



POPE FRANCIS ARRIVES IN US

WHITEHALL PLANTATION

Land trust seeks \$1.5M grant for public park

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The Beaufort County Open Land Trust has applied for \$1.5 million from the South Carolina Conservation Bank to help fund a proposed \$3.3 million waterfront park at the planned Whitehall Plantation development, officials said this week.

If approved, the conservation bank grant would go toward purchasing the 3.5-acre waterfront property on Lady's Island, just across the Woods Memorial Bridge from downtown Beaufort.

But county and city officials are still scratching their heads about where to find another \$1.8 million to fund parking, boardwalk and other improvements at the park.

"This park will do its part to highlight the turn bridge and the (Henry C. Chambers) Waterfront Park on the other side," County Councilman Brian Flewelling said Monday afternoon. "It's a great idea, and it's a great price. I just don't know where we'll find the money."

That's where the Open Land Trust stepped in, said Lisa Lord, administrator for the land trust and the county's Rural and Critical Lands Program.

Over the summer, Whitehall developers Dick Stewart and Steve Tully approached the Open Land Trust about applying for the grant because they want to preserve the waterfront as part of their plan to build 76 homes on the property. The land trust agreed and wanted to contribute, so Lord applied in July.

"It's a very unique project for the bank — it's not something they're typically used to seeing — but I think it's a great project. It serves several purposes," Lord said. "Our (application) was ranked very, very strongly. We hit all of the right criteria. It's just going to depend on where we sit when they clear out some of the past projects backlog."

The conservation bank will consider the application at its meeting Nov. 4 in Orangeburg.

Even if that grant is approved, though, the county and city are still left with a sizable expense to make the park a reality, officials said this week.

The developers have proposed that funding could come from the



The Associated Press

Pope Francis, left, walks with President Barack Obama, right, after arriving at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., on Tuesday.

Francis to meet with president, address Congress and speak at UN

By NICOLE WINFIELD and RACHEL ZOLL
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Pope Francis arrived Tuesday on the first visit of his life to the United States, bringing his "church of the poor" to the world's wealthiest superpower and a country polarized over issues closest to his heart: immigration, social injustice and economic inequality.

According to a rare honor to the pontiff, President Barack Obama and his wife and daughters welcomed Francis at the bottom of the stairs

on the red-carpeted tarmac at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland after the pope's chartered plane touched down from Cuba. Presidents usually make important visitors come to them at the White House.

Emerging from the plane to boisterous cheers from a crowd of hundreds, the smiling 78-year-old pontiff removed his skullcap in the windy weather and made his way down the steps in his white robes.

He was met by a military honor guard, chanting schoolchildren, politicians, and Roman Catholic clergymen in black robes and brightly colored sashes of scarlet and purple. Joe Biden, the nation's first Catholic vice president, and his wife were among those who welcomed him.

Please see POPE on 11A

Please see GRANT on 11A

Raided nightclub owner used to be a deputy in Colleton County

By CAITLIN TURNER
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A month after he was let go as a deputy at the Colleton County Sheriff's Office, the owner of a Bluffton nightclub raided by police Saturday was arrested and charged with business and alcohol license violations.

Keith Fernandez, 30, was charged with operating without a business license, unlawful manufacture, possessing and storing of alcoholic beverages, illegally storing liquor in a place of business, operating without a permit and unlawfully carrying a firearm on a liquor premises

after the Bluffton Police Department and the S.C. Law Enforcement Division found guns and drugs at the Burroughs Bar and Grill Night Club at 39 Persimmon St.

Fernandez was found with a firearm as a search warrant was executed, according to a Bluffton police news release.

Fernandez worked for the Colleton County Sheriff's Office as a deputy for a little over a year, Lt. Shane Roberts of the Sheriff's Office said Tuesday.

He also worked as a deputy for the Jasper County Sheriff's Office several years ago, Chief Deputy Roy Hughes said.

Hughes could not recall how long Fernandez worked at his department. He said Fernandez began working for the Colleton Sheriff's Office shortly after he left Jasper County.

Fernandez was let go Aug. 13 at "the pleasure of the sheriff" in Colleton County, Roberts said Tuesday. He said Fernandez was hired in April 2013.

Roberts said there was no record of disciplinary action against Fernandez.

Eight others were charged Sept. 19 when investigators found 0.16 grams of suspected heroin, \$260 in cash collected from cover charges,

four firearms, 59 rounds of ammunition and 610 bottles of illegal alcohol, the release said.

Fernandez was released Tuesday from the Beaufort County Detention Center, according to the center's documents. No indication of when Fernandez is expected in court was available Tuesday on the Beaufort County Court's website.

Three employees and two customers were also released.

Customer Leonard Brown Jr., who was charged with unlawfully carrying a firearm on a liquor premises and felony possession of a firearm, remains in custody with a \$10,000 bond.

The club was previously shut down in January when it was known as the Encore Lounge and was under different ownership.

The address is registered to Braveship Financial LLC, a company based in Oklahoma.

When asked Tuesday if Braveship Financial would evaluate lease policies for future tenants, the company's Bluffton attorney, Nick Felix with the McNair Law Firm, said neither he nor his client would comment on the circumstances because it is a pending matter.

Follow reporter Caitlin Turner at twitter.com/Cait_E_Turner.

HIGH: 80
LOW: 69



Weather, 2A

Half off sushi and dinner

dealsaver.com/HiltonHead

TODAY'S QUOTE

"Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning."
Bill Gates



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