



2020 Hampton Street • Room 3063A
P.O. Box 192 • Columbia, SC 29202
(803) 576-2083

Minutes
April 15, 2019

Attendance:

Members present: Carol Kososki, John Grego, Charles Weber, Buddy Atkins, Sam Holland, Tim McSwain, Andrea Williams, Robert Squirewell and Glenice Pearson via telephone

Absent: Virginia Sanders, Jim Thomas

Others present:

Quinton Epps, Conservation Division

Nancy Stone-Collum, Conservation Division

Charlie Fisher, Conservation Division

Ken Driggers, Legal Counsel

Clayton Voignier, Community Planning & Development Department

Dr. Lori Ziolkowski, USC Assistant Professor Dept. Earth, Ocean, & Environment

Call to Order

Chair Carol Kososki welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:30 with a quorum.

Approval of Agenda

John Grego made a motion to approve the agenda and was seconded by Buddy Atkins. Motion carried.

Approval of March 18, 2019 Minutes

Charles Weber moved to approve the March 18 minutes as presented. Tim McSwain seconded the motion which carried.

Report of Chair

Carol stated she was reserving her comments until later in the meeting regarding the Penny Development Team and formulation of a policy for reallocation of Greenway funds.

Treasurer's Report

No report given

Report of the Community Planning & Development Director

Mr. Voignier reported Mr. Gomeau has left and Dr. John Thompson is Acting County Administrator while a Council search committee continues to narrow the field of candidates to lead the day-to-day operations of County government on a permanent basis. Due to an anticipated \$2 million shortfall in the General Fund for the upcoming fiscal year, a spending freeze has been enacted on non-essential spending. Departmental budgets have been reviewed and there are no concerns with the RCCC budget.

Climate Change Presentation

Nancy introduced Dr. Ziolkowski, an Assistant Professor in the School of Earth, Ocean, & Environment at USC. She leads a dynamic lab of students in research topics related to climate change in the polar regions and life in extreme environments. Her research has garnered international recognition and locally she was recently named a USC Breakthrough Rising Star.

Dr. Z stated the scientific community is in agreement climate change is caused by people. Unfortunately facts are not enough to change minds with people split politically and most don't think they will be affected. She cited examples of change: a 2° Fahrenheit average increase in temperatures in the US, the Arctic is warming more than any other place on earth, farmers have an extra month of growing season, more record high temperatures than record lows, and an increase in violent weather. A graph showed human factors rather than natural factors track the temperature increase.

Solutions include talking about the issue, voting, buying green power. Just as corporations came together to end the use of CFCs that were destroying the ozone layer, so to can governments and industry take big steps to reduce CO₂. SC could get more energy from solar than wind. When asked what the Commission can do, Dr. Z recommended more talk about climate change and the need to help the public become more connected to nature.

Conservation Committee Report

NE Landfill

Buddy provided edits on the draft letter John Grego wrote that was reviewed at the March meeting. The letter recommends five actions SCDHEC should take with Republic Services' contract for the Northeast Landfill. Buddy emphasized the goal of the letter was to protect conservation values, not to regulate. Charles made a motion seconded by Andrea Williams to send the letter to Council. Motion carried unanimously. Clayton Voignier will determine how it should be communicated to Council. Nancy will report back when the letter is sent.

Westinghouse Report

As a result of news articles in 2018 that radioactive uranium had leaked through a hole in the concrete floor at Westinghouse Nuclear Facility, Sen. Jackson and Councilwoman Myers appointed a Citizens' Advisory Committee to meet monthly with officials from Westinghouse and SCDHEC. Andrea is a member of the council and she reported the community remains distressed by the lack of information and the inaction in cleaning up groundwater contamination that occurred from leaks in 2008 and 2011. Since residents living in the vicinity

depend on wells for drinking water, 36 test wells were dug and four were found to be contaminated. Excavating the top layer of clay underneath the floor where the more recent leak occurred has been approved as have new on-site test wells. Westinghouse is under new ownership so the problem exists as to who is accountable and who will pay for on-going testing. Andrea said the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is reluctant to address several issues. She will keep RCCC informed as the Citizens' Advisory Committee continues to meet.

Greenway Funds Reprogramming

Carol reminded members that RCCC members and staff have been involved with the Greenway Advisory Committee for years. Of the 15 projects approved in the 2012 referendum, Lincoln Tunnel is complete, Three Rivers Greenway is nearing completion, and Gills Creek A is in the design stage. Public meetings were held within the last four months to gauge public preferences for Smith/Rocky Branch A & B and Crane Creek A, B, and C. As a result, the Project Development Team for the Transportation Penny made a recommendation to Council on how to proceed with the remaining projects, given there is not enough funding to build all of them and some are not wanted. Several councilmembers called for a work session to discuss each project but one has not been scheduled.

Buddy made a motion seconded by John to extend the meeting until 5:20pm. Motion carried.

Carol asked Ken Driggers to come up with a policy that allows Council to reallocate or reprogram funds from one greenway project to another. Ken explained he tried to frame a rational process and considers the public input key for transparency and legitimacy. Buddy requested "new" project be changed to "existing" so there is no confusion that all projects were approved in the referendum. John moved to adopt the policy with the edits discussed and forward it to County Council and the Ad Hoc Committee with the recommendation that Council hold a work session to discuss each Greenway project. The motion was seconded by Charles and was approved unanimously. Buddy stated RCCC should have been in charge of greenway policy and development from the beginning.

Land Program Planner Report

Chris Hansen reported the signs for Pinewood Lake Park have been delivered and need to be installed. Irrigation has been installed in the pollinator garden. The Tour de Cure, a fundraiser for the American Diabetes Association, used the park for a staging area this past Saturday. Attendance at the park is steadily increasing with the warm weather.

Conservation Division Manager's Report

Quinton said Administration and Councilman Livingston requested a summary of actions regarding Pinewood Lake Park which he provided. There has been no contact from the Foundation since January. Councilwoman Newton inquired if the Foundation was scheduling any events; they have not done so since December.

Conservation Coordinator's Report

Nancy reported the Forest Stewardship Management Plan has been awarded to American Forest Management, low bidder for the project. The final details of the contract are being worked out. John asked Nancy to provide a letter of support to bring the Waterways Smithsonian exhibit to Congaree National Park which she did. Four of the historical grants have been closed out and several others are close. The reports from the Blythewood Historical Society and Ebenezer Lutheran Church are available. The Planning Commission voted 7 to 1 to disapprove the re-zoning for Crickentree Golf Course. This matter goes before Council on April 23 at 7 pm. The Friends of Harbison State Forest ribbon cutting will be held Thursday, April 25. Dr. Lydia Mattice Brandt will lead a walking tour of the capitol grounds on Monday, May 20 immediately after the Commission meeting. The Mill Creek tour is May 3 from 2:30 to 5:30.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlie Fisher, Administrative Assistant