



Legislation Text

File #: 15-2823, Version: 1

Title:

Property Interest Exchange - Rural Hill Nature Preserve

Summary

ACTION:

Adopt a resolution of intent to exchange a lease on a portion of County owned Tax Parcel 013-041-01 (+/- 2.25 acres) for an access easement across Tax Parcel 013-181-04 owned by Lewis Atkins Parks Heirs

Staff Contact: Jacqueline McNeil, Asset and Facility Management

Presentation: No

BACKGROUND/JUSTIFICATION:

The Natural Resources Division of Park and Recreation is working on a plan to restore a portion of Rural Hill Nature Preserve by removing some or all loblolly pine to improve biodiversity and wildlife habitat at the preserve. A “plantation” refers to a stand of trees that have been planted in straight rows. Most of the loblolly pine plantation at Rural Hill, as well as, the nearby Cowan’s Ford Wildlife Refuge were planted between the late 1950s and the late 1980s, prior to the County acquiring the property. Over the years, the Natural Resources Division has implemented restoration plans at this and other County nature preserves. Restoration plans often include logging of the trees by an outside vendor contracted by the County and/or prescribed burns, and replanting the area with native species. In this case, Park and Recreation will likely replant the area with short-leaf pine trees which are native to this area of North Carolina and are a declining species throughout the southeast.

The plantation that Natural Resources intends to restore is located on Tax Parcel 013-181-12 which is the southernmost portion of Rural Hill Nature Preserve and is 145 acres in size. Before beginning the process to restore this portion of the nature preserve as well as for maintenance of this portion of the nature preserve, Park and Recreation needs to secure a long term accessible route to and from the property. This portion of the nature preserve is separated from the northern portion of the nature preserve by a tributary of McDowell Creek and is bordered on three sides by Mountain Island Lake. The most feasible route to and from the property is through parcel 013-181-04 which is owned by the Lewis Atkins Parks Heirs and located north of the County’s property to be restored. The Parks Heirs have agreed to grant the County a five (5) year access easement across their parcel in exchange for the County granting the Parks Heirs a five year lease on a portion of County owned Tax Parcel 013-041-01

(+/- 2.25) which is a small portion of Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge and is across Neck Road from the Parks Heirs property. The Parks would like to fence in this portion of the County's property to allow grazing for their cattle as well as mowing of the property from time to time. To accommodate the height of logging trucks traversing the Parks Heirs property, an electrical power line on the Parks Heirs property must be buried. The County has agreed to reimburse the Park Heirs up to \$1,800 to cover this cost. Major business terms of the exchange are as follows:

Properties - The County is to grant a 5 year lease on +/- 2.25 acres of Tax Parcel 013-041-01 to the Lewis Atkins Parks Heirs. The Lewis Atkins Parks Heirs are to grant a 5 year access easement across Tax Parcel 013-181-04 to the County.

Lease Provisions - Activities allowed on the Leased Area to the Parks Heirs will included grazing of farm animals and mowing of the property.

Reimbursement by the County - The County will reimburse the Parks Heirs up to \$1,800 to cover the cost of burying electrical lines to accommodate the height of logging trucks.

PROCUREMENT BACKGROUND:

N/A

POLICY IMPACT:

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT:

Funds for reimbursement will come from Park and Recreation's operating budget.