



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

Minutes
February 10, 2020

Attendance:

Commissioner	District	Present
Charles Weber	1	Yes
Tim McSwain	2	Yes
Sam Holland	3	Yes
Vacant	4	--
Buddy Atkins	5	Yes
John Grego	6	Yes
Robert Squirewell	7	Yes
Carol Kososki	8	Yes
Jim Thomas	9	No
Vacant	10	--
Gail Rodriguez	11	Yes

Staff & Visitors	Affiliation
Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
Nancy Stone-Collum	Conservation Division
Charlie Fisher	Conservation Division
John Worrell	Columbia Rowing Club Member
Brett Niermeier	USC Student

Call to Order

Chair Carol Kososki welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:35pm. Introductions of visitors, members and staff were made.

Approval of Agenda

Charles Weber made a motion to approve the agenda and was seconded by Robert Squirewell. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Charles moved to approve the minutes of January 13, 2020 and was seconded by Tim McSwain. Motion carried.

Report of the Chair

Carol gave an overview of the meetings and letters that have taken place since the RCCC January 13th meeting regarding the proposed re-organization of the Administrative Assistant position. In response to a request from Carol to meet with Administration, RCCC members Robert Squirewell, Carol Kososki, and Buddy Atkins met with the County Administrator Leonardo Brown, Assistant County Administrator Ashley Powell, Director of Community Planning & Development (CP&D) Clayton Voignier, RCCC Liaison Councilman Chip Jackson, Council Chairman Paul Livingston, and Richland Soil & Water Conservation District (RSWCD) Chairman, Kenny Mullis on January 21st. During the meeting

the discussion focused on concerns over the perceived benefits of creating an administrative pool within the CP&D and the negative impacts to the Conservation Division. Robert explained when an employee with specialized knowledge and skills, like Charlie, is moved into a pool, the position becomes diluted and loss of efficiency and delays occur. Clayton said that Charlie Fisher's job description matched other admin assistants but Robert argued the others would take considerable training to deal with Charlie's unique administrative and non-administrative RSWCD responsibilities. Carol pointed out the loss of efficiency and capacity to the Conservation Division. Buddy stated Mr. Brown said he was unaware of the CP&D proposal prior to the meeting. He will discuss the matter with his staff and respond to RCCC and RSWCD on the operational changes proposed.

Following the meeting, Kenny Mullis sent a letter (copy on file) January 26 to Misters Brown, Jackson, and Livingston to clarify the unique duties of District employees with a list of questions and concerns. Since, no response has been received from Administration, Carol drafted a letter requesting an update on the meeting. Charles moved, seconded by John Grego to send the letter which was approved unanimously. Gail Rodriguez asked if any action had taken place on February 3rd, the date for implementation of the proposal, and the answer was no. It was understood to be deferred pending a response from Mr. Brown.

Charles Weber questioned whether the administrative position was properly classified. Buddy suggested the position is very much a hybrid and it may be better to look for a different job description rather than try to modify Charlie's current job classification and duties.

Carol read an email Clayton Voignier sent on February 6th stating "As a result of recent conversation, at the behest of RCCC, Administration is now engaged in an internal process where personnel and employment matters are concerned. This process is, for this purpose, specific to the Conservation Division of Community Planning and Development. Therefore, until this internal process is concluded and Administration authorizes my doing so, I am unable to speak to any such process. As such, the discussion of the Land Program Planner position will not be included in my report for the 2/10 meeting of RCCC." Charles had trouble interpreting the email since filling the vacant land program planner position is unrelated to the administrative assistant. Buddy asked Quinton about applications and Quinton replied he had provided his recommendations to Clayton. Robert suggested conveying a sense of urgency since Quinton has to spend considerable time at Pinewood Lake Park and Buddy will be filling in for him while Quinton is away at a conference. Due to the urgency to fill the position, Carol agreed to send a response under her name inquiring about the time line and why it is taking so long to hire the Land Program Planner.

Treasurer's Report

Robert met with Nancy and Quinton to go over the budget and gain a better understanding of the financial situation. Expenditures are in line with where they should be for this time of the year. John questioned why only a small portion of Professional Services was encumbered. Currently there is no contract for an attorney and very few projects are being executed. Asked about the annual payment for the purchase of the Upper Mill Creek property, Quinton replied the approximate \$100,000 is taken out at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Conservation Division Manager's Report

Walden Pond Amendment

Quinton reported RCCC signed a contract with WK Dickson in July 2018 to prepare a feasibility study on whether the Walden Pond dam, breached during the 2015 flood, can be removed without causing flooding downstream. If that is possible the homeowners association is willing to deed the property to the county for a public park. The widening of the adjacent Spears Creek Church Road with Transportation Penny funds included the survey work needed for the hydrologic analysis for the feasibility study. Since work on the road has been stalled for over a year with no immediate plans to move forward, an amendment to the scope of work with WK Dickson to conduct the survey work is needed; otherwise, the study should be abandoned. The exact amount has not been received from the consultants but is estimated to cost between \$10,000 and \$20,000. John made a motion seconded by Buddy to amend the scope of work to add in survey work not to exceed \$20,000. Motion carried unanimously.

Columbia Rowing Club Contract

Mr. John Worrell, a founding member of the Columbia Rowing Club reported on damage done by the recent flooding on the Broad River. Tree limbs and debris litter the property even worse than during the 2015 flood. Several boats inside the boathouse were damaged. The dock was washed away for the second time in five years so consideration is being given to alternative access options. The Club provides low-cost water recreational opportunities in Richland County, UofSC uses their equipment and dock, and the Club offers a high school youth program. Mr. Worrell expressed pleasure to be under the aegis of RCCC and how helpful it is to work with Quinton. Because the operating agreement with Richland County expires April 7, 2020, Buddy moved to recommend Council approve an extension of the Club's contract for an additional five years. Charles seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Fairfield Waste Water Treatment Plant

The proposed regional wastewater treatment plant would be permitted to discharge 2 to 4 million gallons per day into Big Cedar Creek just above the Fairfield County line. Big Cedar Creek flows into Richland County on its way to the Broad River. The wastewater will be treated to the highest standard but Richland County downstream landowners remain concerned. A new modern treatment plant is needed to replace two aging plants, provide for future growth, and service a proposed mega-industrial site. DHEC will not allow the wastewater to be discharged to the Wateree River. Most Richland County residents do not realize wastewater is discharged now into the creek.

Legal Contract Status

One application was received and deemed not qualified. Procurement will re-issue the Request for Qualifications with changes in the scope of work provided by Quinton and Nancy. The Legal Department has deferred to RCCC on selection of a contract attorney consistent with the normal procurement process.

Conservation Coordination Report

Grant Update

Four Community Conservation and twelve Historic Preservation grant applications were received.

Nancy will email Committee members details on how to access and score the grant applications and a time will be established to hear presentations. Everyone was referred to their copy of an up-to-date spending report for current grants.

MacGregor Property

In 2007 a 71-acre tract of land was donated to the county by a separate LLC of the Mungo Company for use as a public golf course. The former owner of the property is now stating, in the event the property was not used as a golf course, it was to revert back to the original owner. Letters exist between Milton Pope, the County Administrator at the time, and the property owner regarding this condition; however the deed has no reversionary clause and stipulates the land “shall be used only as a public golf course and related facilities or a natural green space for passive, non-consumptive, recreational uses.” In 2008 a feasibility study was done and determined there was no capacity for a golf course in this area and the highest and best use was residential. RCCC assumed management of this property when the adjacent Cabin Branch tracts were acquired in 2014. The Forestry Stewardship Plan completed last summer by the RCCC addresses recommended uses for this property. Quinton will email and advise Administration the property is being maintained as a passive recreational property consistent with the Lower Richland Tourism Plan and the deed.

Buddy made a motion seconded by Tim to extend the meeting an additional 15 minutes. Motion carried.

Timberlane Drive Tree Planting/Tree Canopy Grant

Quinton and Nancy met with Richland County GIS and the Green Infrastructure Center staff to determine where the Tree Canopy grant should focus. The decision was made to study the northwest part of the county south of the Broad River down to the confluence with the Saluda River. In the early stage, most of the work is data gathering and GIS analysis.

Quinton, Nancy and a forester recently visited the Timberlane and Glenhaven roads close to Gills Creek that were so badly flooded to determine where and what kind of trees can be planted. The forester recommended hiring another forester to do a planting plan. Several sources of funding are available for planting trees. Nancy will attend a Tree Keeper Workshop later in the week.

Other

Buddy reported Richland Soil and Water Conservation District received the National Association of Conservation Districts 2020 Urban Agriculture Conservation Grant Initiative they applied for. This project will enhance and build additional pollinator habitats at Pinewood Lake Park for use as a demonstration garden and to facilitate pollinator workshops for the community.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlie Fisher