



Legislation Text

File #: 18-1001, **Version:** 1

Item:

Agricultural Lands Easement (ALE) Grant Award and 2018 Cooperative Agreement for the Scottie McFarland Farm Addition

Date Of BOCC Meeting: September 4, 2018

Request For Board Action:

The Board is requested to approve a 2018 Cooperative Agreement between the County and the United States by and through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), for \$47,295 to provide federal grant support towards the protection of the Scottie McFarland farm in northern Durham with a permanent conservation easement. The CCC is the federal entity that disburses grant funds under the federal Agricultural Lands Easement Program (ALE). The grant funds are awarded to reimburse Durham County for 50 percent of the approved appraised value for the acquisition of a conservation easement on 10 additional acres of the Scottie McFarland farm, for a total of 91 acres.

The Board of County Commissioners previously approved the acquisition of a conservation easement on the 81 acres of the Scottie McFarland farm in 2014, with ALE grant funds awarded in September 2016 to pay for 50 percent of the cost of that easement. The funding for the county's share of the conservation easement was approved from the open space and farmland capital project at that time. The attached federal cooperative agreement award for \$47,295 will pay for 50 percent of the cost of the appraised value of the additional easement acreage at the time of closing. The federal ALE funds are distributed as a "pass through" to the state's Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) offices, which administers the program and awards the grants. The funds are paid at the time the easement on each farm is conveyed. The county's matching funds for the easement was previously set aside from the open space and farmland capital project account when the option to purchase the easement was previously approved by the Board, so no additional funding is needed for this easement.

Alignment With Strategic Plan: This conservation easement helps to implement Strategic Plan Goal 4: Environmental Stewardship and Community Prosperity, by increasing the amount of open space and farmland that has been protected by Durham County. The federal funds in this cooperative agreement supports Goal 5: Accountable, Efficient and Visionary Government by leveraging additional funding to stretch county open space funding.

Resource Persons: Jane Korest, Division Head for Open Space & Real Estate; Celeste Burns, Open Space Coordinator, Peri Manns, Deputy Director of Engineering and Environmental Services

County Manager's Recommendation: The County Manager requests that the Board approve the 2018 Cooperative Agreement between Durham County and Commodity Credit Corporation for the amount of \$47,295, to authorize the County Manager to execute the Cooperative Agreement, as well as the corresponding conservation easements on the Scottie McFarland farm. A final budget for the farm easement will be brought back to the Board prior to closing.

County Manager: _____

