



2020 Hampton Street · Room 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204
(803) 576-2080
January 22, 2024
4th Floor Conference Room
January Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Commissioner	District	Present
Charles Weber	1	Yes
James Young	2	Yes
Wayman Stover	3	Yes
Glenice Pearson	4	Yes
Kip Dillihay	5	Yes
John Grego	6	Yes
Robert Squirewell	7	Yes
Deborah DePaoli	8	Yes
Khali Gallman	9	Yes
Darrell Jackson Jr.	10	No
Gail Rodriguez	11	No

Staff & Visitors	Affiliation
John McKenzie	Conservation Division
Val Morris	Conservation Division
Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
Aric Jensen	Assistant County Administrator

Call to Order

Grego welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:32 pm. Members, staff, and guests met in-person or by Zoom.

Approval of Agenda

- ⇒ **Weber moved to amend the agenda to add the Mill Creek Bridge proposal as an action item which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Minutes

- ⇒ **Young moved to approve November minutes which was seconded by Stover. Motion passed unanimously.**

Report of the Chair

- **Officer Elections – action item:** Elections for Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC).
- ⇒ **Weber moved to retain the slate of officers from the previous year which was seconded by Stover. Motion passed unanimously.**
 - **John Grego, RCCC, Chair**
 - **Khali Gallman, Historic Preservation Committee, Chair**
 - **Charles Weber, Natural Resource Committee, Chair**
 - **Robert Squirewell, RCCC, Treasurer**

- **Rules of Procedure – action item:** Grego reported the DRAFT Rules of Procedure need to be updated to provide for the current names of the RCCC committees and other items.

⇒ **Young moved to approve the Rules of Procedure as amended which was seconded by Stover. Motion passed unanimously.**

- **Congaree Biosphere Region - update:** Grego reported the Congaree Biosphere Region is getting closer to adopting their by-laws. Additionally, he mentioned the 2024 Congaree Research Symposium which features Congaree Biosphere Region will take place on February 1st through February 2nd 2024. In conclusion, Grego reported he along with others will arrange a lunch or dinner with Cliff McCreedy, the Science and Stewardship Coordinator for National Park Service who is a supporter of the Lower Richland Tourism Plan (LRTP).
- **Greenway Advisory Committee - update:** Grego reported Permit approvals/plans for the Crane Creek Greenway have been submitted to City of Columbia, DHEC and Army Corps of Engineer. In addition, access points, Devine Street crossing at Crowson Road and dedicated right-of-way were discussed for the Gills Creek Greenway.
- **Columbia Rowing Club Operating Agreement:** Grego reported the agreement was approved by County Council and has made its way up to administration for the signature process.
- **Advocacy – update:** Stover, Dilihay, Grego and Gallman reported they spoke with councilmembers giving them updates about the projects with the RCCC.

Report from Community Planning & Development

- **Land Development Code-Remapping Restart – update:** Jensen reported a draft of the Olympia Historic Plan is being viewed by different organizations like the City of Columbia and Richland County Planning and Zoning Board for their input. Jensen also commended RCCC for their efforts with the Historic Preservation Plan (HPP).

Treasurer’s Report

- **FY23–24 General Budget – update:** Squirewell reported money was moved in the budget, (line items 529500 and 531400) to help with upkeep and landscaping for Pinewood Lake Park and to purchase a tractor. No other major changes were made to the budget.
- **FY24-25 Proposed Budget – update:** Epps reported the proposed FY24-25 budget is similar to last year, however he will add line items for the Lower Richland Tourism Plan Implementation, and remove items for Historic Preservation Plan (HPP), Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan (HTMP) Implementation, Mill Creek Bridge Replacement. In conclusion, he spoke about the work in progress for purchasing the Cabin Branch properties

Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) Report

- **HTMP Implementation RFP – action item:**

- ⇒ **Gallman moved to proceed with the HTMP Implementation which was seconded by Weber. Motion passed unanimously.**

There was discussion about the urgency in moving forward with the implementation to avoid losing the funds for the project. Pearson stated she felt the committee wasn't given ample time to discuss the plan especially during the December holidays. McKenzie stated the HTMP was on the agenda as an action plan since last March and was included in the FY23-24 budget.

- **Historic Preservation Plan RFP – action item:**

- ⇒ **Gallman moved to proceed with the HPP which was seconded by Weber. Motion passed. Pearson and Squirewell opposed the vote stating they support the plan but disagree with some of the verbiage.**

- **Cemetery Protection Ordinance – action item:**

- ⇒ **Gallman moved to proceed with the Cemetery Protection Ordinance which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously.**

Natural Resources Committee (NRC) Report

- **Forestry Stewardship Plan – action item:**

- ⇒ **Weber moved to proceed with the Forestry Stewardship Plan which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously.**

- **Mill Creek Bridge – action item:** Epps reported he budgeted the replacement cost to be about \$700,000.00, after the solicitation was done the lowest bid came in at \$1,145,479.00. Epps proposed transferring \$445,149.00 from the Acquisition budget the Construction budget for the replacement of the Mill Creek Bridge.

- ⇒ **Weber moved to accept the proposal Epps made for the replacement of the Mill Creek Bridge which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously.**

- **Scout Motors – update:** Weber reported Scout Motors has received their permits from the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE), they will resume development at the site.
- **Potential Property Purchase – update:** Weber reported still a work in progress.
- **Bates Old River – update:** Grego reported he put together a draft email for the staff to review regarding the Columbia Rowing Club and Richland County Recreation Commission (RCRC).
- **Mitigation Bank Credits – update:** Weber reported still a work in progress.

Conservation Program Analyst's Report

- **Fabel Easement – update:** McKenzie reported still a work in progress no new updates.
- **Lake Elizabeth Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported still a work in progress no new updates.
- **Benedict College grant – update:** McKenzie reported the project is completed.
- **FY23-24 RCCC Grants – update:** McKenzie reported all of the grantee’s submitted their quarterly reports on time and everyone is on track.
- **Zoom Grant Evaluation Training – update:** McKenzie reported he created a document to be sent out with links on how to review grants.
- **Events – update:** McKenzie report COACH Documentary will be premiered on Saturday, March 2,2024 at Trinity Baptist Church, 2521 Richland Street, Columbia, SC.

⇒ **Grego moved to extend the meeting by 10 minutes which was seconded by Weber. Motion passed unanimously.**

Conservation Manager’s Report

- **Annual Work Plan – action item:** Epps reported Grego will present the Annual Work Plan to County Council on March 19, 2024. Epps gave a brief overview of the items Grego will cover during the presentation.

⇒ **Weber moved to approve the Annual Work Plan which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously.**

- **Staff Vacancy - update:** Epps reported he had an applicant for the Land Planner position, however the applicant declined the offer. He also reported Chelsea Holliday has been hired as the new Administrative Assistant, with a start date of February 12, 2024. In addition, he reported in conjunction with the Planning Department he was able to hire a Sustainability Planner, Jessica Thompson who will start the same date as Holliday.
- **New Business:** Grego reported on the behalf of RCCC he purchased three trees in honor of Mildred Myers, a former commissioner who passed away in November 2023.

- **Public Input:** None reported

- **Adjournment:**

⇒ **At 5:06 pm, Weber moved to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted, Val Morris