

Oconee River Greenway Authority

MINUTES

27 November 2007

Members Present: Peter Boylan, Chairman; Richard Bentley, Bo Edwards, Lee Moon, Marion Nelson

Others Present: Jeff Gray – GMC
Vonda Everett - GDOT
Kraig Collins – GDOT
Frank Stevens - GDOT
Dale Higdon - GFC
Kyle Hood (for Dennis Holder) – Wilkinson County
Heather Langston – ORGA Director
Sherrill Jones – Recorder

Not Present: Troy Clymer, Dennis Holder, Bubba Williams

Location: President's Conference room in the Old State Capital building.

I. Call to Order – At approximately 1:30 PM, Chairman Boylan called the 27 November 2007 meeting of the Oconee River Greenway Authority (ORGA) to order. He welcomed all who were present, and introduced Kyle Hood, Interim County Manager for Wilkinson County.

II. Approval of Minutes for 30 October 2007 – After a review of the 30 October 2007 Minutes, Director Langston asked that the following change be made:

- Page 2 - Section IV.B.2. (last line) – GDOT representative, should be FHWA representative.

Dr. Langston also asked members to review the second paragraph of Section IV.C.2. on page 3. Following a brief discussion Mr. Bentley made a motion, seconded by Mr. Nelson, to approve the minutes with the change requested by Dr. Langston, as well as the following change to the second paragraph of Section IV C.2. It should read as follows:

“There was also discussion related to the interpretive signage and it was decided that ALL signage and interpretive elements would NOT be included in the contract.”

The motion to approve the minutes as described above was unanimously accepted.

III. Treasurer's Report – Dr. Langston reported a current checking/savings total of \$26,288.79 and total Assets of \$194,750.45. A motion made by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mr. Bentley to accept the treasurer's report was unanimously approved.

IV. Old Business

A. Phase I: Construction Status

1. Sewer Update --- Mayor Bentley reported that he had not been able to coordinate a site visit and will need another couple of weeks to assess the situation.

2. **Fence design** – no report
3. **McMillan Island Privet Removal** – Director Langston reported that Pat Beer indicated GMC cadets will remove privet when they return in January. Chairman Boylan asked that this item be included on the January Board Agenda. Mr. Edwards volunteered to assist with this project.
4. **Ribbon Cutting** – Director Langston asked for input regarding the ribbon cutting for the Greenway. There was consensus among those present to hold the ribbon cutting in April even though the Greenway will be open to the public as soon as Southern Wilderness completes work. The Foundation will be asked to assist, but not assume full responsibility. Mr. Edwards volunteered to chair this committee. He will seek a co-chair from the Foundation and will coordinate with the city, the CVB, and Mainstreet to determine a date compatible with all calendars. Director Langston and Mr. Nelson will serve on the committee as well. Chairman Boylan asked Mr. Edwards to propose a date for consideration at the board’s January meeting.

Those present supported the concept of a Festival which might include a pig roast, bluegrass band and fund-raiser for the Greenway kickoff.

Mr. Hood reported that the official opening of Ball's Ferry State Park will be on December 7th at 11:00 AM. Chairman Boylan suggested that board members plan to attend as a show of support for Wilkinson County.

B. Property Appraisal and Purchase issues

1. **ROW Acquisition** - Vonda Everett reported that she met with Director Langston, a state attorney, another GDOT rep and an FHWA rep to make sure that funding for the Greenway has not been jeopardized. She indicated that the Garner property **CAN NOT** be used in Phase II because it was purchased after the approval of the Project’s right of way plans. She then read the following statement outlining rules:

“If a project has already been identified, FHWA allows sponsors to purchase property prior to having an approved set of right of way plans and an environmental document as long as property is purchased in accordance with federal guidelines. This rule applies to local governments, state authorities, private parties and non-profit organizations. The purchaser should not expect reimbursement or to use the value as part of their match also. State and federal guidelines do not apply to purchases that occur prior to project being identified and included in current approved STIP or TIP.

The Garner property that ORGA recently purchased cannot be used in Phase II, because it was purchased after the project was already identified without following federal guidelines (appraisal was not reviewed by GDOT).

In regards to the only remaining needed parcel for Phase II, the Georgia Power parcel cannot be donated until GDOT has given ORGA right of way authorization. This is because ORGA made initial contact with Georgia

Power. Otherwise, a property owner can donate property prior to right of way authorization as long as the donation was not solicited and as long as federal guidelines were followed.”

Chairman Boylan expressed appreciation to Ms. Everett for her assistance in facilitating the Greenway project through the GDOT.

2. **Garner** – Dr. Langston reported that the Foundation has completed the purchase of the Garner property, and those present agreed to accept the donation of the property from the Foundation at this time.

C. Phase II Status Report

1. **Breedlove Contract** - Director Langston reported that the Breedlove contract is currently under review by GSFIC and George Zier, and that the format of the contract is being revised.

2. **Need to Modify Concept Report** – Director Langston noted that the Concept Report for Phase II needs to be modified to reflect utilization of only the funds available for this Phase. The Concept Report can not include items or portions of items for which funds are not yet available. She asked board members to prioritize items for Phase II and recommended saving the amphitheater for Phase III.

D. Security and Maintenance of the Park – Director Langston shared a letter written to Scott Wood, City Manager, in which she requested a meeting to discuss security and maintenance for the Greenway.

E. Financial Spreadsheet Update – Director Langston presented the monthly Financial Spreadsheet noting an estimated shortfall of approximated 1.9 million for Phase II.

F. Light Poles for DNR Loop – Director Langston reminded board members that light poles and water have been included along the main trail for the Greenway; however, the DNR loop has neither. In light of current unknowns regarding ORGA’s financial situation, Chairman Boylan recommended postponing this discussion. He asked Director Langston to continue talks with both the city and Georgia Power in an effort to obtain a fixed estimate regarding the installation of light poles, as well as trenching and installation of water lines.

V. New Business

A. Resolution for 2007 DNR Trails Grant – Director Langston asked the board to approve a resolution to submit a request to the Georgia DNR for a grant of financial assistance (\$100,000) to construct a 10 ft. wide, 2390 linear feet concrete trail that surrounds a wetland north of the HWY 22 Bridge in Milledgeville. The resolution further authorizes and empowers Dr. Langston to submit said application and any subsequent amendments thereto on behalf of ORGA. Mr. Edwards make motion to accept the resolution. It was seconded by Mr. Nelson and unanimously approved.

B. 2004 and 2006 DNR Trails Grant Update – Director Langston reported that the 2004 and 2006 DNR Grants were recently audited. There is a possibility that ORGA may not receive the 2004 Grant money due to failure to competitively bid the project. DNR requires competitive bidding for projects of more than \$75,000. She further reported that while the 2006 Grant was competitively bid prior to the notice to proceed, it, too, is in jeopardy as ORGA signed a document with GDOT stating that no other federal funds would be used for the project. Other federal funds are being used; consequently, there may be a conflict of interest. Mr. Edwards suggested an appeal to George Zier. Chairman Boylan noted that funds from the Woodruff grant may have to be used to cover this loss. He also suggested applying for another Woodruff grant.

C. Approval of Pay Request #4 – Director Langston asked the board to approve two pay requests (\$237,234.65 and \$1,530.00) to Southern Wilderness. She also noted that Southern Wilderness will issue another pay request before the next ORGA meeting. In addition, she asked for permission to activate a bank line-of-credit in anticipation of a short-fall of funds. Mr. Edwards made a motion to approve the pay requests and to allow Dr. Langston to activate a line of credit if necessary. Mr. Nelson seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

D. Update Contact Information – Mr. Edwards and Mr. Nelson were asked to update their respective contact information sheets.

VII. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 29, 2008 at 1:30 PM in the conference room of the Old Capital Building.

VIII. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 2:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sherrill Jones, Recorder