



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

Notes April 18, 2016

Attendance:

Members present: Carol Kososki, John Grego, Glenice Pearson, Jim Thomas, and Charles Weber

Absent: Sam Holland, Ann Furr, Margaret DuBard, Becky Bailey, Virginia Sanders, and Jennifer Carter

Others present:

Quinton Epps, Conservation Department
Nancy Stone-Collum, Conservation Department
Charlie Fisher, Conservation Department
Ken Driggers, Contract Legal Counsel
Jamelle Ellis, Richland County Sustainability Coordinator

Chair, Carol Kososki welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 3:35pm without a quorum.

Conservation Director's Report

Mill Creek

Quinton reported the Mitigation Banking Instrument for the Mills Creek Lower Tract property was approved today. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has declined to be involved in publicity however Rob Perry will make arrangements for a dedication/ribbon cutting ceremony. The conservation easement held by Richland Soil and Water Conservation District still needs to be signed and recorded. A 300-400 page document will guide the mitigation banker, Eco Capital, in the restoration of wetlands and streams which in turn develop into mitigation credits. Ken Driggers said this private public partnership could be a national model.

County Council approved the purchase of the Mill Creek Upper Tract at its April 5 meeting. The next step is to get the contract approved; it will go through committee and be on Council's June or July agenda. The financial arrangements to pay for the property need to be established with Daniel Driggers and approved by Administration. A temporary and a long range management plan will need to be developed for the property. The Concept Plan will help with developing the property environmentally.

Concept Plan RFP

Procurement received four responses to the Concept Plan RFP. The selection committee includes Glenice, John, Nancy, Jamelle Ellis, and Carroll Williamson in Planning will complete their evaluations of the proposals by May 3rd. Quinton introduced Dr. Jamelle Ellis, the county's new Sustainability Coordinator.

Owens Field

A Request of Action has been submitted to Council asking approval of an intergovernmental agreement with the City of Columbia to procure and manage the county portion of the project (trail and stormwater) and to transfer county funds to the city. The Legal Department is reviewing the agreement. These delays are placing the DHEC 319 grant funds in jeopardy due to time constraints.

Flood Actions

The applications for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding, \$10-15 million mostly focused on buyouts, are due by mid-May. Richland County will receive \$23.5 million in Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds to assist with more buyouts and infrastructure needs. Funds may be used to provide the 25% local match needed for the HMGP buyouts. Commissioners are encouraged to help develop ideas for projects to promote economic resiliency. 51% of the CDBG-DR money will be spent in low to moderate income communities. Although the funds have been awarded, the county must wait on the parameters to be published in the Federal Register. Glenice asked about how regular CDBG funds are spent; Quinton said he would send her links to that information.

Carol reported the meeting dates for the Blue Ribbon Flood Committee are May 5, June 9, June 23 and July 14. The committee meets from 2-4pm in the county's 4th floor conference room. A Greenway Advisory Meeting will be held April 25 in the Transportation Penny Offices. With regard to Gills Creek Section A Greenway, Penny staff have been meeting with homeowner groups on the west side of the creek and they are receptive to placement of the trail there.

Conservation Coordinator's Report

Slave Dwelling Conference

One of the FY17 Historic Preservation grant recommendations was sponsorship of The Slave Dwelling Conference scheduled for September 19-21 at the Columbia Convention Center. Nancy is part of the planning committee and will review 31 proposals for session presentations. An effort will be made to ensure USC is involved in the conference, including a field visit to the campus. Glenice said she and Jim are working independently to notify others who might be interested in attending the Slave Dwelling Conference.

Forfeited Land Parcel

The owner of a one-acre parcel adjacent to the old Zorba's property on Decker Blvd. stopped paying property tax on the tract several years ago with the result that the property has reverted to the Forfeited Land Commission. This parcel is landlocked, has wetlands, and Jackson Creek flows through it (see attached map). Acquisition of the property would prevent commercial development and advance the potential for developing a walking trail near Jackson Creek. A Request of Action has been sent to Council to move ownership of the property from the Forfeited Land Commission into Richland County's name.

Nancy is scheduled to meet with Councilman Manning at the Rice Creek Farms property discussed at a previous meeting.

Grants Update

Quarterly reports were due last Friday. Several grant payment requests have already been received. Grantees have been made aware all work must be completed by June 30 and no roll over of funds into FY17 will be approved. A tour will be planned for RCCC members to see the work done at the Heathwood Hall garden, Camp Discovery, and St. Mark's Church. A community meeting for the nomination of

Melrose Heights as a National Historic District is scheduled for June 13. Ribbon cuttings are expected in June for Sesqui and Harbison projects.

Events

The Wine for Water Gills Creek fundraiser is scheduled for April 20; April 21-22 is The Reconstruction Era: History & Public Memory Conference; and the State Historic Preservation Conference is April 22.

Treasurer's Report

Nancy reported the \$20,000 Gills Creek Watershed Association grant funding has been transferred to Professional Services for the Owens Field project.

Conservation Committee Report

John reported Ted Hopkins is interested in granting another easement on approximately 190 acres in Lower Richland. Although not contiguous to the Mill Creek property, it is close by and contains wetlands, uplands, and a stream that joins Mill Creek. The committee will evaluate the property more closely. John submitted comments on the Dominion Gas Line project for the Friends of Congaree Swamp. DNR also commented and EPA indicated there should be a stricter permitting process. Of concern is the use of conventional boring to cross creeks rather than horizontal directional drilling. Most of the private concerns have been handled separately.

Palmetto Utilities' discharge into Spears Creek is on Council's agenda for tomorrow and will be discussed in Executive Session since it is a contractual matter. Andy Yasinsac with the Sierra Club submitted comments to Council which Councilmember Dixon sent out to some constituents, including Jim Thomas. Quinton relayed that the size of the discharge has been reduced and is moved back to Kershaw County. A major part of the problem is that Palmetto Utilities accepted 2 million gallons/day from the city of Columbia and does not want to build a pipeline to the Wateree for which they have a permit. Glenice raised the concern that RCCC is frequently asked to review problematic situations and provide counsel, then is ignored and not informed of final decisions. Quinton pointed out that our advice in October did have an effect because Council did not approve the original request to discharge in Richland County. Carol requested a brief summary and talking points regarding RCCC's concerns and what members should focus on with their Council representatives.

The meeting ended at 5pm with no actions having been taken.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlie Fisher
Administrative Assistant