MEETING MINUTES

**COMMITTEE NAME:** Conservation Land Acquisition and Stewardship Advisory Committee (CLASAC) a/k/a Conservation 20/20  

**DATE:** June 12, 2014  

**LOCATION:** Community Development Public Works Center, First Floor Conference Room, 1500 Monroe Street, Fort Myers, FL 33901  

**AGENDA ITEM 1:** CALL TO ORDER – George Wheaton called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.  

**DULY ADVERTISED:** Y  

**QUORUM:** Y  

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Present – 11  
Karen Andress, Carl Barraco, Janet Bunch, Charles Cook, Dalton Drake, Christie Knight, Wiley Parker, Greg Rawl, Donald Schrotenboer, Joshua Tuyls, George Wheaton  

**ABSENT – 4**  
Rob Fowler, Charlie Green, Barrett Stejskal, Randy Thibaut  

**STAFF PRESENT:** Renee Armstrong, Karen Bickford, Dawn Lehnert, Karen Maquire, Jessica Mendes, Cathy Olson, Holly Schwartz, Lynda Thompson  

**NOTES:** Commissioner Mann was in attendance.  

**AGENDA ITEM 2:** COMMISSIONER MANN  

**DISCUSSION SUMMARY:** Commissioner Mann thanked the committee for their willingness to participate in one of the most important programs the County has ever had to-date. Commissioner Mann shared some of his observations and ideas with CLASAC. The Management fund never accumulated enough interest to function entirely off of the interest. Consider reducing the millage from 0.5 to 0.1 mills for management and don’t charge the 0.4 difference. When we spend down the acquisition fund to $50 million, maybe have 0.2 or 0.25 mills tax to increase the balance to continue the program. The revenue for the program will increase as land values increase. Your job is to help us reestablish public confidence. He is profoundly grateful to CLASAC for their participation. George Wheaton asked Commissioner Mann if there is any danger of the $100 million for the program being incorporated into the County budget? Commissioner Mann indicated he would be stunned if any of the Commissioners would even suggest it.  

**AGENDA ITEM 3:** APPROVE MINUTES – May 8, 2014  

**MOTION:** Approve the May 8, 2014, CLASAC Minutes as submitted.  

**MOTION BY/SEONDED BY:** Greg Rawl / Karen Andress  

**DISCUSSION:** Sunshine law requirements between CLASAC members and the Facilitator were asked about. No determination has yet been made.  

**VOTE RESULT:** No opposition.  

**AGENDA ITEM 4:** PUBLIC COMMENT  

**DISCUSSION SUMMARY:** Noel Andress, current Chair of the Lee County Local Planning Agency (LPA) and former Chair of the Blue Ribbon Committee (BRC), reminded the CLASAC of the 16 recommendations of the BRC. New Commissioners are now sitting on the Board that weren’t in office when the 16 BRC recommendations were implemented. The BRC was made up of 7 real estate professionals. We studied the 20/20 Program over 4 months and the recommendations were adopted and codified by the Board of County Commissioners. Until we have a new vote by the Board of County Commissioners, those 16 recommendations are a directive to the staff and CLASAC regarding the reform of the 20/20 Program. Any CLASAC discussions need to take the BRC recommendations into consideration. There were many excellent suggestions in those recommendations that would go a long way towards solving some of the problems. Lee County has a growth quota of 1.5-1.6 million people. We are at 650-700,000 people today. Where are we going to put another million people in Lee County and retain the quality of life we have now? Lee County needs the Conservation 20/20 Program. The Lee County Comprehensive Plan identified lands in the DR/GR areas in Tiers 1-5 that will cost the County $150 million to
purchase. These properties are identified as prime conservation properties for the future of this County. We need to stay the course. We are only about half way there. As we go forward, he would appreciate the Board looking at the BRC recommendations when deciding to change the program.

Bill Hammond, noted the original Program campaign was put through during a recession. If people really believe they are going to get services and receive a benefit from it they don’t mind paying taxes. Among all the coastal counties (east and west) in Florida, all the Counties were at 40% or more due to Everglades purchases. 20% was not the goal for the 20/20 Program. That came out of a misnomer at a planning meeting where someone mentioned if we could only get 20% of Lee County conserved. It was more 20/20 hindsight. Odum studies and several other studies in the State of Florida suggest strongly that 40% of our county needs to be in green space if we are going to stay in a relatively sustainable way. Basically the only Ad Valorem tax properties that pay their way are high priced real estate (million dollar estates and waterfront properties) and unimproved pasture. Once you reach optimum growth, each of us gets less for our tax dollar than we used to. The avoided costs the County doesn’t have to pay for schools, roads, and fire protection is what creates the potential for sustainability. Tourism is directly related to green space and recreation. The reason that people come to Southwest Florida is for the quality of our environment. The medical profession is now documenting that billions of dollars of healthcare savings is being realized just by reforesting around their cities. If you live within 1½ miles of major green space you may see as much as 1/3 less depression and other forms of mental stresses and illnesses. He welcomes a referendum for the Program if and when it is decided upon.

AGENDA ITEM 5: CRITERIA & RANKING SUB-COMMITTEE (CRSC): No Agenda Items

AGENDA ITEM 6: MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE (MSC)
A. QUARTERLY REPORT

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: This was deferred until next month.

AGENDA ITEM 7: OTHER BUSINESS
A. Orientation PowerPoint Presentation by Lynda Thompson

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: This is an update to an orientation presentation created specifically for this Committee with the Blue Ribbon Committee changes. The presentation went over the history of the program and the ten duties of CLASAC as identified in the adopted ordinance. Carl Barraco asked about Conservation Easements and if that includes all land in conservation easement status, regardless of whom the beneficiary is? Lynda Thompson responded these generally benefit private Homeowner Associations.

B. Management Annual Report PowerPoint Presentation by Cathy Olson

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: Cathy Olson presented management and stewardship activities conducted last budget year. Noel Andress asked about the status of Alva Scrub and City of Cape Coral’s Scrub Jay Mitigation at this preserve. Cathy Olson indicated the County worked with the City during their habitat and conservation planning process. They have received an Incidental Take Permit for their project. The next step is for the City to band the birds in Festival Park. Then the City will send a check to the County and we begin the mitigation for them complying with their permit. The City is not too happy about paying for the mitigation, even though it is a substantial savings for the City of several million dollars. The County is only charging them $800,000. A multi-party agreement has been entered into with the City, County, and Fish and Wildlife Conservation Service.
AGENDA ITEM 8: CONTINUED FACILITATION – HERB MARLOWE

DISCUSSION SUMMARY:

Herb Marlowe introduced himself to those who hadn’t already met him. He works on public policy issues. He laid out the process that CLASAC will be going through. He framed three questions/topics and provided detail on the how and timing. What is the goal here? Or what are we trying to accomplish with the Program? How do you do it; what are the different ways? The item of trust of government and its dimensions. First will be goals. He will be getting in touch with remaining CLASAC members that he hasn’t yet had a chance to speak with. Of the CLASAC members he did speak with the consensus was not to repeat the failures of other Counties. A method is to look at other Counties and how they developed. The 3 counties identified will be Broward, Palm Beach and Hillsborough. What did they look like when they had 600,000 people? What did they look like when they had 1 million people? What do they do that we like? What do they do that we don’t like? Where is Lee County going to go as far as population? Staff is developing maps and trying to look at population density now. We will begin that conversation by presenting data. What do you want to use this program for? That will be the goal conversation. The Program conversation will be the how do we do it? He is helping staff develop a couple of matrices for you. The left hand columns consist of program characteristics. We will lay out the current program, updates with the BRC, and some alternatives. Another matrix will be developed comparing best practices of other programs in other Counties. The purpose is to ensure that CLASAC has done its due diligence. We want to be able to see the big picture and best practices. The third conversation is about trust. There are trust issues with the Commission, not necessarily with the current commission, but with the commission form of government. Herb asked if there were any questions/comments about methodology. Don Schroteboer asked how the elements were established/developed? Herb identified a draft and then circulated it to staff and they added a few items. This is a developing item, so if there are more features/components please let staff know.

Herb identified a scheduling challenge requested by the County Manager and the Commissioner Chair who requested two items be addressed: They would like CLASAC to have both the goal conversation and funding conversation sooner rather than later. To facilitate that request Herb requested that two CLASAC workshops be held between now and the next regular CLASAC meeting. The workshops will address goals and funding. The concept is that he will bring back the findings at the July CLASAC meeting that we can hopefully find some common ground. He asked for feedback from the committee. Karen Andress asked when the Board’s final discussion will be held on the budget? Herb responded in September with the preliminary millage being set in August. George Wheaton asked Herb to clarify what was referred to for program goals? Herb indicated a way to approach it could be in a percentage. Are there certain features that we believe we need to maintain for water quality, diversity, habitat, etc.? Maybe it’s not as much an acreage goal but types of land or configurations of land. What are we really trying to achieve here? The original goals were to improve water quality, wildlife/habitat protection, water resources and passive recreation. Are there end results? What are the functions, services, benefits, impacts? Do that in the context of
adding another 500,000 people. What do you want to keep? What do you want this County to be like? What does this Program need to do to get you there? Janet Bunch asked about the matrix and if the committee was expected to fill it out? Herb responded that staff is preparing data needed for the discussion. The information being prepared will be presented and discussed by CLASAC. Once you decide on what the goals should be, this will be the mechanism on how to get there. Marisa Carrozzo asked if the completed matrices were going to be provided ahead of time? Herb noted this is a very accelerated schedule and we are asking a lot of staff. We will do our best to get the completed matrices to you at least 24-hours prior to the meeting.

**MOTION:** Move the July 10, 2014, CLASAC Meeting to July 17, 2014.

**MOTION BY/SEONDED BY:** Charles Cook / Karen Andress

**DISCUSSION SUMMARY:** There was no opposition.

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<th>AGENDA ITEM 9: SET NEXT MEETING DATES</th>
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<th>AGENDA ITEM 10:</th>
<th>ADJOURN: George Wheaton adjourned the meeting at 7:34 p.m.</th>
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<td><strong>RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:</strong></td>
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