

**ELMS PROPERTY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
10:00 A.M. OCTOBER 11, 2007
Minutes**

Members present were Denis Canavan, Brad Clements, Susan Gray on behalf of Pete Dunbar, Steve Riley, Mark Muir on behalf of David Gailey, Phil Rollins, Robert Paul, and Marianne Chapman.

Members absent were Bryan King.

Others present were Harold Siskind, Retired Teacher; Margarita Rochow, Elms Environmental Center; Terry Black, St. Mary's County Sheriff's Department; and Catherine Peck, Department of Natural Resources.

Mr. Canavan called the meeting to order at 10:06 p.m. and asked for additions or amendments to the agenda.

I. Approval of Minutes – 7/19/07

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of 7/19/07 as presented. The motion passed without opposition.

II. Unfinished Business

a. Security Issues

- Terry Black, St. Mary's County Sheriff's Department – Mr. Canavan updated Mr. Black on the issue of trespassing on the Elms property. Mr. Black stated ongoing premise checks are being conducted over the course of the past four months. Mr. Black stated during this time several complaints have been responded to including alcohol violations, unwanted guests, shooting violations, etc. Mr. Black stated the Sheriff's Department now has a key to the Elms property that is checked out to every shift so the premise checks can be completed. Ms. Cindy Thomas informed Mr. Black of the 4-Wheelers carrying back-packs that enter the property at 6:30 p.m. every night and do not leave the property until 12:30 a.m. in the morning. Ms. Thomas noted the approximate location on the aerial photo of the property. Mr. Black stated he would pass this information on to Narcotics. Ms. Chapman stated in the past Sheriff's Department and DNR representatives have been involved with the committee and asked if this would be a possibility.
- Corporal Catherine Peck, Department of Natural Resources – Mr. Canavan asked if Ms. Peck had anything to add regarding the security issues. Ms. Peck stated DNR owns 4-wheelers which could be a big help in fighting this problem. Ms. Peck stated the 4-wheelers have a better knowledge and understanding of the trails throughout the Elms property. Ms. Peck stated DNR would like to obtain a key to the property to conduct security checks. Ms. Peck also asked for an aerial photo of the property.
- b. July 31, 2007 BOCC Meeting Discussion** – Mr. Canavan stated the County Commissioners expressed their concerns with the safety issues, adequate access, and joint use of the property at their July 31, 2007 meeting. Mr. Clements gave an overview of the schools proposed trail system stating there is no reason we can't stay with our original plan. Mr. Canavan stated after the remaining houses are raised this area could be used for hunting as well as the north side of area two. Mr. Canavan stated with these two areas being used for hunting there would be 76.99 additional acres of hunting area.

Mr. Riley asked that the committee consider cutting the southern line shorter and to the east to free up the southern most finger for hunting purposes. Ms. Chapman stated this is the only Environmental Education Center in the County whereas hunters have over 5, 000 acres in the County to use for hunting. Ms. Chapman stated the Environmental Center is of limited space already. Mr. Riley stated the hunters are not trying to take land away from the Education Center they are simply trying to retain what they already have. Ms. Chapman stated the environmental center already has less land than the hunters.

Mr. Rollins stated another 800 acres just opened up for hunting in St. Mary's County. Mr. Riley stated this is about compromise and if we can compromise the southern finger for hunting this is a deal we can take to the bank. Mr. Canavan asked what environmental features make the southern finger unique. Ms. Rochow stated the species are different for each section of the property, this finger happens to be densely wooded.

Mr. Canavan stated he believes the plan as proposed is correct therefore he will support moving the 150 foot safety area to be coterminous with the lease line measured internally to the county leased portion. **Mr. Rollins made a motion that the plan as presented by the Board of Education titled Future Use Areas and Trail Additions that shows area two (2) in the County Lease Area be made available for hunting. I move that this plan serve as the basis to move forward and continue to work with the State to raze the remaining houses to free up an additional 75 acres for the purpose of hunting. Mr. Clements seconded.** During discussion Mr. Riley asked for a friendly amendment to the motion requesting the southern boundary be amended to reflect the area as marked on the plan. The friendly amendment was not accepted. **The original motion passed by a 7-1 vote with Mr. Riley opposed.**

Mr. Riley made a motion to consider the southern boundary as part of hunting land and Mr. Rollins seconded for discussion purposes. Mr. Riley stated this portion of the land could be jointly used. Mr. Rollins stated he would not vote in favor of this motion. Mr. Riley stated they only want this portion of the property three months out of the year. Dr. Paul stated he is tired of hearing the hunters are not being heard. Dr. Paul stated the hunters have been being heard for months and this is why we aren't getting anywhere. **The motion failed by a 1-7 vote with Mr. Canavan, Mr. Clements, Mr. Rollins, Mr. Muir, Ms. Chapman, and Ms. Gray opposed.**

Mr. Canavan stated he would forward the committee's recommendation to the County Commissioners in a letter.

Adequate Access – Mr. Rollins stated he would be requesting proposals for additional ideas regarding the trail system. Mr. Canavan recommended leaving this subject alone until we know more about the paths and then let emergency services know. It was recommended that the emergency services path be placed in the 150 foot buffer.

Joint Use – Mr. Canavan stated joint use of the property is a big issue. Ms. Chapman stated the ultimate goal is to have a site manager on the site at all times. Mr. Canavan stated a site manager would be the ultimate goal however in the interim we need to discuss who can use the property and during what times. Mr. Canavan recommended the committee tackle this issue at the next meeting.

- c. **Discussion of Well Status** – Mr. Clements stated they have hired Patuxent Well Drillers who have been working to obtain the proper permits. Mr. Canavan stated he

can look into this permit and the committee can discuss this issue at the next meeting.

III. New Business

- a. **Endangered Species** – Mr. Canavan asked if any endangered species have been found on the property. Ms. Chapman stated Kyle Rambo from the Naval Air Station or Dr. Paul could possibly help with a study. Mr. Canavan asked if there is a list of species. Ms. Chapman stated we did have a study done years ago and there is a list. Mr. Canavan asked if this list could be updated. It was decided to review this at the next meeting.

IV. Next Steps

- a. **Coordination between Board of Education and Parks & Recreation to use Connecting Paths** – It was decided that connecting paths would be discussed at the next meeting.
- b. **Signage** – It was decided that signage would be discussed at the next meeting.

- V. Adjournment and Lunch** – After discussion a motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 12:30 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.