

Escambia County 4-H Task Force
Meeting Minutes – March 18, 2013

A meeting of the Escambia County 4-H Task Force was held on Monday, March 18, 2013, in the Extension Office auditorium.

Dr. Keith Diem, Associate Dean and State 4-H Program Leader, and 4-H Task Force Facilitator, called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. CT, and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Task Force members present: Brian Bell, Jimmy Cunningham, Whitney Fike, Robert McLaughlin, Eli Miller, Anne Peterson, Sharon Tanner, Dave Timberlake, Dana Beth Tyler, Stacey Ward, and Rebekah Mobley. Task Force member absent: David Nielsen.

Dr. Diem stated that everyone should have received and reviewed the meeting minutes of January 22, 2013. With no changes, Brian Bell made a motion to accept the minutes with a second by Sharon Tanner. Minutes approved unanimously by verbal vote.

Dr. Diem emphasized that the main purpose of this meeting was to review the possible options, and review the pros and cons of each option, keeping in mind that the Task Force does not get to choose or rank.

Before the review of options to be presented by subcommittees, Dr. Diem brought up two points not on the agenda to clear up rumors.

1. Some lobbying by advocacy groups has taken place. This lobbying involved legislative delegations as well as the UF/IFAS Vice President and Dean. Dr. Diem emphasized that the lobbying was not done in part of or on behalf of the Task Force although some Task Force members may have been involved.
2. Misinformation continues to be communicated by some parties, such as items that were supposedly promised to the youth and the number of times the youth voted to sell the property. To clarify, Dr. Diem referenced a letter dated April 26, 2012, by the attorney representing the 4-H youth, Margaret Stopp. In the letter, it states a potential need for additional acreage for animal science-related activities as well as nature programs and trails. It also indicates that it was apparent that the 4-H youth appropriately relied on the MOU for their vote. The letter is on file for anyone that wishes to review it. The need for possible additional acreage is addressed in the MOU in that land purchase would be considered but neither the MOU nor the letter states land replacement as acre for acre. A copy of the letter is kept on file for anyone that wishes to see it. He further clarified that only one official vote took place on April 23, 2012, with the 4-H youth and it was handled through the County's Supervisor of Elections Office.

Task Force member Jimmy Cunningham used this opportunity to explain the purpose of a meeting with the President of Florida Farm Bureau and the attempt by some local members to put the statewide IFAS budget on hold because of the Escambia County 4-H land issue. Dr. Place had a meeting with the Florida Farm Bureau while Dr. Place was in the local area to attend an Agritourism event. This meeting consisted of the Farm Bureau director, members of the Gulf Coast Agriculture and Natural Resources Association (GCA/NRA), and interested people—about 30 in all. At the meeting, topics included replacing land for the kids and the MOU which states that additional land purchase would be considered.

Discussion concluded with a reminder that the Task Force has a specific purpose based on the MOU and that Task Force members signed an agreement when they were appointed by the Dean that explains their role and expected behaviors.

In returning to the formal agenda, Dr. Diem reemphasized his role in the meeting as the facilitator and not a member of the Task Force; and that Extension faculty/staff are there to provide support needed but also not members of the Task Force. As the facilitator he is responsible for keeping the Task Force on track. He reviewed the Task Force progress so far:

- First meeting covered the MOU and background of 4-H;
- Second meeting reviewed the draft criteria for proposals and created the subcommittees to start the vetting process;
- Third meeting for the subcommittees to give their presentations and report their findings. Twenty minutes for presentations followed by 10 minutes for discussion to address pros and cons as well as any additional questions or issues that need to be addressed by each proposal. The presentation information will be need to be put into a Task Force report to be submitted to the Dean.

Subcommittee reports will cover private land options—specifically, the Bayer property; publicly-owned land options; and non-land options.

Presentation 1 – Private Land Option – Bayer Property

| PROS | CONS |
|---|--|
| Multifaceted & complete package | Has to be sold in its entirety |
| Accessible roadways / fenced and gated | Size/complexity – how much of the property would actually be used/needed by 4-H? |
| Turnkey operation | Environmental concerns unknown |
| Closest replacement in comparable size to Langley Bell Center | Not located in the population center |
| Located in the center of the county area | Cost of upkeep is unclear |

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| Potential to expand 4-H in north end | Issues of youth safety with leased property and other adults on the property |
| There is 250 acres—75% is cultivated | |

Information still needed:

- Environmental study. Phase 1 completed but seller not releasing the results unless a serious offer is made.
- Cost of additional environmental studies that the county would require and who pays for these studies?
- Clarification on amount of land currently being leased to other parties and what commitments, if any, continue if property is sold to 4-H? What part of the land is being used and what part would be available to 4-H?
- If part of the property is leased out, what are the potential liabilities?
- Would the County be permitted to lease County-owned property to private citizens for profit purposes?
- How would income from property work as it relates to the fact that 4-H would purchase the property but the County would hold it in trust for 4-H? Is the County willing to do that?
- Buildings have been vacant for two years—are there any problems as a result? How old are the buildings?
- Asking price in listing is \$2.1 million—what is seller willing to accept? Can we get this in writing?
- What is the annual estimated cost for upkeep, such as utilities?
- If additional acreage is not needed by 4-H and were to be sold, what is the current prices of agriculture land?

Note: “Parking Lot” issue: possible poll of preferences between various properties regarding geographic accessibility to various 4-H audiences who might use the property.

Presentation 2 – Publicly-owned Property

1. Pensacola Interstate Fairgrounds

| PROS | CONS |
|---|---|
| Excellent scholarship program but youth must participate in shows to qualify so this would enable that participation. | Less than one acre—not sufficient space compared to size of area currently used for Spring Show at Langley Bell |
| Provides instant exposure when showing at the Fair | Needs lots of TLC |
| Centrally located-accessible to population | Possible traffic congestion |

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| No cost for usage of facilities for the Spring Show other than manure and bedding removal costs | If improvements are made on the property and the situation does not work, 4-H is out of monies spent for improvements |
| Facilities willing to allow hog pens and raising of hogs on the property | Unsure of the cost if hogs are raised |
| MOU would need to be drawn up between parties | MOU would need to be drawn up between parties to clarify permitted use, responsibilities, governance, etc. |

Information still needed:

- Clarify the property Charter—who owns the property and can make decisions for it. It appears to be a privately owned but chartered by the County.
- Identify the facility upgrades needed and the associated costs.
- Is the size adequate?
- Where is the location of the new Walmart as related to the Fair Property?
- Would this new Walmart have any effect on accessibility/traffic?

2. Cottage Hill State Forest

| PROS | CONS |
|---|---|
| No acquisition cost | Cost associated with improvement |
| Tremendous place for environmental education—wetlands, woods, creek passes through middle of property, some flat land areas | Development for showing facilities, barns, an arena, bathrooms, would be the greatest concern due to highly wooded nature of property |
| State is willing to provide upkeep on the fire-breaks which could serve as nature trails | Existing bridge would need work |
| In quiet neighborhood | Ten-year Management Plan does list that this would not be a good site for grazing cattle (although this is not a stated need of 4-H) |
| Forestry, blue bird, and bat programs could be brought back with this property | |
| Offers space for youth to explore, climb trees, and be young | |
| State is willing to provide controlled burns at no cost, as needed | |

Information needed: clarification/identification of areas that can be used.

What are the needs of 4-H in terms of grazing cattle?

Identify what improvements may be needed for 4-H purposes and estimated costs.

3. Equestrian Center.

| PROS | CONS |
|--|--|
| Property is already maintained by the County | Facility manager voice concerns over mixing other animals with the horse environment, informed subcommittee that she did not foresee this as working well |
| Property has great potential to meet various 4-H needs pertaining to environmental, horticulture science and outdoor education, and animal science | Facility manager voiced concerns about the facilities being used during horse and dog show times due to the fact that the whole facility would be rented |
| There are 151 acres including Equestrian Center facility | If the whole facility is rented, 4-H would not have access to the property; this may require advance scheduling. |
| | Facility does not want to have hogs raised on the property |
| | Facility sees a potential danger with the smell of other animals and how a horse may react—the average show horse is \$75,000 |
| | Cross contamination issues with the hogs and horses |
| | Facility uses inmate labor |
| | Facility does allow alcohol sales at some events and during shows, many clients bring in their own alcohol |
| | Currently there are 46 events booked for the year with two of those being three-week events. Most of April is booked and typically booked as shown in past records |
| | County in the process of using four acres as a 2 million-gallon holding pond |

Information still needed:

- How can 4-H use a portion of the acreage available? The Equestrian Center is 151 acres.
- What are the possible uses and what permissions are needed—who makes the decisions?

4. Roy Hyatt

| PROS | CONS |
|--|--|
| Property currently offers: nature trails, different terrains (wetlands and dry areas), different types of plant life, boardwalk, butterfly garden, and green house | Safety concerns when areas of the property needs to have controlled burns |
| Forestry Department maintains the nature trails | School District personnel must be on site for the property to be used—most clubs meet after school hours or on the weekends. An MOU may be needed to allow (trained) Extension/4-H volunteers to be permitted. |
| STEM, environmental horticulture science, outdoor education resources, forestry, club development/citizenship/leadership could have low rope course offered—depending on which 20 acres animal science facilities for showing & potential raising is located | If raising animals is to occur, safety concerns at night due to coyotes on property since it is a natural habitat type environmental and coyotes are not unusual on the property |
| Requires partnership with Roy Hyatt / School Board to 4-H use of the property | |

Information needed:

- Identify exactly where the property is located in relation to the Roy Hyatt Center.
- What are the restrictions for weekend events since it is owned by School Board?

Presentation 3 – Non-Land Options

1. State of Florida Parks

| PROS | CONS |
|--|---|
| No cost to 4-H | Preplanning required for free entrance—letter needed in advance |
| Variety of venues for various activities | Travel distance |
| No maintenance | 4-H volunteer training required to conduct programs |
| Some facilities provide camping sites | |

2. Areas that provide leased property for raising livestock

| PROS | CONS |
|--|--|
| Mentors available for livestock raising | Lots of responsibility for the 4-H Club leader |
| 4-H member belongs to a club that supports livestock | Potential liability issues |
| Various sites available | Distance to travel for the youth |
| No land purchase needed | Time & commitment for family— responsibility could fall to property owner if 4-H youth/family does not honor commitment. |

At the end of the presentations and discussion period, Dr. Diem thanked everyone for the efforts that went into their reports. He said the next step would be to further enhance the various proposals in response to tonight's feedback from Task Force members and additional investigation. He suggested the members contact Pamela Allen to help put them in touch with experts from various County government departments or outside agencies that can help with some of the technical questions. Each subcommittee will continue to work within their group on their proposal(s). Dr. Diem suggested that, after each proposal is fully vetted, that perhaps some of the proposals could be combined to provide a more comprehensive solution better meet the program needs of 4-H.

In summary, Dr. Diem outlined the following based on tonight's Task Force discussion:

1. Subcommittee will continue working to flesh out the current proposals;
2. No further proposals would be considered at this time;
3. No public input needed, as agreed by the Task Force members;
4. Scheduling of another meeting in the six weeks after subcommittees have had time to meet and gather additional information about the options being considered.
5. After the fourth meeting, the Task Force should be ready to present a rough draft of the proposals to the Dean. He will then determine if there is any other information/clarification that he needs and what other proposals should be accepted and vetted before he would make a decision in accordance with the MOU.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:25 PM CT.

Note: handouts distributed by each subcommittee attached to minutes.