



2020 Hampton Street • Room 3063A
 P.O. Box 192 • Columbia, SC 29202
 (803) 576-2080

Minutes
January 11, 2021

Attendance

Commissioner	District	Present
Charles Weber	1	Yes
Tim McSwain	2	Yes
Sam Holland	3	Yes
Vacant	4	--
Buddy Atkins	5	Yes
John Grego	6	Yes
Robert Squirewell	7	Yes
Carol Kososki	8	Yes
Vacant	9	--
Vacant	10	--
Gail Rodriguez	11	Yes

Staff & Visitors	Affiliation
Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
Clayton Voigneir	Community Planning & Dev
Brian Crooks	Planning Services Division
Meghan Sullivan	Planning Services Division

Call to Order

Carol Kososki welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:34pm. All members, staff, and guests participated by Zoom video conference due to the closure of County offices as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Approval of Agenda

Buddy suggested the Cabin Branch parcel item should be an action item due to the deadline in the letter received from John McAllister. Following discussion, Buddy moved to make this an action item. John seconded and the motion passed. John made a motion to approve the agenda as amended which was seconded by Tim. Motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Buddy moved to approve the minutes of the December 21, 2020 meeting and was seconded by John. Motion passed.

Report of the Chair

Carol stated it was time for the annual election and requested Tim provide a slate of proposed officers. Tim nominated John Grego for chair, Sam Holland for Historic Committee chair, Buddy Atkins for Conservation Committee chair and Robert Squirewell for treasurer. Carol reminded everyone the committee chairs also serve as Commission vice chairs. Charles seconded Tim’s nominating motion. Carol asked if there were any

nominations from the floor. Hearing none, Charles moved to close the nominations which Gail seconded. Motion passed.

Treasurer’s Report

Robert Squirewell reported on the budget and noted no significant changes from the December 2020 budget.

Report of the Community Planning & Development Director

Clayton updated the Commission on the Timberlane tree planting public engagement. A survey will be initiated on February 8 and will be open for 45 days. Two virtual public meetings will be held with the effort completed in April 2021. Richland County Public Information Office and the Gills Creek Watershed Association will assist in the effort. John asked what communities would be the focus of the survey. Brian stated the area would be the same as targeted back in 2018. Buddy urged caution over not recreating any controversy over the greenway since it is a simple tree planting project. Carol suggested informing County Council members (District 5 and 6) about the effort to avoid jeopardizing progress on the greenway and that it is important to coordinate this survey with the Transportation Penny personnel responsible for the Gills Creek greenway. Clayton stated he will be communicating with Council through the Clerk’s Office.

John inquired of Clayton whether or not it would be possible for someone from the CP&D administrative pool to be the Commission’s recording secretary for minutes. Clayton said he could look into it but “that we don’t necessarily have a pool at this point because of staffing challenges in other divisions within the department” and he would need to confer with Robin Carter who is the business manager to determine the availability of any assistance. Carol stated Charlie Fisher had retired in December so we are without an administrative assistant and with Nancy Stone-Collum’s retirement, the Commission is in a tight personnel position.

Carol mentioned Paul Livingston had been elected Council Chair and Yvonne McBride was elected Vice Chair.

Conservation Committee Report

John shared the Committee’s letter on the Land Development Code (LDC) which was developed during the December 14 Committee meeting. The Agricultural District comments focused on agricultural land preservation and an appendix was attached to the comments on similar efforts in Pennsylvania. Comments also included improving the Water Resources Overlay to better protect headwater streams and wetlands and to include priority watersheds previously designated by the Commission. John stated this was especially important given the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer’s rule change reducing jurisdictional waters requiring protection. Quinton also suggested a mitigation effort could be explored to allow for certain development in agricultural and floodplain overlays. Buddy encouraged Clayton and Brian to conduct additional research on the Agricultural Overlay to improve agricultural land protection. Brian stated they were looking closely at both agricultural and water resources overlays and how best to map these overlays. The commission’s comments will be incorporated into the overall comments provided to the consultant. Brian will attend the Commission’s February meeting regarding this matter. Brian will look into a meeting with the Commission, Clarion (the consultant) and Planning staff.

Conservation Manager’s Report

2021-22 Grants

Quinton has been working with Brian and Meghan to determine how to manage the upcoming grant proposals. Quinton is also been processing existing grant invoices. Buddy asked whether Commissioners or Quinton how to proceed with the use of scoring the upcoming grant applications using the Zoom Grant online program or

whether we should just provide scoring directly to Quinton. Quinton has provided access to Meghan on the Zoom Grants application. The consensus seemed to be to use the online scoring if possible. Carol mentioned the need to determine the allocations between the conservation and historic grants to avoid issues on grant funding with County Council. Carol mentioned a story in the Columbia Star on the grant applications.

Lake Elizabeth

John discussed the letter answering Lake Elizabeth homeowners' concerns about public access around the lake. Quinton will be sending the letter to the HOA in the next couple of days.

Cabin Branch Property

John restated the concern over the offered price for the parcel R24600-01-33. At the December 2020 meeting, Buddy had requested Quinton provide certain information to the Commission. In response, Quinton stated the Commission paid \$5,000 per acre for the adjacent parcels; therefore, the offered price was higher on a per acre basis than previously paid by the Commission. Quinton also found the amount of wetlands and floodplains on the parcel are slightly higher than our adjacent western parcel. Quinton was unable to find any new information on ingress/egress other than the two-acre parcel owned by Horrell Hill, LLC just north of the parcel. John's conclusion we could not justify the higher offered price. Carol stated it would be difficult to make any counter offer on the parcel at this time due to the financial situation of the County due to financial impacts caused by the pandemic and also having a number of new Council members unfamiliar with our programs. Based on the discussion, Charles moved to send a letter to Mr. McAllister to express our continued interest in the parcel due to its conservation value but are not prepared to make a counter offer on the parcel at this time. Tim seconded and the motion passed.

Commissioner Appointments

Quinton mentioned the need to fill the existing vacancies on the Commission. Quinton also provided a draft letter to be sent to Council members requesting their appointments to fill the three existing vacant positions and Carol's upcoming vacancy. He stated he would update to provide some additional information to assist the new Council members in making an appointment. Carol emphasized the need to explain the time commitment involved in being a Commissioner. Buddy volunteered to draft the letters to save Quinton's time and provide those to the Commission for review. Robert mentioned he would speak to Councilwoman Barron.

New Business

Buddy discussed the proposed amendment to the Commission's bylaws to add the past-president as an ex officio non-voting member. Buddy will resend the motion to all Commissioners which will be placed on the agenda for February.

Carol thanked everyone as out-going chair for all their work on the Commission and reminded everyone of the next meeting on February 22. The meeting was adjourned at 4:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
James Blake Atkins, Ph.D.