



DRAFT

CONSERVATION 20/20 MEETING MINUTES
September 21, 2022

Carl Barraco, chair, called the Conservation 20/20 Land Acquisition and Stewardship Advisory Committee (CLASAC) meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. *The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.*

Role Call/Committee Members in attendance (14): *A quorum was established.*

Karen Andress, Carl Barraco, Derrick Botana, Carlene Brennan, Sharail Cluck, Ron Inge, Christie Knight, Matthew Lincolnhol, Christopher Robben, Elaine Sarlo, Shane Spring, Andrew Sund, Rae Ann Wessel,

Excused member (1): Sawyer Smith

Approve the May 18, 2022, meeting minutes: **Spring made a motion to approve the May 18, 2022**, meeting minutes as submitted; **Inge** seconded. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Having no objection, Agenda Items were heard out of order. Item 6A was heard first.

Agenda Item 6A. Committee Member Items: 1. Update on Water Quality Runoff into Spring Creek/former Bonita Springs Golf Course property. **Botana** advised the City of Bonita Springs recently tested the water running into Spring Creek from the Bonita Springs golf course property which showed no surficial contamination, and he would like for this property to be reconsidered for acquisition. **Robben** noted that there had not been much committee business in the last few years and perhaps these unconventional parcels need to be reconsidered, especially if there are collaborations. *Having no further discussion this matter was closed.*

Agenda Item 5: Negotiated Purchase Agreement Nomination 610

Item 5A - Nomination 610. **Robert Clemens**, director of county lands, provided details on the negotiation of Nomination 610. This is a ¼ acre parcel in the vicinity of I-75 and Bayshore Road. The purchase price is \$10,000, and staff recommends forwarding the contract to the Board for acceptance. The appraised value was \$19,000. The expenses the County will be responsible for are a survey, phase I environmental evaluation, and recording fees. This is an infill parcel of Caloosahatchee Creeks Preserves. **Spring motioned approval of the staff negotiated purchase agreement for Nomination 610; Inge** seconded. **Wessel** asked about the Lee County Utilities notation on the map. **Clemens** responded that it is owned by Lee County and contains a well head. *The motion was called are carried unanimously.*

Agenda Item 5B: Negotiated Purchase Agreement Nomination 621.

Clemens advised Nomination #621 is south of Pine Island Road, immediately adjacent to Heron Pond Preserve (non-C20/20), within the vicinity of C20/20 Buttonwood Preserve, and west of Little Pine Island Mitigation Bank. The purchase agreement is \$142,800, the County will pay for a survey, and a phase I environmental audit. The staff recommendation is to forward the purchase agreement to the Board for approval. **Andress motioned to approve the purchase agreement for Nomination 621. Spring** seconded. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Staff/Committee Updates

• New Nominations

1. Nomination 622, **Clemens** advised this parcel is commonly known as Buck Key. Staff has concerns about the expected asking price. The County acquired a similar island parcel in 2019 for under \$900,000. He advised the property owner's rep did submit comparable parcels on Captiva. **Barraco** asked about the development units on this site.

Public comment was opened: **Jeff Burns**, Broker representing the property owner for Nomination 622, explained the comparable sales submitted and developable units. Each development unit on Buck Key consists of +/-1.27 acres. The vacant land sales that were not waterfront were discounted 20%. He also advised Mariner Properties sold a land locked parcel on Buck Key to the Trust for Public Land for \$6 million, in the late 90's. Public comment was closed at this time.

Discussion ensued regarding a recent procedural change with public comment. **Cluck** made a motion to allow public comment on each item. **Wessel** seconded and requested that public comment be held for each item prior to the vote. It was emphasized public comment is not intended to be a dialogue between the committee, staff, and the public. *The vote passed unanimously.*

Motion to table Nomination #622 to allow staff to discuss appropriate land values with the owner was made by **Cluck**. **Paul** seconded. **Barraco** requested if this parcel is to come back, he would like clarification on what the development units mean, and what it would take to build out there? **Robben** asked about access to utilities/power on this site. **Clemens** responded that power was not currently available on this island. **Clemens** commented that comparable sales are those you can drive a conventional vehicle to. From a development standpoint there are going to be significant mitigation costs to the tune of approximately \$200,000 per unit. The elevation on this site is between 2-4 feet, so a typical septic system is not going to work with the elevation. There is no road network here and he further noted feasibility study's are very expensive. **Brennan** asked about the development status on Buck Key. **Clemens** advised the bulk of the island is either government owned or owned by other preservation groups. **Brennan** further asked why staff is so focused on real estate values and development costs. **Clemens** explained that the seller's price is not market oriented and staff is cognizant of spending taxpayer dollars in a fiscally responsible manner. The motion passed unanimously.

Clemens reviewed Nomination 623. This parcel is located along the south side of SR-80 and scored 16 points. The parcel is 37-acres and surrounded by roads. He noted this piece has substantial farming debris/plastic residuals which are quite expensive to remediate. **Wessel** asked about Item C criteria saltwater intrusion, or if other County departments may be interested in acquiring this parcel? **Clemens** advised that yes, another department may be interested, and it is currently being vetted.

Public Comment was opened: **Karyn Allman** suggested if purchased, the amenities for the adjacent Oak Creek Preserve could be placed upon a portion of this parcel. Public comment was closed at this time.

Motion to reject Nomination #623 was made by **Spring** and seconded by **Knight**. *The motion passed unanimously.*

- Acquisition Status

Clemens asked if there were any questions or concerns with the Acquisition Status Report provided. **Botana** asked if funds are not used within the year allocated, what happens to those funds? **Clemens** advised that unused funding is rolled over from one fiscal year to the next. Discussion ensued regarding one committee members perception on a lack of recent significant purchases. **Botana** suggested waterfront properties should be a priority for program purchases. **Cluck** replied that Nominations are submitted to this program by willing sellers. Action is taken on parcels when those purchases are warranted based upon criteria, price, etc. **Cluck** further clarified that buying property just for the sake of buying isn't prudent. **Wessel** advised that the latest Ordinance changes allows the County to solicit properties. The acquisition fund fluctuates between \$40-100 million, and replenishment of the acquisition fund is at the discretion of the Commissioners, once it falls below \$40 million. **Wessel** suggested scoring be adjusted for more environmental significance. She would like to have program scoring on a future Agenda item to discuss revising the review criteria. **Inge** referred the committee to page 2 of 2 of the Acquisition Status Report, which outlines the parcels that went to impasse or were withdrawn for whatever reason. **Spring** suggested that we have been good stewards of the funding and cautioned members on the quality over quantity on purchases. **Botana** suggested the scoring criteria needed to be reevaluated for storm surge, carbon footprint, and other known sciences which are not currently part of the scoring. **Robben** brought up management funds and how grants have been turned down on projects that are necessary because it's not in the budget. He knows the acquisition and management funds are separate, however, he questioned when only a fraction of the funding that has been allocated is spent, and then we turn away money because it is not in the budget? **Clemens** brought to the attention of the committee that one of the properties we acquired this past fiscal year, owned by V.K. Judd Creek. This particular waterfront property took us over two years to acquire. He further explained the contingencies/encumbrances required when dealing with other government agencies which are out of the control of County staff.

- New Logo – **Jesse Lavender, director of Parks and Recreation**, introduced the new Conservation 20/20 logo. The design is part of the County's continued commitment to improve water quality, wildlife, and preservation. The logo exemplifies the County's dedication to making this community a great place to live,

work and play. The logo design was selected with conservation and the areas natural landscape in mind. Conservation 20/20 swag was provided to committee members.

- Management Update - **Lavender** provided a brief update on management activities. Between May and August 1,500 acres of exotics were treated/completed, and there is another 5,000 acres in process. There was a brush reduction performed at Gator Hole Preserve. New plantings in compliance with the SFWMD permit was performed at Yellow Fever Creek. There was also a prescribed burn performed at Alva Scrub.
- **Lavender** provided two informational items identifying preserves/surrounding land for Telegraph Creek/Bob Janes and Alva Equestrian Property. It is the intent of the County to incorporate all parcels into the Bob Janes Preserve due to their proximity. Additionally, the newly acquired parcels (Nomination #612, 273-2) in addition to a parcel formerly slated for a radio-controlled aircraft park, and at one point, an eco-park (both uses are now obsolete), these parcels will be incorporated into Alva Scrub Preserve. **Wessel** asked about ATV usage on the Alva parcels being incorporated into the Scrub Preserve and if there was fencing planned to deter the ATV use.

Agenda Item 7 - Public Comment was opened. **Karyn Allman** noted it is hurricane season and emphasized that if any of the preserves are going to be used as debris sites, they should be restored following. She asked for an update for activities at Olga Shores Preserve.

Marsha Ellis, Inner Loop Working Group, she identified the greater Imperial Marsh area, Estero, Estero Bay, and noted an interdepartmental swap with Solid Waste. She requested an opportunity to speak before the committee on green infrastructure in an urban environment which is very important. She felt the corridor in this area was being underutilized.

Ambrose Bechtel – Environmental Stewardship, Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC), spoke on the Spring Creek Golf Course. Golf courses require very little modification to restore to a fully natural state. These types of properties are good for public use because they come with trails and public access. This type of purchase will set a precedence for other golf courses in the area. This golf course is on a tidal creek. If the impending development proceeds, it will essentially destroy the ecosystem and should add urgency to its consideration. Finally, the acquisition of this parcel would be an important flood mitigation resource in a flood prone area.

Holly Schwartz – Eyes on Conservation 20/20 Coalition, appreciates the updates on management. The Board of County Commissioners voted on their budget last night. She expressed concern with the management allocation of \$5 million dollars, indicating the management budget is \$200,000 less than last fiscal year. This means there is more land and less money to manage the properties. She requested an update on the management plans specifically Larry Kiker preserve. Edison Farms was purchase in 2017 and the public still hasn't seen any information on what may be happening on this property. This zoning on this property has also not been amended to EC "environmentally critical", from Agriculture (AG).

Next meeting Date/Time: The next meeting will tentatively be held the third Wednesday, October 19, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. *This meeting was subsequently cancelled.*

Adjourn: **Barraco** adjourned the meeting following a motion by **Spring** at 6:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Reneé Moneta