



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

Minutes April 23, 2012

Attendance:

Members present: Carol Kososki, John Grego, Jim Lawracy, Becky Bailey, Gary Atkinson, Mildred Myers, Ann Furr, and Sam Holland

Absent: Virginia Sanders, Margaret DuBard, Glenice Pearson (recovering from surgery)

Others present:

James B. Atkins (Buddy), Environmental Planning Division
Nancy Stone-Collum, Environmental Planning Division
Chanda Cooper, Environmental Planning Division
Charlie Fisher, Environmental Planning Division
Tracy Hegler, Richland County Planning Director
Ken Driggers, Legal

Chair Carol Kososki called the meeting to order at 4:08 pm without a quorum and requested those present to review the minutes and agenda. Carol distributed a recent newspaper article on Cooks Mountain. Republic Services is marketing the property for resale and Ken Driggers was asked to find out the terms for sale. Carol introduced new Conservation Commission member Ann Furr who was appointed by Seth Rose to replace Frank Houston.

Comments from Planning Director

Tracy Hegler, the new Planning and Developmental Services Department Director, is a native of SC who worked for five years at the Florida Space Authority. In her most recent position she was a transportation planner for Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc. focusing on smart growth and environmentally sensitive design. With experience in both the public and private sectors, Ms. Hegler has learned the art of negotiation and mediation and looks forward to working with staff to develop a long range vision for growth in Richland County.

With the arrival of more Commission members, a quorum was obtained.

Minutes: A motion was made by John Grego and seconded by Becky Bailey to approve the minutes of March 26, 2012 as written. Motion carried.

Agenda: Jim Lawracy made a motion to approve the agenda which was seconded by Becky Bailey. Motion carried.

Report of the Chair

Carol Kososki reported a follow up meeting with Milton Pope, Richland County Administrator, is scheduled for Thursday, April 26 regarding the department reorganization requested by the Conservation Commission and Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD). The Development Roundtable met today to review some edits necessary for the amended ordinances. The revised ordinances are the result of three years' work designed to balance environmental and development interests in Richland County. A public information session is scheduled for May 21 from 6-8pm in the fourth floor conference room of the county's Administration Building on Hampton Street.

Ms. Hegler reported a 90-day Green Code moratorium is now in effect. The current code is ambiguous and inconsistent with other parts of the Land Development code. Planned revisions to the Green Code may not be necessary if the Development Roundtable principles are adopted by Council.

Committee Reports

Conservation Committee

Nancy Stone-Collum explained Ted Hopkins is ready to proceed with a conservation easement on 100 acres in Lower Richland near Lower Richland Blvd and Hwy 378. The parcels are zoned both mixed use (commercial and residential) around the lake and the fields adjacent to the railroad track, conservation/agricultural open space in the current Southeast Richland Master Plan. Mr. Hopkins is interested in creating a food hub and farmer's market. Jim Lawracy moved to allocate \$50,000 for purchase of the easement and John Grego seconded the motion. Buddy Atkins said the property would tie in to the RSWCD's USDA – NRCS initiative, Organic Richland, promoting organic and locally-grown food and agri/eco-tourism. Ken Driggers pointed out there are still hard feelings among Council members from previous easement negotiations. There are possible mitigation credits for restoring the stream that was dammed to create a pond which is currently empty due to the drought. Jim called for the vote which passed unanimously.

Nancy reported that as of today, the Spring Valley Homeowners Association is interested in buying the 26 acres at the entrance to the Spring Valley subdivision from the Coopers. Negotiations can now begin again.

RCCC members have an opportunity to visit the USC Bioswale on Tuesday, May 1. USC received \$1,000 for an educational grant from RCCC to pay for printing of a booklet on bioswales and a few small signs.

Nancy and Chanda will attend the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Carolina Fence garden RCCC funded with a grant at Round Top Elementary School on May 2. Joyce Dickerson has been invited to the ceremony.

Historic Committee

Jim Lawracy reported five RCCC members attended the award ceremony at the State House where Frank Houston accepted the SC 2012 Historic Preservation Service Award on behalf of RCCC. The Irish Memorial interpretive panel was unveiled at Riverfront Park on March 31. Glenice Pearson, Nancy, and Jim attended the preview opening and reception for the Fox Theatre. The theatre is open for limited shows; it still requires extensive work and substantial funding to complete the upper theatre.

Historic Columbia Foundation is celebrating their 50th anniversary on May 24. A request from HCF to sponsor a table for \$1000 was rejected. Gary Atkins moved to fund up to four \$75 tickets for the birthday celebration. Jim seconded the motion and all agreed. Jim, Glenice, Becky and Nancy will represent the Commission.

Nancy mentioned her concern about lack of progress with moving the Kensington cabin. An archaeological review was finally conducted in March. She advised Scarborough-Hamer Foundation loss of funding could occur if the cabin is not moved this fiscal year.

Meeting Extension

Becky Bailey moved and Gary seconded the motion to extend the meeting until 5:45pm. Motion carried.

Finance Committee

Nancy referred RCCC members to their detailed budget report. Any unspent money goes into the capital fund. The \$100,000 allocated for Caughman Pond was transferred from Professional Services to cover RCCC's obligation. Becky requested quarterly budget reports in the same format.

Outreach Committee

Sam Holland reported Chanda Cooper had a table at Forest Lake Presbyterian for Earth Sunday on April 22. A clean-up day sponsored by Net Impact, a student group at USC School of Business, was held at Jackson Creek on April 22 with media coverage by WLTX and Fox News. Chanda had a booth with brochures and trail maps at the River Rocks Festival at Riverfront Park on April 14.

RCCC and RSWCD partnered with NRCS to celebrate Earth Day at Ridgewood Park. Glenice attended along with Councilman Paul Livingston, Senator John Scott and Representative Chris Hart.

Carol would like to set a goal to have at least one publicity event in each of the 11 Council districts based on a grant project or easement.

Environmental Division Manager's Report

Green Development Grant

Buddy reported he sent a certified letter to the Wall Development Group regarding the incomplete 2010 Green Development grant, stating unless RCCC hears from him the project is cancelled; today he received a fax from Craig Wall requesting an extension. Buddy's recommendation is to terminate the funding since completion of the project in the near term is unlikely due to the weak housing market. A motion was made by Jim and seconded by Gary to cancel the grant. Motion carried.

Jackson Creek Mitigation Bank

County staff held meetings with, Alan Kahn and Hugh Palmer to discuss obtaining easements required to move forward with the bank. Mr. Kahn and Palmer own a majority of the property along the stream and wetland areas adjacent to the proposed mitigation bank at Jackson Creek upstream of Decker Blvd. Staff hope to meet with Mr. Palmer this week to discuss the easements; if he is not amenable to the negotiations, the Jackson Creek-Decker mitigation bank will be unsuccessful and need to be abandoned. Buddy informed the Commission he has received positive feedback and interest regarding the application to SCDHEC for a \$3.2 Million State Revolving Fund loan to pay for BMP implementation and restoration/construction costs for the Jackson Creek bank.

Time Extension

A motion was made by Jim and seconded by Gary to extend the meeting an additional five minutes. Motion carried.

Conservation Coordinator's Report

Nancy reported two appraisers have been approved and both look like excellent choices with specific experience in mitigation banks and rural properties. Discussions with Planning and Developmental Services Department staff continue about greenway planning for the County. Nancy distributed an updated contact sheet of RCCC members.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Jim and seconded by Gary to adjourn the meeting at 5:45pm.

Next meeting date is May 21.

Submitted by
Charlie Fisher
Administrative