

Minutes
Land Acquisition Committee
2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, S. E.
Suite 1252 East Tower
Atlanta, GA 30334

December 7, 2010

Attending:

Committee Members

Tom Wheeler, Chairman
Earl Barrs
Dennis Billew
Warren Budd
Bill Carruth
Dwight Davis
Joe Hatfield
Walter Hudson
Philip Watt
Jenny Lynn Bradley, Board Chairman, ex-officio

Board Members

Bill Archer
Gene Bishop
Mabel Jenkins
Phyllis Johnson
Ray Lambert
Loyce Turner
Jim Walters

Visitors

Jim Scarbrough, Gwinnett Water Resources
Ronny Just, Georgia Power Corporation
David Wamer, Georgia NWTF
Will Wingate, Georgia Conservancy
Amanda Morrow, Georgia Southern University
Kevin Chapman, Georgia Southern University
Sue Moore, Georgia Southern University
Matthew Luke, Georgia Southern University
Debbie Phillips, Georgia Industry Environmental Coalition

Staff Members

Todd Holbrook
Paul Burkhalter
Allen Barnes
Spud Woodward
Dave Crass
Becky Kelley
Dan Forster
Suzanne Burnes
Steve Friedman
Jac Capp
Linda MacGregor
Jeanne Cyriaque
Lauren Curry
Terry West
Homer Bryson
Jim Ussery
Doralyn Kirkland
Emily Hitchcock
Kyle Pearson
Jeff Weaver
Connie Buck
Mary Ann Evans
Hellen Harris

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Bryan Tolar, Georgia Agribusiness Council

Mike Giles, Georgia Poultry Federation

Juliet Cohen, Upper Chattahoochee RiverKeeper

Joe Cook, Coosa River Basin Initiative

Katie Kirkpatrick, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce

Thomas Farmer, The Nature Conservancy

David Word, Joe Tanner & Associates

Carolyn Pait, Oglethorpe Power Corporation

Abit Massey, Georgia Poultry Federation

Margaret Campbell, Troutman Sanders

Tavia McCuen, Forestar

Jill Johnson, Georgia Conservation Voters

Hunter Broun

Ray Boyd

The December 7, 2011 meeting of the Land Acquisition Committee was called to order by Board Chairman Jenny Lynn Bradley.

Chairman Bradley called on Tom Wheeler, Chairman of the Land Acquisition Committee. Mr. Wheeler stated that item (e), consideration of dedicating properties as Heritage Preserves, will not be considered at this meeting.

Mr. Wheeler called on Steve Friedman, Chief of Real Estate, for presentation of several items for consideration.

Mr. Friedman stated that the first item for consideration was relocation of an existing permanent easement covering 1.60± acres and issuance of a new easement for a maximum of 0.65± acres of real property for the purpose of constructing, maintaining and operating of an overhead distribution line, Jackson Electric Membership Corporation (EMC), Fort Yargo State Park, Barrow County.

Mr. Friedman stated that Jackson EMC was granted an easement over Fort Yargo State park in 1940, prior to the State acquiring the property. He further stated that the current easement held by Jackson EMC is 1.60 acres and crosses through some sensitive habitat. He added that the proposed easement is for 0.65± acres, which will result in the park gaining 0.95± acres.

Mr. Friedman stated that in exchange for the new easement, Jackson EMC will execute a quitclaim deed to the State for the existing 1.60-acre easement and remove all electrical poles that were used for the previous easement. He further stated that the new easement will start at Carson Wages Road and end at Matthews School Road.

Mr. Friedman stated that he would like to request the Committee recommend that the Board adopt the Resolution regarding this issue.

A motion was made by Mr. Carruth, seconded by Dr. Watt and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for relocation of an existing permanent easement covering 1.60± acres and issuance of a new easement for a maximum of 0.65± acres of real property for the purpose of constructing, maintaining and operating of an overhead distribution line, Jackson Electric Membership Corporation (EMC), Fort Yargo State Park, Barrow County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part hereof)

Mr. Friedman stated that the next item for consideration was granting of a permanent easement by the State Properties Commission and the General Assembly, for a maximum of 0.05± acres of real property for the purpose or relocating an overhead utility line, Georgia Power Company, Rhodes Memorial Hall, Fulton County.

Mr. Friedman stated that as part of the Peachtree Phase III streetscape project, facilitated by Midtown Alliance and the City of Atlanta, all overhead utilities along Peachtree Street between Peachtree Circle and the I-85 bridge will be relocated underground in order to provide enhanced pedestrian access, conform to ADA standards and improve the aesthetic quality of the Peachtree corridor. He further stated that the overhead utility line servicing Rhodes Memorial Hall will be relocated underground and will continue to service the building. He added that there will not be any cost to the Department for this action and that Midtown Alliance has agreed to repair any damages done to the landscaping or parking.

Mr. Friedman state that he would like to request the Committee recommend that the Board adopt the Resolution regarding this issue.

A motion was made by Mr. Carruth, seconded by Dr. Watt and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission and General Assembly approval for the granting of a permanent easement by the State Properties Commission and the General Assembly for a maximum of 0.05± acres of real property for the purpose of relocating an overhead utility line, Georgia power Company, Rhodes Memorial Hall, Fulton County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part hereof)

Mr. Friedman stated that the next item for consideration was acquisition (purchase) of 1,055± acres of real property, Altamaha River Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Walker Lake Tract via The Nature Conservancy (TNC), McIntosh County.

Mr. Friedman stated that the Department seeks approval to acquire this property, as it is an important tract of land in the lower Altamaha River corridor, which is itself one of the most important conservation targets identified in Georgia State Wildlife Action Plan. He further stated that this tract of land connects the Altamaha WMA with the Townsend WMA. He added that TNC will sell a restrictive easement over this property to the U. S. Marine Corps that will preclude development, and that the Department will then acquire the remaining fee at a reduced price.

Mr. Friedman stated that he would like to request the Committee recommend that the Board adopt the Resolution regarding this issue.

A motion was made by Mr. Carruth, seconded by Dr. Watt and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for acquisition (purchase) of 1,055± acres of real property, Altamaha River Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Walker Lake Tract, via The Nature Conservancy (TNC), McIntosh County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part hereof)

Mr. Friedman displayed maps of high conservation areas that was developed from the State Wildlife Action Plan. He stated that the areas of highest conservation values were Lookout Mountain, Pigeon Mountain, Dawson Forest, Paulding Forest, Central Georgia Ocmulgee River Corridor, the Lower Altamaha River and Southwest Georgia Longleaf Pine.

Mr. Friedman stated that the next item for consideration was acquisition (purchase) of 10,015± acres of real property, Oaky Woods Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Oaky Woods Properties, L. L. C. tract, Houston County, which is located within the Central Georgia Ocmulgee River Corridor.

Mr. Friedman stated that the original proposed acquisition was for 9,595±, but that the Department was able to negotiate an additional 420 acres at no additional cost. He further stated that this additional acreage will add more protection on the Ocmulgee River and create a corridor connector down to Big Indian Creek.

Mr. Friedman stated that the Department has leased 15,991 acres of Oaky Woods going back to 1966 and that this project would allow the acquisition of 10,015 acres of that land. He further stated that Oaky Woods is the largest most ecologically important unprotected tract of land in the central part of Georgia. He added that this area contains extensive upland pine, forested wetlands, a blackland prairie and is the core habitat for the Central Georgia black bear population, the third largest in the state.

Mr. Friedman stated that the purchase price for Oaky Woods is \$28,785,000.00. He further stated that this would be \$2,874 per acre. He added that the source of funds for the project is General Obligation Bond #110 (\$24,777,817.00), and that three Bonds will also be re-directed to the project (Bond #21 for \$2,071,124; Bond #92 for \$1,928,737.00; and Bond #93 for \$7,322.00).

Mr. Friedman stated that he would like to request the Committee recommend that the Board adopt the Resolution regarding this issue.

Mr. Wheeler called on Ray Boyd of Rutledge, Georgia, who stated his opposition to the purchase of Oaky Woods at the current purchase price, stating that he felt the deal was somehow corrupt. He also handed out a document to Board members regarding this issue

Discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Mr. Carruth, seconded by Mr. Barrs and carried with one opposing vote from Mr. Hatfield that the Committee recommends that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the acquisition of \$10,015± acres of real property, Oaky Woods Wildlife

Management Area (WMA), Oaky Woods Properties, L.L. C. tract, Houston County.
(Resolution attached hereto and made a part hereof)

Mr. Davis stated that he had quickly looked over the document handed out by Mr. Boyd and would like the record to reflect that he has tried to do as thorough an investigation as possible to convince himself that there was no evidence whatsoever that there is any ownership in this property by any decision-maker or anyone involved in this process, so the suggestion by Mr. Boyd that this is somehow a corrupt deal should not go un-rebutted. He further stated that he feels there may be some greedy landowners involved that are taking advantage of a situation, and also feels that there is absolutely no evidence of corruption regarding this deal.

Discussion ensued.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.