

**ELMS PROPERTY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
10:00 A.M. June 7, 2007
Minutes**

Members present were Denis Canavan, Chair; Mark Muir on behalf of David Gailey; Steve Riley, Sandi Patty on behalf of Peter Dunbar; Brad Clements; Phil Rollins; Bob Paul; Marianne Chapman and Margarita Rochow.

Members absent were Brian King.

Others present were Amber Guy, LUGM Office Manager; Jada Stuckert, LUGM Recording Secretary.

Mr. Canavan called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. and asked for additions or amendments to the agenda. Ms. Chapman asked that two items be placed on the agenda. Ms. Chapman stated one being a former citizen member of the committee and the other being the open meeting policy. Mr. Canavan agreed to add the two items to the agenda.

- I. Approval of Minutes – 3/15/07: Ms. Chapman stated she found a considerable amount of corrections that need to be made to the minutes. Ms. Chapman stated in the first paragraph it is unclear who is a member and who is a citizen. Ms. Chapman stated Dr. Dunbar's statements and the management plan discussion are missing as well as most of the sentences are not complete sentences which leave the expressions in the meeting unclear. Mr. Canavan suggested Ms. Chapman flag the sentences and send them back to LUGM to rewrite the minutes for the next meeting. It was recommended that all changes be highlighted.
- II. Update on signage
 - a. Drug-free zone signs: Mr. Clements stated the signs have been ordered from the State. Mr. Canavan stated at the previous meeting durability, material, and proximity was discussed. Mr. Clements stated they have ordered not less than three of the standard drug-free zones signs. Mr. Clements stated one would be located on the dirt road entrance, one on the environmental side of the beach property, and one on the northern beach property.
 - b. No Lifeguard on Duty sign: Mr. Rollins stated this and the sign on St. James Church Road directing people to the park access point have been taken care of.
 - c. Sign on St. James Church Road directing people to park access point: See II.b for discussion.
 - d. No trespassing: Mr. Canavan stated at the previous meeting the point was made that you can not post the State property with No Trespassing signs. However, Ms. Thomas pointed out there are trespassers that come in from the Northern side of the property by ATV's or bikes, or even walking. Ms. Thomas stated riders have made a trail over there and the neighboring property owners have put up stakes in the ground which she believes are still standing. Ms. Rochow stated this is a growing problem. Ms. Thomas asked if Ms. Rochow has found the stock yet because riders are growing something back there. Ms. Thomas stated she lost track of where it goes but they are cutting East and then South. Mr. Buist stated he could take a member of DNR or Law Enforcement to a place where he has witnessed this type of activity. Mr. Canavan asked if it was a safe assumption that the ATV's are either being driven by people that live in the neighborhood or close to the neighborhood. Mr. Thomas stated they are regulars so she thinks they must live nearby. Mr. Canavan stated the difficulty is if they are as active as you say they are they will

disregard any signage. Mr. Canavan stated the question is about policing action and who has the authority to police over the State land. Mr. Muir stated that DNR has this authority. After further discussion, the Committee agreed to send a letter asking and/or seek their advice for cooperation between DNR policing and the Local Police Department.

Mr. Canavan asked if there were any other signage issues. Ms. Rochow stated there was an overnight for the last day of school and there were literally 38 cars that came down St. James Church Road. Ms. Rochow stated she would like to have some "Children at Play", "Slow Children Playing" signs or even speed limit signs. Ms. Chapman stated DECD produced maps that are incorrect. Ms. Chapman stated most of the problems with cars coming down St. James Church Road are originating from the incorrect maps which show St. James Church Road as the access road for the parks and recreation public beach area. Ms. Chapman stated this needs to be corrected in the DECD maps.

Mr. Canavan asked where the signs would be placed. Ms. Rochow stated they would be placed on the dirt road. Ms. Patty stated she believes the amount of cars coming down St. James Church Road is probably due to the incorrect information written in brochures and websites.

Mr. Riley stated there has been a new fence put up by the houses on the Northern end of the property and on the fence there was a No Trespassing sign posted last week. Mr. Riley stated that the sign is no longer there and does not know if the State took it down because you can't post No Trespassing signs on State property or if it was vandals. Ms. Patty stated it was probably vandals. Ms. Patty stated it is her understanding that the houses that are in bad condition on this land have been posted with No Trespassing signs. Ms. Patty stated she is not sure where the no signs posted on State property statement came from but she believes that it could be you can not post in a Wildlife Management Area because it is used for Wildlife Management. Mr. Canavan stated that page three of the previous minutes states Mr. Bennett made this statement. Mr. Canavan stated we can not post the Park land with No Trespassing signs. Mr. Canavan stated we still have the option of asking property owners if a No Trespassing sign could be posted on their side of the common property.

- III. Update on trail system: Mr. Rollins stated that the major concern for his is the general public accessing the trail system during times when there are students in the same areas. Mr. Rollins stated that he is not just referring to hunters but anyone accessing the trail system. Ms. Chapman suggested having a trail system that accessed the public areas and another trail system for the school to access the areas used for the educational program. Mr. Riley stated this would be better discussed after the hunting safety zones are delineated. Mr. Canavan stated we want to improve the use of trails for better access on the grounds where the public and children can use the paths. Mr. Canavan stated his assumption is we are trying to work for the type of materials we use on the path, the location of the path, then who uses the paths and when is left to the operation of the school site or proper signage to indicate to people that they are on the school leased area. Mr. Canavan stated "isn't that what were really going for here?"

Mr. Rollins stated there are school grounds (playgrounds, tennis courts, etc.) that aren't available to the general public during the school day. Mr. Rollins stated the problem here is that there is such a huge area. Mr. Canavan stated hold to your example, I have a wooded chipped path that started 1 mile away from the school campus but it leads directly to the school campus, when I get to that demarcation telling me I am entering the school campus, I know to stop because it is a school day. Mr. Rollins stated in

theory he agrees with Canavan but a non-connected path system is logical but are we going to create more management problems.

Mr. Canavan asked if anyone has seen the ELMS Environmental Expansion Plan in current form. All members stated they had not seen the plan. Ms. Patty stated the original intention of the management plan was to give the County the opportunity to expand the ability to utilize the Environmental Center, Recreation Area, and ELMS Beach. Patty further stated going back to the original areas that the Board of Education had and the Park & Recreation had totally defeats the purpose of the management plan that was put together as well as defeating the purpose of the leases that the County Commissioners have signed. Mr. Buist stated when the County Commissioners spoke on this they said when they signed the lease they did not intend the uses that are happening now. Ms. Chapman stated Mr. Dean who was one of the original County Commissioner and worked with the State to develop programs on the site and helped put the Management plan together.

After further discussion, Ms. Patty made a motion that the committee take a vote to leave the management plan as it stands and Mr. Clements seconded. Dr. Paul asked if the safety zone is specified in the original plan. Ms. Patty stated the safety zone is specified by the Department of Natural Resources regulations. Dr. Paul stated that the safety zone is flexible. Mr. Canavan stated no. Dr. Paul asked where the hunting versus the environmental lines are. Ms. Chapman stated that all the land is public, the school and environmental center are public. Ms. Thomas asked why her neighbors are being told they can't walk down this road. Ms. Chapman stated they can walk down to go to the parks and recreation public beach area. Ms. Chapman stated the Environmental Education Center beach is used by the public for Educational Programs. Ms. Thomas stated in this case this is not a public road. Mr. Canavan asked what precludes Ms. Thomas from walking or riding her horse down St. James Place to the beach. Mr. Clements stated during the hearing with the Board of Education it was very much understood that there would be no hunting East of the green line and it must have been clear with Mr. Canavan's board because that's why hunters came out. Mr. Rollins stated he is not sure that it was clear because after the fact at least one or two of my members did not understand that we were impacting hunters. Mr. Clements stated the use of the property is still up for discussion and needs to be defined. Mr. Riley stated the Education center has taken this land piece by piece and done nothing to improve on it and stated the land has been taken from the citizens for the past decade. Mr. Riley requested that the safety zone line be returned to the middle of the property as it was before. After further discussion Ms. Patty made a friendly amendment to the original motion and Dr. Paul seconded. The motion was read as: "motion to request that the ELMS Advisory Committee endorse the Management Plan prepared in 2004 and submit it to the County Commissioners and to further clarify the leases on the County leased property to further define the Environmental Education requirements, Recreational requirements and other uses. The motion passed with a 6-2 vote, Mark Muir and Captain Stephen Riley opposed.

- a. Who will maintain: See discussion above.
- b. Where will they be located: See discussion above.
- c. What materials will be used: See discussion above.
- d. Who will be allowed access: See discussion above.

The Committee took a short lunch break and reconvened at 12:40 p.m.

- IV. Update of BOCC presentation on Cindi Thomas concerns
 - a. Vandalism and trespassing: See discussions above.
 - b. Public access to Elms lease area: See discussions above.
 - c. Hunting safety zones: See discussions above.

d. Discuss exhibits: See discussions above.

V. Update on Maintenance Issues

- a. Relocation of the well: The current well will be sealed and abandoned and the new well location has been staked out. Receiving credit for the buildings square footage was discussed.
- b. Shoreline erosion: Ms. Patty stated she prepared a summary report on all the studies that have been done and sent it out to DNR Shoreline Erosion experts. Patty stated she would bring copies to the next meeting. Mr. Canavan asked about the access point between the public park and the environmental center by the pond. Mr. Rollins stated it was opened because water from the pond was backing up into the picnic area so they dug the channel back out. Mr. Rollins stated that they will not do this again without coming to the Committee; it will stay closed until it naturally opens.
- c. Tree removal: The trees have been removed. Mr. Riley asked if it would be possible to cut trees that are already dead or knocked down over the paths. Mr. Rollins stated we may want to get the usage figured out before this happens. Mr. Riley stated Canavan may want to consider doing some logging. Mr. Canavan stated he's not sure whether or not the County would entertain the idea. Mr. Riley stated this could be money making idea as well as helping the environment. Mr. Canavan asked if the money would go to DNR or to the public. Mr. Canavan stated do not remove any trees until we can get clarification, but back to the original question, Riley could cut and move slightly any tree that is impeding access.

VI. Discuss presentation to BOCC of ELMS Advisory Committee overview

- a. Deadline is June 30, 2007: Mr. Canavan stated he would get an agenda slot. Canavan stated once this is done he will alert the Committee as to the date. Canavan stated the format would be a presentation of the management plan, a presentation of the lease concerns.

VII. Ms. Chapman stated that a previous member of the Committee John Horton has passed away as of last week. Ms. Chapman stated Mr. Horton was a very important citizen member of the committee member for many years. After discussion it was recommended and decided to have Mr. Canavan send a letter to the Horton family.

Ms. Chapman asked Canavan to explain the procedures of an open meeting to the Committee. Mr. Canavan stated that he is not as stringent as the BOCC, he encourages the public to participate.

Ms. Chapman stated the minutes need to be accurately recorded and typed. Mr. Canavan agreed accurate minutes are very important.

Mr. Buist asked if there is a way to add more citizen members to the Committee. Mr. Canavan stated this could be an agenda item for the next meeting. Mr. Canavan stated if you are opposed to the idea he wants to know why and if you are in support of the idea he wants to know why.

Mr. Canavan stated the meetings will take place quarterly on the third Thursdays. It was recommended that a special meeting be held in the near future. After discussion, it was decided that the next meeting would be held Thursday, July 19, 2007.

Mr. Canavan referenced the letter received and dated April 23, 2007 from Mr. Martirano, Superintendent of School for St. Mary's County. Mr. Canavan stated there is reference to a map which is not included with the letter. Ms. Thomas stated if this portion of land is

opened up for hunters to utilize it is going to create even more problems with the public entering the property from the Northern end.

Mr. Canavan stated if we raised the houses it would be a lot easier to open up this area. Ms. Thomas stated there is one more trailer back there and in her opinion if this trailer was removed it would alleviate a lot of the problems. Ms. Thomas further stated when all the houses have been raised it will alleviate a huge amount of the problems. Mr. Canavan asked who we should direct a letter to get the trailer removed and the houses raised. Ms. Patty stated the houses are currently on the demolition list but it is solely a budgetary restriction at this point. After further discussion Mr. Canavan stated that LUGM Inspectors would be given authority to take action on the trailers.

Ms. Rochow stated during the meeting two people have indicated that there areas of suspected horticultural growth, can we take action as a group or as an individual. Mr. Canavan asked who knows where the areas are located. Ms. Thomas stated she knows the general vicinity of one area and Mr. Buist knows the vicinity of the other area. Mr. Canavan stated we should find out what's going on back there and whoever goes into the woods needs to go with a group and possibly an officer of the law.

VIII. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:29 p.m.