



2020 Hampton Street • Room 3063A  
 P.O. Box 192 • Columbia, SC 29202  
 (803) 576-2080

**Minutes**  
**February 22, 2021**

**Attendance**

Commissioner	District	Present
Charles Weber	1	Yes
Tim McSwain	2	Yes
Sam Holland	3	Yes
Glenice Pearson	4	Yes
Buddy Atkins	5	Yes
John Grego	6	Yes
Robert Squirewell	7	Yes
Carol Kososki	8	Yes
Vacant	9	--
Vacant	10	--
Gail Rodriguez	11	Yes

Staff & Visitors	Affiliation
Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
Clayton Voigneir	Community Planning & Dev
Brian Crooks	Planning Services Division
Meghan Sullivan	Planning Services Division
Nancy Stone-Collum	

**Call to Order**

John Grego welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:32 pm. All members, staff, and guests participated by Zoom video conference due to the closure of County offices as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Approval of Agenda**

⇒ Charles moved to approve the agenda which was seconded by Tim. Motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

⇒ Tim moved to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2021 meeting and was seconded by Charles. Motion passed unanimously.

**Report of the Chair**

*New Commissioner Update*

John initiated a discussion of the status of filling vacant positions on the Commission. John welcomed Glenice on her re-appointment by Chairman Livingston to the Commission. Carol mentioned she had spoken with Councilman Overture Walker. As of the meeting, Councilman Walker had not made an appointment but would most probably select Jennifer Satterthwaite who is an environmental planner. John stated he had sent a letter to

Councilwoman Jenifer Mackey regarding an appointment but has not had any news. For District 10, John has spoken with Councilwoman Rev. English and she has decided to appoint Darrell Jackson, Jr. John has spoken with him and provided him a copy of the Lower Richland Tourism Plan (LRTP). John requested he contact Quinton to provide his contact information.

*Bylaw Amendment*

Buddy provided a proposed change to Commission’s Rules of Procedures to all Commissioners via email on January 12, 2021. The change would amend the Rules of Procedure, Article 1, Section 2, to read:

“The officers of the Commission shall be a chair, two vice chairs, treasurer and the past chair. With the exception of the past chair, officers shall be elected for a one-year term at the first Commission meeting in each calendar year. The past-chair shall serve as an ex-officio of the Executive Committee for a period not to exceed one year from the prior annual election of officers.”

⇒ **Buddy moved to accept the proposed change and Charles seconded. During the discussion, Buddy suggested (non-voting) be added after ex-officio and “member” be added after (non-voting). Tim proposed an amendment to add “immediate” preceding “past chair” to clarify. Motion passed unanimously to change the rules to include the proposed amendments.**

*Blue Ribbon Committee*

John asked what presence the Commission should have on the Blue Ribbon Committee. Carol reviewed the formation of the Committee following the October 2015 flood. She stated it was really just an “ad-hoc” Committee with no defined members or bylaws although it was effective in bringing together citizens impacted by the flood. Carol suggested Council should designate members to the Committee going forward. Carol discussed how she, representing the Commission, had been involved as well as Gills Creek Watershed Association (GCWA). Clayton stated it is up to Chairman Livingston on how to move forward with organizing the Committee. John stated he would like to participate in the Committee going forward.

Buddy mentioned Carol has represented the Commission on the Transportation Penny Greenway Advisory Committee for a number of years and inquired regarding our participation going forward. Carol stated we should clearly continue our involvement especially since the final design for Gills Creek A is being completed and public input solicited. The terminus on Timberlane is also the location for the tree planting effort on which the Commission was previously involved. Clayton mentioned the press release for a community engagement action on the final plan for the Richland County-owned parcels along Timberlane purchased with FEMA funds. A public meeting is being planned with the Transportation Department. John expressed his interest in participating in any public meeting. Buddy requested Clayton provide the Commissioners a copy or link to the notice sent out by the Community Planning and Development Department.

**Treasurer’s Report**

Robert Squirewell reported on the budget and noted no significant changes from the January 2021 budget.

**Report of the Community Planning & Development Director**

Clayton reported on financial information from the January 2021 Council Retreat. Based on financial and tax collection data through Nov 2020 were in “good shape”. He also stated he had updated Council on the Land Development Code (LDC) zoning and received numerous questions regarding the public engagement process. CP&D staff will be meeting with individual Council members to review the proposed LDC map revisions. He

also stated staff is working with the consultant (Clarion) to assess our comments and those of the business community.

John inquired if Council discussed the current hiring freeze. Clayton stated Council is looking at significant cuts in the coming year but he provided no information regarding the hiring freeze. Clayton suggested budget cuts will be higher than 5% and could possibly effect current, existing staff positions. Buddy asked about the hiring dichotomy between various departments, especially Public Works, which continues to hire non-essential positions. Clayton stated he has held positions open in expectation of double-digit budget cuts in CP&D. He hopes to have more discussion with Administration regarding hiring next week. Carol stated it appears there are no “across the board cuts” and inquired about our ability to use our special revenue funds. Clayton responded he is having discussions with Administration regarding general verses special revenue funding expenditures. He opined that some departments may have to make future cuts depending on updated revenues and he expects more cuts in CP&D.

John inquired again if Clayton had requested help with the Commission’s minutes from Robin Carter. Clayton stated CP&D only has one person to assist but he has not worked out a final arrangement, but hopes to soon.

Buddy asked Brian if he had any insights on how our comments on the LDC, such as the agricultural zoning, might be translated into the zoning maps. Brian stated they are trying to use the current data layers and adding site-specific information to conduct the mapping and obtain comments from public input. CP&D will develop a map viewer as a tool for the public to compare current verses proposed zoning changes.

Meghan updated the Commission on the Timberlane tree planting public engagement. Six online responses have been received to date. Brian stated a total of 30 written responses have been received.

### **Conservation Committee Report**

Buddy provided a brief review of the letter sent to Mr. John McAllister regarding the Cabin Branch property.

### **Historic Committee Report**

Sam explained two FY21 historic grantees have requested extensions. The Historic Committee met and resolved the Progressive Network grant extension request since the applicant requested funding during FY 22 due to their inability to complete the FY 21 grant due to Covid-19 restrictions. The Historic Committee voted to extend the Lower Richland Heritage and Genealogy Society; Kindred Connections: Sharing Our Stories grant due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

**⇒ Sam moved the Committee motion to extend the grant which was seconded by Carol. Motion passed unanimously.**

### **Conservation Manager’s Report**

#### *Grants*

Quinton updated the Commission on the Committee decisions on the FY 21 grants. A total of \$66,247 has been paid out of a total grants budget of \$276,824. Quinton provided the Commissioners the last quarterly reports via email. Buddy requested for Quinton to remind the current grantees of the requirement to give attribution to the Commission, especially regarding social media posts.

Regarding the FY 22 grant applications, the Conservation Committee approved six (6) grants totaling \$58,356. The grant application from Dutch Fork Elementary Academy of Environmental Sciences was not approved since

this would have marked the third consecutive year for the same project. (Current Commission policy allows grant funding for a maximum of two consecutive years for the same project.) The Historic Committee approved nine grants totaling \$191,644.

*Capital Improvement Project Requests*

Quinton explained he had submitted a capital improvement project request list to administration last month. The list was included in the Commission’s agenda package. The request list focuses on capital improvements over the next 10 years, consistent with the Lower Richland Tourism Plan (LRTP) to the Cabin Branch and Mill Creek properties and totals \$18.4 million. The projects consist of road improvements, bridge replacement and lodge upgrades at Mill Creek, trail construction, and master plan development for Cabin Branch and Mill Creek.

Carol inquired what the process will be to move this list forward. Quinton stated it will go to Administration for their review, approval and recommendation to Council during the budget meetings. Charles reminded everyone that two years ago Council was not provided the original CIP project list – only the Administration’s “approved” list. Clayton stated the CIP list was submitted to Finance and will be reviewed by Administration. John stated he would communicate our list to Councilwomen Newton and English. Carol and Glenice emphasized the need to communicate this list to Council. Buddy informed the Commissioners a couple of bills going through the General Assembly could aid in our efforts to implement the LRTP as well as some grant opportunities at the USDA regarding farmers markets and minority-owned farming efforts. He emphasized the need to try and leverage these opportunities and that we could discuss this at a future strategic session. Glenice stated that we need to assist black entrepreneurs with future opportunities outlined in the LRTP. Buddy inquired on the timing to involve Council members. Glenice suggested we should communicate with State elected officials regarding our efforts.

*Mill Creek Bridge Replacement*

Quinton informed the Commission about the status of the Mill Creek bridge replacement. Currently, the RFP process is in Procurement.

*Lake Elizabeth*

Quinton stated the HOA is in the process of determining a plan of action for the property surrounding the lake in response to our question and answer document. Refer to the January 2021 meeting minutes.

**New Business**

John mentioned the benefit, especially to new members, of having a strategic planning session. Topics would include how to best advocate Commission programs with the Council, review the grants process, staffing and an ethics review.

**⇒ At 4:59 pm, Buddy moved to extend the meeting until 5:15 pm. Glenice seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

**Public Input**

*Atlas Road Trees*

John said he has been contacted by Atlas Road community members in the Atlas and Shop Road area regarding the preservation of three grand live oak trees on the parcel at the NE intersection of Atlas and Shop Road. A Quick Trip (QT) gas station is proposed and preservation of the existing grand trees is a concern. John and Carol

have spoken with the Planning Division on how to preserve these grand trees. As of our meeting, a site plan has not been reviewed or approved by the County. Tim stated it was typical for the gas stations to clear the lot and provide for compensation for tree cutting. Buddy mentioned because these trees are located adjacent to Atlas Road, they would be easy to preserve and not impede the gas station construction. Glenice expressed her concern over continued erosion of black communities due to such projects. Tim expressed the need to get the County staff to give appropriate attention to saving the trees. Brian mentioned the site plan is approved administratively and does not need approval from the Planning Commission. Carol suggested contacting the QT representative, Paulette Morin at 704-559-8000.

Glenice commended and thanked Carol for all her significant service to the Commission.

**⇒ At 5:14 pm, Charles moved to adjourn the meeting. Tim seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
James Blake Atkins, Ph.D.