



MINUTES CONSERVATION BANK BOARD

May 23, 2017

Oconee County Administrative Offices, Council Chambers
415 S. Pine Street, Walhalla, SC 29691

MEMBERS

Mr. Shea Airey, Chairman
Mr. Frank Ables, Vice Chairman
Ms. Jennifer Moss, Secretary
Mr. Marvin Prater, Treasurer

Ms. Frances Rundlett
Mr. Richard Cain
Mr. Jason Davis
Ms. Katie D. Smith, Staff Liaison

The Oconee County Conservation Bank Board [OCCB] met at 9:00 a.m. in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with Mr. Shea Airey, Ms. Jennifer Moss, Mr. Jason Davis, Ms. Frances Rundlett [Mr. Marvin Prater, Mr. Frank Ables & Mr. Richard Cain were not present], Amanda Brock, Public Information Officer and Katie D. Smith, Clerk to Council acting as staff liaison.

Press: Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting, date, time, place of meeting and agenda were posted on the bulletin board at the County Administrative Offices, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC, and the County Council website [www.oconeese.com/council]. In addition it was made available [*upon request*] to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

No members of the media were present.

Call to Order:

Mr. Shea Airey, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

Discussion and/or action regarding Powell Property

Mr. Eddie Martin, District Manager with the Oconee Soil and Water Conservation District, addressed the Committee regarding Mr. Jerry Powell's Statement of Interest packet. He noted they have been in the process of having this property protected for about five years. The original project was two parcels with two separate land owners. However, the other land owner could not fulfill his commitment. They went to the State Conservation Bank and asked if they could split the project. Mr. Martin noted the State Conservation Bank generally does not split the projects, but due to the status of the property and the prime soils, they were willing and gave an extension date. In forwarding this project and the delays that took place, there is a deadline to have this completed by the end of summer. If everything is not closed by August, all the money will have to be returned, which includes the Oconee Soil and Conservation District administrative fund and what NRCS has allocated. Mr. Powell had one survey completed. However, the survey was not adequate due to changes with the FARM bill. Several items needed would be new statistics and specifications that would need to be completed and have certain type of shake files and signage on the place that was not done in the previous survey. NRCS came back and indicated these items would be needed. Mr. Martin noted this is the reason why they are applying to the OCCB for Mr. Powell with this amount of money to get this survey completed in the manner that needs to be done so they can proceed with this package.

Discussion followed to include:

- Mr. Martin's signature would constitute the affidavit
- Land management plan with Farm Service Agency and NRCS
- Land has continually been farmed for 15 years

- Land is located on right on the side of Hwy 59, about a mile and half off of Hwy 24 on Hwy 59
- Site visit has been completed by Mr. Davis and Mr. Martin around March 2017 and completed inventory assessment for the land
- Mr. Airey asked Mr. Davis to write brief summary to the board titled “Observations from Site Visit”

Documentation needed:

- Notarized statement indicating land owner has produced significant agriculture products in Oconee County over the last two years
- Scenic view of land from road over agriculture landscape
- Aerial map showing nearest municipality

These items need to be forwarded to the Clerk to County Council. Once items have been received and the application approved, this will be forwarded to the County Council for approval tentatively set for Tuesday, June 20, 2017.

Regarding future applications, generally land owners would need to have survey and appraisal completed prior to submitting application. The OCCB is not in a position to complete grants for survey and appraisal. This would need to be completed and documentation would need to be provided in order for applications to be approved. If application is approved, there could be a potential reimbursement them for those costs.

Additional discussion followed to include:

- 2 creeks on the property that run to the Beaverdam Watershed
- Land is currently being grazed and for hay
- Easement will stipulate uses as used at this point in time and possible uses in the future
- Reserve rights
- Working drive to the easement
- Mr. Powell plans to leave property to his son

Mr. Airey asked if Mr. Powell would object with a press release from OCCB regarding the process. Mr. Martin noted he did not think it would be a problem but would certainly ask Mr. Powell to be certain.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, June 8, 2017 at the Oconee County Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC 29691.

Old Business:

None at this meeting.

New Business:

None at this meeting.

Adjourn:

Mr. Airey adjourned the meeting, approved unanimously, at 9:31 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Katie D. Smith
Clerk to Council & Staff Liaison