

**Pima County Conservation Acquisition Commission Meeting**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Building  
3500 West River Road  
Thursday, March 22, 2012  
2:00 p.m.**

**MOTIONS**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Gardner moved, seconded by Commissioner Pettis to approve the December 8, 2011 meeting minutes. Motion approved 6-0 (Commissioners Corey, Hare, Marshall, Prouty and Smith absent).

**MOTION:** Commissioner Marian moved, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to accept the 1997/2004 semi-annual bond program report for fiscal year 2011/2012. Motion approved 6-0 (Commissioners Corey, Hare, Marshall, Prouty and Smith absent).

**DIRECTION TO STAFF**

Commission requested more information on House Bill 2408 requiring an audit of Pima County's bond programs.

**SUMMARY OF MEETING**

1. Roll Call

The Commission meeting began at 2:10 p.m.

Commissioners Present

Helen Gardner  
Jan Johnson, Vice-Chair  
James Marian  
Chuck Pettis  
Bill Roe, Chairman (via phone)  
Tom Sheridan

Commissioners Absent

Les Corey  
Trevor Hare  
Rob Marshall  
Tim Prouty  
Corey Smith

2. Executive Session

None.

3. Approval of the December 8, 2011 Meeting Minutes

**MOTION:** Commissioner Gardner moved, seconded by Commissioner Pettis to approve the December 8, 2011 meeting minutes. Motion approved 6-0 (Commissioners Corey, Hare, Marshall, Prouty and Smith absent).

4. Update on 1997/2004 Conservation Bond Program Expenditures

Nicole Fyffe reported that there have been no changes to the 1997 Open Space Bond program, with a remaining balance of \$234,000 earmarked for the Tortolita Mountain Park Expansion. Under the 2004 Conservation Acquisition Bond program, there are 3 active projects: Kino and 36<sup>th</sup> Street property, Tortolita Mountain Park Expansion, and Town of Sahuarita State land property. There is currently \$6.6 million remaining under Jurisdictional Open Space within the City of Tucson, Towns of Oro Valley and Sahuarita.

5. Accept 1997/2004 Semi-Annual Bond Program Report

Nicole Fyffe presented the overall brochure and map depicting all projects. Materials are available online and on cd. The report breaks up the 5 year CIP projects by categories. The Commission received the open space portion of the report for review and approval.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Marian moved, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to accept the 1997/2004 semi-annual bond program report for fiscal year 2011/2012. Motion approved 6-0 (Commissioners Corey, Hare, Marshall, Prouty and Smith absent).

Nicole Fyffe noted that an update from the County Administrator was e-mailed to the Commission on HB2656, which was the Bill that required an oversight bond committee made up of members of all jurisdictions. Most of the language was struck, but it now focuses on the County's ability to issue Certificates of Participation. There was a new bill introduced that would require an audit of Pima County's bond programs (HB2408). The bill has gone through the House and passed the Committee of the Whole.

The Commission requested more information on this bill.

6. County Held Grazing Leases

A. Status update on lease terms between County and the Arizona State Land Department and between the County and Ranch Managers

In response to the Commission's request for information on the status of County-held grazing leases, Kerry Baldwin provided a spreadsheet with up to date information on all County ranches. Mr. Baldwin went over the terms for each lease and the current status of the ranch management agreements. The spreadsheet shows that currently ranches are running about 50% of their capacity. The number of cattle continues to go down, and it is anticipated that this trend will continue until the climate changes. He further noted that Bar V Ranch may be the first ranch where the operator may not have interest in continuing to operate the ranch given the declining numbers of animal units. The ranch management agreement is at no cost to the operator, but day to day maintenance is the operator's responsibilities. The other side to this is the goals of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan and our responsibility to ranch sustainability. The County acquires these ranches in various states of quality and work together with the rancher to protect the resources. Standards for range management and resource protection will be adjusted as circumstances continue to evolve.

B. Potential development threats to County-held state grazing leases using growth scenario maps from Imagine Greater Tucson (IGT) and update on IGT planning effort

Arlan Colton, Pima County Planning Director, handed out the Arizona Daily Star's insert and survey results for the Imagine Greater Tucson survey. Mr. Colton explained that IGT is an ongoing process, and any land use depicted is more for spatial representation than actual land uses prescribed. The 4 alternative maps are just projections not actuals. These 4 maps show you the various growth scenarios.

Commissioner Sheridan asked if the maps were based on survey results or information by developers and projects. Mr. Colton responded that the maps are based on what exists today or is committed for development. The input and values derived from the first phase, coupled with expert panels, contributed to the development of the 3 alternative scenarios. Overall, the people attending the public meetings and providing input seemed to favor higher density. Mr. Colton noted that IGT staff, the scenarios team and consultant are working on a hybrid approach of the alternatives that may come out in the spring. The assumption made is that the population will double and that we would provide the jobs needed for population increase. From this effort, the next step would be to provide jurisdictions with guiding principles for a regional vision for their review.

Staff reviewed the growth scenario maps to see if encroachment was projected on any of the County's open space acquisitions. As described by Mr. Colton, the maps are just possible scenarios and not land use plans. As expected, under the current growth trend, conflict with open space acquisitions closer to urban areas is likely. (Diamond Bar Ranch in Three Points and Bar V Ranch east of Vail)

7. General Updates

- Proposed Development Activities on Bond Parcels: Nothing new to report.
- State Trust land application to acquire land to expand Tortolita Mountain Park: The County is still completing due diligence required by the State Land Department. The legislation introduced to sweep Growing Smarter matching grant funds is still being considered. Arizona State Parks is still moving forward with their Growing Smarter application workshop. The County will continue to move forward in this process.
- State Trust land conservation efforts within the Town of Sahuarita: The State Land Department has made it clear that they need to have discussions with other area parties prior to beginning discussions with the County on our acquisition proposal. The State will be having discussions with FICO, the Town, and the Green Valley Community Water Company, all pursuing other actions in this area as well.
- Avra Valley – Interstate 10 Tucson-Tortolita Mountain connection: The County is waiting for an appraisal of the 3-acre parcel on the west side of I-10. TEP has not been as responsive as in the past with regard to the potential conservation easement on the east side of I-10.
- Saguaro National Park Boundary Adjustment Act H.R. 715: Nothing new to report.
- Catalina/Tortolita Connection: The County is pursuing a right-of-way easement along Oracle to accommodate the ADOT/RTA Wildlife land bridge, and discussions with the State Land Department regarding the Catalina Detention Facility property are ongoing.

- Kelly Ranch: A General Plan Amendment and annexation request was submitted to the Town of Oro Valley by the owners. The Commission expressed that the ridgeline from Catalina State Park should be protected.
- Rosemont Mine: Staff spent the last couple of months commenting on DEIS and other permit applications. DEIS rated by EPA as one of the worst. County staff and others participated in a tour of Cienega Preserve with EPA officials.
- SunZia Transmission Line Project: Last week, the Rapid Response Technical Team came to meet with the various agencies and local governments. The RRTT was created with the purpose of expediting the SunZia review process. The Team is made up of representatives from the National Parks Service, Bureau of Land Management, Department of Defense, and Department of Interior. Attendees came from Safford, Coolidge, Pinal County, Mammoth and others. The Draft EIS will be released in the spring. The RRTT was looking for input from the various jurisdictions on what permitting requirements they may have over the transmission line project.
- BLM Solar EIS: The comment period on the targeted Supplemental Draft EIS closed in January. Responses to comments submitted will be included in the final EIS, which should come out late summer 2012.
- Future Bond Election Update: The County Administrator proposed new transportation corridor projects for possible inclusion in the future bond program. The Bond Advisory Committee asked that further discussion on this proposal be brought back in the context of the overall tentatively approved bond package. There was no indication of a 2012 Bond election, but it has not officially been ruled out. The Bond Advisory Committee continues to refine projects. At this time, the County Administrator is not recommending a 2012 Bond election.

#### 8. Next Commission Meeting

There was some discussion on members serving on the Commission and their respective terms. Ms. Fyffe indicated that all expressed interest in continuing to serve, and that the Board of Supervisors was in support of reappointment. It is anticipated that everyone will be reappointed. Dates for a Commission meeting in August or September will be sent out. The Bond Advisory Committee will meet on Friday, September 21, 2012, so the Commission meeting will need to be scheduled prior to that date for semi-annual report approval.

#### 9. Call to the Public

No one spoke.

#### 10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.