



**2020 Hampton Street • Room 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204
(803) 576-2080
October 21, 2024
4th Floor Conference Room
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	Yes
Vacant	8	
Khali Gallman	9	Yes
Kendrick Scott	10	Yes
Gail Rodriguez	11	Yes

Staff & Visitors	Affiliation
Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
John McKenzie	Conservation Division
Jessica Thompson	Conservation Division
Aric Jensen	Administration
Synithia Williams	Planning & Development
Geonard Price	Planning & Development
Matthew Smith	Planning & Development

Call to Order

Grego welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:31 pm. Members, staff, and guests met in-person and via Zoom.

Approval of Agenda

⇒ **Dillihay moved to approve the agenda which was seconded by Stover. Motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Minutes

⇒ **Weber moved to approve the September minutes which was seconded by Stover. Motion passed unanimously.**

Comprehensive Plan Presentation

Comprehensive Planner Smith presented an overview of the recently started planning process. Smith explained the State requirements and elements as well as the future land use maps and designations. A process overview chart showed the three phases, including the Community Engagement and Public Forum input opportunities. Smith was asked about stakeholder input regarding the Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC). He assured the group the RCCC would be a key stakeholder.

Report of the Chair

- **Goodwill Estates Property – update:** Young reported Congressman Clyburn would like to visit after the election. Young stated the property owner is not pushing the sale and wants to give this process time to develop. Young shared he was told the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has requested an appraisal of the property.
- **Congaree Action Now Historical Marker – update:** Congaree National Park will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2026. Grego reported he submitted an application to the S.C. Department of Archives and History (SCDAH) for a historical marker to note the 1975 Congaree Action Now rally which galvanized support for the park.
- **Advocacy – update:** No updates were provided.

Report from Community Planning & Development

- **Administration – update:** Williams encouraged the RCCC to spread the word about upcoming Comprehensive Plan public meetings. Williams explained proposed impact fees for developers are to help cover the County’s costs for new developments. Williams reported on Councilmember Terracio’s proposed motion for a moratorium on rezoning/construction in the Olympia community until the overlay district is created there.

Treasurer’s Report

- **FY24-25 General Budget Status – update:** Squirewell reported 31% of budget has been spent in the first 1/3 of the year.

Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) Report

- **Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan Implementation – update:** Gallman reported the Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan contract award is still in the approval process.
- **Historic Preservation Plan – update:** Gallman reported she and Grego met with Ethos Preservation and provided their input. McKenzie explained Ethos Preservation is sending in documents as required in the Scope of Services and they were included with the agenda.
- **African American Tourism Conference – update:** Gallman stated she attended the Charleston and Greenville conferences and they were similar. Epps shared South Carolina African American Tourism visitor spending numbers and popular activities.

Natural Resources Committee (NRC) Report

- **Conservation Lands Master Plans – update:** No updates were provided.
- **Cabin Branch Easements – update:** No updates were provided.
- **Forestry Stewardship Plan – update:** Epps stated the Land Program Planner position is open.

- **Rural Tourism and Community Service (RTCS) Zoning for LRTP – update:** No updates were provided.
- **Mill Creek Bridge – update:** Epps shared photos of the bridge foundations being installed recently.
- **Mitigation Bank Credits – update:** No updates were provided.
- **Broad River Property – update:** Epps shared the property was closed due to downed trees.
- **Bates Old River Landing – update:** No updates were provided.

Conservation Program Analyst’s Report

- **FY25-26 Grant funding increase – action item:** McKenzie shared information on all past grant requests, awards, and millage rate revenue. There was discussion of changes in individual maximum grant awards but no changes were approved.
- ⇒ **Weber moved to increase RCCC total grant allocation to \$300,000 annually which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **Ganus Easement Negotiations – update:** McKenzie stated the meeting to begin negotiations has to be rescheduled.
 - **Cemetery/Easement Notifications – update:** Price reported the Planning and Development Department will begin referring to the internal GIS map layers to ensure plan reviewers identify cemeteries and conservation easements during the review process before work can begin. Price stated the new Cemetery Ordinance will also be a useful new tool for protection. Williams suggested this step can be added to a pre-submittal meeting checklist. Williams explained the ETrakit in-house developers are no longer with the County and making changes now requires contracting out the work.
 - **Fabel Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie stated he has not heard back from Fabel about the easement draft sent for his review.
 - **Lake Elizabeth Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported he has provided the draft easement to the Lake Elizabeth Home Owners Association for their review and awaits their response.
 - **FY24-25 RCCC Grants – update:** McKenzie stated all FY24-25 RCCC grant recipients submitted their 1st Quarterly report and no significant issues were reported.
 - **Events – update:** McKenzie reminded commissioners of the Holiday Drop-In on December 3 from 4:30-6 pm in the 3rd floor Atrium. The SC Farmer Resource Rodeo is January 30, 2025, 9am to 4:30 pm at Senate’s End, 316 Senate St. Columbia.

Conservation Manager's Report

- **Small Business Development Center:** Epps reported staff is working with USC's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to determine how to promote small businesses in Lower Richland, focusing on agricultural and tourism related businesses. Staff and SBDC have created a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to fund programs and workshops and are considering grants for additional funding. The MOA is being reviewed by the County Attorney's office.
- **Staff Vacancy – update:** Epps reported the Land Planner position is open. The Administrative Assistant position has been filled and will start in November. Interviews are continuing to fill the Conservation Education Analyst position.
- **Property Report – update:** Epps delivered a report of damage to RCCC properties as a result of the recent hurricane. Epps has already removed 35 blockages from fallen trees from Mill Creek roadways. Several trees down at the Broad River property have required it to be closed until removal.

New Business: N/A

Public Input: N/A

Adjournment

- ⇒ **At 5:00 pm, Squirewell moved to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted, John McKenzie