

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairman Dan Tripp and Members of the County Council

FROM: Carlton Owen, Chairman
Greenville County Historic and Natural Resources Trust

DATE: May 17, 2024

RE: Oakland Plantation

The County's Historic and Natural Resources Trust (HNR Trust) is asking for approval to acquire an interest in property known as "Oakland Plantation" near the Five Forks area of Greenville County. Under the County Ordinance creating the HNR Trust, County Council can approve acquisition of eligible properties as County assets.

To that end, the Trust is requesting approval from County Council to move forward with a project to establish a new 52-acre park just north of Simpsonville on the property where Oakland Plantation once operated. Oakland Plantation is located at 259 Adams Mill Road and contains a 48-acre "large tract" and a 3.8-acre "small tract" that includes a main house from the early 1800s, a slave dwelling, and historic agricultural buildings.

The HNR Trust Board unanimously approved the Oakland Plantation property project as part of the evaluation and adoption process. Oakland Plantation met the conservation criteria set out by County Council for HNR Trust consideration of potential projects. Under the HNR Trust's evaluation process, the Board considers projects that fall within one or more of four categories -- Natural Resources (e.g., forests, wetlands, undeveloped land, etc.); Farms; Historic Sites and Buildings; and Trails. The 51.8-acre Oakland Plantation property ranks highly in two categories -- Natural Resources and Historic Sites and Buildings. Summarizing the key elements to the Oakland Plantation property's strength and eligibility:

- 1) Natural Resources – With more than 50-acres of open space, the property can support a new regional county park in the rapidly growing Five Forks area, the site surpassed our thresholds for funding; and
- 2) Historic Sites and Buildings – The property has a more than 200-year-old main home on the site, along with a former slave cabin and related out-buildings, providing a unique preservation opportunity in the Upstate.

The Upstate Preservation Trust (UPT) is under contract to purchase the Oakland Plantation property from the YMCA of Greenville County, using funds provided by grants from the South Carolina Conservation Bank and the HNR Trust. These grants are contingent on transferring the property to Greenville County for ownership and operation with UPT retaining responsibility for the preservation and interpretation of historic structures on the site.

After visiting and evaluating Oakland Plantation, the HNR Trust's Grants Committee proposed a \$602,500 grant to UPT at HNR Trust's December 18, 2023 Board meeting. The grant is contingent on UPT having agreements to transfer the property to Greenville County. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Similarly, on December 13, 2023, the South Carolina Conservation Bank approved a \$602,500 grant to UPT contingent on an agreement to transfer the property to Greenville County.

To move forward with this project, we are asking Council to approve HNR Trust's recommendation to accept the property in question to be owned by Greenville County and to authorize the County Administrator, with the advice and counsel of the County Attorney, to negotiate and execute agreements with UPT for the transfer of the property to the County.

Large Tract (shown as Parcel "B")
Greenville County TMS# 0548010102801

Small Tract (Shown as Parcel "A")
Greenville County TMS# 0548010102800

