

Bonnet Shores Fire District

Bonnet Shores Fire District Land Trust Meeting
Tuesday, February 18, 2025
6:30 pm

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

Land Trust Chair Joan Fandetti called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm, followed by leading the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. In attendance were Trustees Paulette Brousseau, Kevin Dolan and Joe Thomas, as well as council liaison Anthony Girardi. Trustee Kelly Sheridan was absent.

Announcements

Chair J. Fandetti made the following announcements:

- David Lutterbach has volunteered to collect water samples from the pond.
- Cara Ludwig has volunteered to trim the new trail behind the community center.
- Signage at the fork, the community center and elsewhere in the Fire District will be color-coordinated to reflect unity between the Fire District and Land Trust.
- Fire District Council Member Anthony Girardi, who serves as the council liaison to the Land Trust, gave a presentation regarding the 2024 application by the prior Land Trust to the IRS to reinstate the 501 (c) (3) status of the Land Trust. He reported that he reviewed over eight years of meeting minutes and emphasized that the Land Trust properties are not taxable based on the 1991 charter (amended in 1992). He stated that the 501 (c) (3) status did not exist for the Land Trust from 2017 to 2024 and that it appeared that the lapsed 501 (c) (3) status that occurred in 2017 was not discovered by Fire District officials until 2018. He addressed the need to withdraw the 2024 application because it included errors regarding the existence of Land Trust bylaws, incorrect identification of a separate Land Trust treasurer and lack of approval from the Fire District Council to submit the reinstatement application to the IRS. He emphasized that there was a difference between withdrawing the error-filled 2024 application and making a decision regarding 501 (c) (3) status for the Land Trust as a larger general issue for the Fire District. He asked all members of the Land Trust, council and the community to conduct their own research before making conclusions.

New Business

- Approval of Monday (1/13/25) meeting minutes
 - P. Brousseau **moved**, seconded by K. Dolan, to approve the January 13, 2025 meeting minutes. The motion was **approved**, 4-0.
- Trail Date of Friday, March 21, 2025 with Audobon Dr. Scott Ruhren
 - J. Thomas **moved**, seconded by P. Brousseau, to schedule the trail walk with Dr. Scott Ruhren on March 21, 2025. The motion was **approved**, 4-0. This trail walk will take place at Noon on March 21, 2025.

- Motion to schedule next meeting
 - K. Dolan **moved**, seconded by J. Thomas, to schedule a meeting for March 24, 2025. The motion was **approved**, 4-0.

Public Comment

- Elayne Casey expressed her opposition to the removal of the Land Trust’s 501 (c) (3) status.
- Trina Wrin asked the Land Trust to investigate the effects of 501 (c) (3) status on donors and potential donors.
- Faith LaSalle discussed the differences between land trusts across the state and stated that the Bonnet Shores Land Trust did not need 501 (c) (3) status.
- Kristiana Quinn discussed the implications of grant applications with regard to an entity’s 501 (c) (3) status.
- Nancy Cordy thanked Anthony Girardi for his presentation and addressed prior grant applications from the Fire District.
- Joe Thomas stated that the Land Trust is trying to address errors made by the prior Land Trust and to give the council the facts regarding the issue in front of us, rather than address future “doomsday” scenarios.
- Michelle Caraccia discussed flooding on Lake Road and asked the Land Trust to overturn its vote recommending dissolution of the 501 (c) (3) status.
- Mary Weber asked the Land Trust to have paper roads transferred to it.
- Paula Childs expressed her opposition to the removal of the Land Trust’s 501 (c) (3) status.
- Paulette Brousseau stated that there were errors in last year’s application by the former Land Trust to reinstate its 501 (c) (3) status.
- Steve Danuszar asked whether there had been a formation document regarding 501 (c) (3) status for the Land Trust.

Adjournment

K. Dolan **moved**, seconded by J. Thomas, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was **approved**, 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/Matthew M. Mannix
Bonnet Shores Fire District Clerk

Ratified on March 21, 2025