

**Big Darby Accord
Open Space Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary**

Thursday, June 26, 2008
9:00 a.m.

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission
Scioto Conference Room
111 Liberty Street, Suite 100
Columbus, OH 43215

Members Present

Beth Clark	Martha Gilson	Malcolm Porter
Mary Ann Core	Tracy Hatmaker	Hector Santiago
Deb Crosby	Adrienne Joly	Anthony Sasson
Jennifer Fish	Matt LaMantia	Steve Studenmund
Scott Fulton	Steve Malone	Kyle Wilson
Bob Gable	John O'Meara	John Talentino
Don Eckhart		

Guests

Wilma Yoder, Program Manager; MORPC – Clean Ohio Funds
Theresa Gordon, Environmental Specialist; Ohio EPA - WRRSP

Introduction

Anthony Sasson brought the meeting of the Open Space Advisory Committee to order at 9:05 a.m. The agenda was reviewed and guests, Wilma Yoder and Theresa Gordon were introduced.

Funding Opportunities

Wilma Yoder, Program Manager for MORPC's Clean Ohio funds presented the committee funding opportunities that are available through her program at MORPC. Currently there is 5 million dollars available and applications are currently being accepted for these funds. In the past, the program has awarded millions of dollars for infrastructure needs in the Central Ohio area. Charts itemizing funding available were provided to all attendees as well as application packets for funding. If an organization is interested in acquiring these funds, after submission of a proposal, a prescreen process is followed by presentation to a selection committee, proposed sites are visited and scored; followed by presentation to a selection committee and a visitation to the proposed site with scoring. Once the decision of to whom the funds will be awarded, an agreement is made between the OPWC (Ohio Public Works Commission) and the receiving organization; making sure that they funds are used as initially proposed. Applications for funding for the current year will be accepted until August 2008.

Theresa Gordon, Environmental Specialist from the Ohio EPA presented the committee with funding opportunities available through her organization; the Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program, which grants loans for projects that improve waste water outlets and addresses clean water issues or programs that improve water quality. The protection of water stems from the protection of the habitat surrounding the water, which also eligible for the funding. While the funding is loan based,

the interest that is paid back toward the loan is applied to habitat restoration; further reaching the organization's goals of conserving the loss of ecological function. Ms. Gordon stated that currently there is 15 million dollars available annually for these loans, with half going toward protection and the other half going toward restoration. The group wants to finance projects that they consider "sure things" and those that will make a difference. Projects not funded include; parking lots, restoration of structures, trail establishment, dredging and workshops. They will fund; riparian buffer acquisition with restoration, wetland restoration and protection, stream bank stabilization with natural design techniques. Rules of the loan availability are available on the printout of the slide show provided during the meeting. It was also mentioned that nominations or submissions for loans that show purposes other than what is outlined by the organization or without a complete budget proposal, that submission will be rejected.

The committee was advised by both presenters that if at any time further information is needed, they are available to answer any questions.

OSAC Administrative Update

Matt LaMantia reported that it was decided that future OSAC meetings be held every two months, as everyone on the committee is not only busy, but more work can be accomplished between meetings.

Since the committee has become more solidified; BDAWG will need to be kept apprised as to what is discussed and/or suggested within OSAC. This will be done by the issuance of an annual report compiled by the OSAC members.

Draft Open Space Map Review

The current map was presented by Mr. LaMantia. He pointed out the protected areas, open spaces, cemeteries and easements. The map does not include golf courses, recreation facilities or farmland. The land is currently labeled with colors as to previously identified as open space versus land purchased by other groups. The map will be updated every two months to show acquisition process.

A discussion ensued regarding the accuracy of the map due to constant updates. It was requested that all known updates be sent to Cheri Mansperger at MORPC so that they may be included in future maps. The color code system was also requested to be changed to reflect open space versus acquisition and the time period involved. It was decided that green should reflect acquisitions prior to June 2006 and yellow reflect acquisitions after June 2006. Any further suggestions for changes to the map and its content should be directed to Mr. LaMantia.

Acquisition Funding Matrix Updates

An updated funding matrix was submitted to committee members. There was a brief discussion regarding the matrix, and finding no changes at this time it was agreed that if anyone had additions or changes that they would be forwarded to Hector.

Acquisition Entities Matrix Updates

An updated entities matrix was submitted to committee members. A discussion ensued on the need to reorganize the matrix as well as a plan needs to be constructed for watershed acquisition. Data needed by the committee is present, but it was decided that it needs to be re-compiled for the plan. Any changes or updates to this matrix should be forward to Jennifer Fish. Jennifer will be responsible for getting the information to Beth so that it can be submitted to BDAWG to keep them informed as well.

Status Updates – OSAC Participants

The floor was opened for committee members to share updates from their areas or interests.

Beth stated that post-marketing summaries of BDAWG are on-line and available at www.bigdarbyaccord.org. The summaries are currently posted without the actual summary being approved by the groups involved. She also informed the committee that MORPC had requested that meetings of BDAWG be open to the public. Working groups have decided to the OSAC to get underway before allowing membership to increase. Finally, it was restated that OSAC will be submitting reports every six months to the Darby Accord Association with updates as to what the committee has done or recommends be done.

Hector is receiving a lot of referrals from agencies for Darby Conservancy to establish easements. He also informed the committee that he has accepted a position with the National Parks Service in Nebraska. And while he is out of the state of Ohio, he will still be involved with creek & river projects.

Kyle closed on three easements in the Hellbranch area totally approximately 70 acres. He also pointed out that the Dispatch printed an article about preservation projects.

Jennifer met with the Darby agriculture land owners to increase their participation in conservation. She also said that the Carbon Credit research will tie into conservancy & stream protection and pay to plant trees along creeks.

Malcolm said that American Electric Power is now required to meet with conservancy goals. He also said that MORPC hosted a seminar about the required goals for a renewable energy program, including wind, solar, etc.

Steve closed on two areas in the Darby area. The first in the Georgesville Area – Metro Park Property and the second at Darby Bend Lake – 14 acres acquired with the help of Clean Ohio. (it was pointed out that this area on the map needs to be changed to yellow now)

Bob closed a 100 acre parcel above the confluence, with 75 acres pending along with several other tract purchases pending.

Adrienne said that Columbus sponsored canoe trips on the Darby with the hopes of getting elected officials along with the public to participate and enjoy the Darby.

Scott said that one case was proposed regarding the proposed rezoning; this failed due to the proper paperwork not being filled out. The zoning was not approved and the area is now in zoning violation. He then asked the committee about zoning rules. It opened a discussion with comments stating that the rules are more difficult to achieve for developers and that examples of zoning rules will be gathered and presented at the next BDAWG meeting.

Acquisition Prioritization Discussion

The information given to the committee was reviewed; in the information, priority criteria was taken and lists of the types of consideration along with descriptions of each criteria. This criteria is to be kept in mind for future acquisitions.

Opinions from the committee were contributed; including,

Prioritize and protect Tier I lands.

Acquire open land, but focus on land closer to stream areas.

Who are the landowners & how will they be approached for conservation?

Start at "top" of the stream (headwaters) and work the way down with conservation, labeling the area's priority; 1 -2 etc.

How is the group thinking is an item needed to report to BDAWG so that the "main" group knows what is going on as far as OSAC's thinking and planning.

What does BDAWG want from OSAC?

OSAC is not an independent entity.

OSAC was formed by BDAWG to advise the spending of money that BDAWG does not have.

OSAC provides guidance with acquisitions and funding sources.

OSAC provides additional information and coordination regarding acquisitions.

OSAC was created to provide guidance to jurisdictions regarding conservation.

OSAC will work toward well defined advice as to what land should be acquired.

What should jurisdictions priorities be for development.

Get to specifics for guidance for said jurisdictions.

The meeting was adjourned; with the next meeting date set for Thursday, August 28, 2008 at 9:00 a.m.