Commissioner Arnold moved, seconded by Commissioner Sheridan, to approve the acquisition of the Diocese-Los Morteros Parcel, and recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the County participate in the auction with a not-to-exceed bid amount to be determined by the Board of Supervisors during executive session. Motion approved 9-0.

9. Updates:

Bar V Ranch: The County is working on closing mineshafts, and fencing a section of the northern parcel that will be managed by the County.

King98: The County closed on the property on March 18, 2005.

Rancho Seco: The Board of Supervisors approved moving forward with the purchase, and the County is anticipating closing on the property on or before May 19, 2005.

Carpenter Ranch: Due diligence is underway.

Camino de Oeste: Contingent acquisition agreements have been sent to certain property owners, and one has been received one back for the Matesich property.

Poteet: Negotiations regarding the acquisition cost are on going.

South Corridor Project Area: The County has contingent acquisition agreements from Hiett, Mejo LLC, Berard, and Kay. Michael Berard, Ms. Heater, and the owners of the Hiett property spoke at this time.

MOTION: Commissioner Corey moved, seconded by Commissioner Arnold, to order appraisals for South Corridor parcels with contingent acquisition agreements. Motion approved 9-0.

Green Valley Hills: No update. Owner has not submitted an application to sell open space to Pima County.

Madera Highlands: Due diligence, including a pineapple cactus survey, is underway and expected to be complete by the next Commission meeting.

Habitat for Humanity parcel and west 36th Street:

Diana Freshwater facilitated a meeting of group of interested neighbors, open space supporters, and City and County staff, to discuss the Habitat for Humanity application and other potential acquisitions along 36th street. The group is scheduled to hold another meeting. City ordinances that apply to the Habitat property will be discussed.

State Trust Land Reform – legal opinion: According to the County Attorney's office, the Commission cannot use County resources to influence the outcomes of elections.

Federal Exchange involving Tumamoc Hill: Jean Emery provided an update on the proposed exchange legislation that would preserve the Simonson Property and property inside the Ironwood National Monument in exchange for BLM land near Sahuarita. This proposed legislation would also include the federal condemnation of Tumamoc Hill. Chairman Roe suggested that this legislation be tied to the Resolution Copper Exchange legislation in order to move it forward.

Proposed Development Activities on Bond Parcels: An update was provided to the Commission prior to the meeting. Commissioner Hare requested that staff check to make sure the owners of Rancho Grande know about the County's acquisition program.

9. Next Commission Meeting, May19

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for May 19, 2005 at 3 p.m. A suggested agenda was distributed to the Commission.

10. Call to the Public

No individuals spoke at this time.

11. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:15 pm.