



2020 Hampton Street • Room 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204
(803) 576-2080
March 17, 2025
County Council Chambers
Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Commissioner	District	Present
Charles Weber	1	Yes
James Young	2	Yes
Wayman Stover	3	Yes
Glenice Pearson	4	No
Kip Dillihay	5	Yes
John Grego	6	Yes
Robert Squirewell	7	No
Vacant	8	
Khali Gallman	9	No
Kendrick Scott	10	Yes
Gail Rodriguez	11	Yes

Staff & Visitors	Affiliation
Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
Alexis Wallraf	Conservation Division
John McKenzie	Conservation Division
Christian Ridgell	Conservation Division
Aric Jensen	Administration

Call to Order

Grego welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:35 pm. Members, staff, and guests met in-person and via Zoom.

Approval of Agenda

- **Rodriguez moved to approve the agenda which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Minutes

- **Young moved to approve the February minutes which was seconded by Weber. Motion passed unanimously.**

Report of the Chair

Goodwill Estates Property – update: Young reported the local non-profit South East Rural Community Outreach (SERCO) supports the public acquisition of Goodwill and they have a long history in lower Richland County. The project is moving forward in the state legislature, with a possibility of new direction. Epps reported Richland County is not directly involved at this point. Grego stated County staff representation is needed at some point. Young stated Richland County has a potential role, but is currently undefined.

- **Advocacy – update:** Grego reported no new updates.

- **Annual Plan Presentation to March 18 Council meeting – update:** Grego reported the Annual Plan will be presented at the County Council meeting on March 18, 2025 at 6:00 PM and suggested talking to council members to make them aware of what is in the budget and changes made. There is an increase in the grant program from \$250,000 to \$300,000 and an increase in acquisition funds from 1.6 million to 2 million. Attachments included a short and long version with talking points to council members and “Commissioner Highlights”.

Report from Community Planning & Development

- **Comprehensive Plan – update:** Jensen reported they are in Phase 2 of three phases. Staff and consultants prepared a new schedule of community meetings throughout the county to discuss findings from Phase 1 (data collecting and information sharing). Grego pointed out the list of upcoming meetings and workshops were attached to the current agenda.

Treasurer’s Report

- **FY24-25 General Budget Status – update:** Epps reported no significant changes in the current budget.
- **FY25-26 Budget – update:** Epps reported all items had been turned in, including grant recommendations, and is currently awaiting administration review. County Council will start their budget process soon and work sessions will be scheduled.

Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) Report

- **Historic Tourism Marking Plan Implementation – update:** McKenzie reported the tour site list is complete including primary sites, secondary sites, and points of interest on the map for self-guided exploration. McKenzie stated rack cards, poster, and digital advertising content designs were in progress, with some refinements needed. Expected completion date is mid-June.
- **Historic Preservation Plan (HPP) - update:** McKenzie reported all preliminary reports have been received and Ethos is focusing on the final plan document. He received a list of about 20 questions needing to be answered to help the team move forward.

Natural Resources Committee (NRC) Report

- **Conservation Land Management and Open Space Strategy – update:** Epps reported no new updates.
- **Watershed Planning – update:** Weber reported the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) provided watershed atlas training two weeks ago and which was extremely helpful and useful.
- **Cabin Branch Easements – update:** Epps stated the proposal was scheduled for review by the Development and Services committee on March 20. Epps explained while the county would maintain ownership of the property, amenity development would be limited by specific restrictions. The property could still be used to generate mitigation credits, although at a different value.

- **Forestry Stewardship Plan – update:** Weber reported no new updates. Grego stated this, along with the Cabin Branch Easement, served as revenue generators for the commission, each with the potential to bring in around a million dollars.
- **Mill Creek Bridge – update:** Weber reported awaiting final inspection of the bridge work and introduced the idea of a ribbon cutting.
- **Mitigation Bank Credits – update:** Grego reported he recently made public comments on a wetland fill permit in Lexington County and they were claiming a modest amount of credits which would be obtained from the Mill Creek Mitigation Bank. Weber responded there may need to be an examination of how many credits were sold and what remains on the NRC level.
- **Broad River Property – update:** Weber reported no new updates.
- **Bates Old River Landing – update:** Grego suggested an email response is needed for the Recreation Commission regarding anticipated maintenance activities if an agreement is reached. Weber responded it is a work in progress.

Conservation Program Analyst's Report

- **Rural Tourism and Community Service (RTCS) Zoning for LRTP – update:** McKenzie reported this is still being considered by the Planning Department and planning consultants but was told it might be more difficult than expected and different approaches should be considered. McKenzie reported he is collecting more information on this matter.
- **Ganus Easement Negotiations – update:** McKenzie reported negotiations are ongoing and Administration and the County Attorney's office are aligning to agree on how it will proceed.
- **Fabel Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported no new updates.
- **Lake Elizabeth Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported no new updates.
- **FY24-25 RCCC Grants – update:** McKenzie reported both Sydney Park Church and Dutch Fork Elementary grant projects are complete.
- **Events – update:** McKenzie shared the Annual Plan Presentation – Tuesday, March 18th, 2025 at 6pm in Council Chambers. The national Conservation Poster Winner from Richland County will be recognized at the County Council meeting on Tuesday, April 1st, 2025 at 6pm in Council Chambers. The Envirothon Competition will be held on Friday, April 25th, 2025 at the Clemson Sandhill REC, 900 Clemson Rd, Columbia, SC 29229
- **Crane Creek Watershed – update:** Weber reported at the previous NRC meeting, it was discussed McKenzie would be applying for a grant to produce a Crane Creek Watershed Management Plan. A meeting was scheduled for this week with Stormwater staff, including David Pitts & Julianne Warren. Grego continued Chanda Cooper contacted them about updating an established watershed plan. Scout Motors was mentioned in

terms of what's changed in the watershed. Richland County Stormwater had implemented some Best Management Practice demonstration projects.

Conservation Manager's Report

- **Lower Richland Tourism Plan-Small Business Development (SBDC) – update:** Epps reported all paperwork and items have been submitted to Finance for this project with the University of South Carolina and SBDC. and are continuing to being work with USC & SBDC. The first workshop in the series is on March 20.
- **Richland Soil & Water Conservation District Awards – update:** Epps reported the Poster Contest winner and the event taking place on April 1st, to recognize the winner in Council Chambers.
- **Ag & Art Tour Volunteers - update:** Epps reported the tour is on June 7th and 8th with 17 sites. Epps reported they are working on recruiting volunteers.
- **Staff Vacancy – update:** Epps introduced Christian Ridgell as the new Land Program Planner and reported the division is now fully staffed.

New Business: N/A

Public Input: N/A

Adjournment

- **At 4:19 pm, Weber moved to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously.**