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Wednesday, Dec. 23, 2009

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Committee discusses Brecon Annex property

by CHRIS NORWOOD

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TALLADEGA COUNTY — The committee appointed by the legislature to govern the Coosa River Valley Annex property in Brecon held a meeting Monday to begin organizing and seek out funding sources.

According to acting board chairman Chuck Roberts, the board was presented with a copy of a letter from Bill Huie, program manager for the Federal Lands to Parks program for the Southeast region. In part, the letter reads "The National Park Service would support the park development of the Annex property by the Coosa River Valley Recreation Board, which was established earlier by (the Alabama legislature). All park development must be according to the approved elements contained in the program of utilization submitted by the city of Lincoln in their 2008 application for this property. Due to the long-standing non-compliance issue, all development of this property will be subject to National Park Service approval and the city of Lincoln's approval."

The property was originally deeded to the Talladega County Commission, which failed to come up with an acceptable use for it, so the federal government, which originally developed the property, requested proposals from other entities. The proposal submitted by the city of Lincoln was deemed the winner, although technically the commission has still not turned the deed over.

Roberts said he believed this does not matter, since he believes the reversion language was automatic. In any case, he said, "the main point is, we're moving forward. We have not formally adopted Lincoln's program yet, but we will, and we will proceed with development according to that plan."

Development will take money, however, and Roberts said the bulk of meeting was spent discussing grant possibilities.

"We met with Rob Grant, (the Alabama Department of Economic and Commercial Affairs) recreation program director. "We talked about both trails programs and land and water use conservation programs. We approved a resolution to send a letter of support on a \$400,000 trails grant. I haven't seen the actual application, but I believe it was either filed by the city of Lincoln or by the commission on behalf of Lincoln. We also agreed to apply for some deobligated land and water funds, up to \$50,000. This is money that was awarded to various agencies but had to be returned."

The board also approved a separate grant application for land and water funding for 2010.

Whether or not any of these grants are awarded should be announced in the spring.

Also Monday, the board:

- Appointed members Andy McWilliams and Joe Ballow to meet with a civilian marksmanship

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National Park Service
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program that has expressed interest in using part of the land.

- Hired attorney Charlie Gaines to help draft bylaws and advise the board on setting up bank accounts and other routine organizational matters.

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