



Richland County Council
ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

October 22, 2024 – 6:00 PM

Council Chambers

2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

COMMITTEE COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Overture Walker, Chair; Derrek Pugh, Paul Livingston, and Don Weaver

OTHERS PRESENT: Allison Terracio, Chakisse Newton, Gretchen Barron, Cheryl English, Jason Branham, Ashiya Myers, Angela Weathersby, Anette Kirylo, Patrick Wright, Ashley Fullerton, Kyle Holsclaw, Jackie Hancock, Leonardo Brown, Jennifer Wladischkin, Tamar Black, Stacey Hamm, Aric Jensen, Michelle Onley, Kenny Bowen, Quinton Epps, Lori Thomas, Michael Byrd, John McKenzie, and Dante Roberts

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Overture Walker called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 PM.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - a. September 24, 2024 – Mr. Pugh moved to approve the minutes as distributed, seconded by Mr. Weaver.
In Favor: Pugh, Livingston, Weaver, and Walker
Not Present: McBride
The vote in favor was unanimous.
3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Mr. Pugh moved to adopt the agenda as published, seconded by Mr. Livingston.
In Favor: Pugh, Livingston, Weaver, and Walker
Not Present: McBride
The vote in favor was unanimous.
4. **ITEMS FOR ACTION**
 - a. Utilities – Cedar Cove and Stoney Point Phase 1 Tank Cleaning Project – Mr. Livingston moved to defer this item until the November Administration and Finance Committee meeting, seconded by Mr. Weaver.
In Favor: Pugh, Livingston, Weaver, and Walker
Not Present: McBride
The vote in favor was unanimous.
 - b. Community Planning & Development – Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan – Mr. John McKenzie, Conservation Program Analyst, stated they are seeking approval of a contract with DFS Creative Concepts to carry out the Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan. The plan was to highlight the African American historic sites utilizing a tour created by Historic Columbia and its marketing partners. It is a GPS-based self-guided tour. Once the application is downloaded, you can travel around the County. The list could potentially grow in the future as we gain members to the tour.

Ms. Barron inquired how we are going to recruit members so we can grow.

Mr. McKenzie responded the marketing team would like to hold a stakeholder and public meeting to receive input on that matter.

Ms. Barron stated that, for clarification, holding the public input/stakeholder meeting and adding additional members would not require action from the body.

Mr. McKenzie replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Walker inquired if there would be markers at the locations or if the app would indicate when you have reached a historic site.

Mr. McKenzie indicated it would be a combination.

Mr. Pugh moved to forward to Council with a recommendation to award a contract to DFS Creative Concepts to implement the Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan (HTMP) by producing an interactive tour of Richland County's African American historic sites, seconded by Mr. Weaver.

In Favor: Pugh, Livingston, Weaver, and Walker

Not Present: McBride

The vote in favor was unanimous.

5. **ITEMS PENDING ANALYSIS: NO ACTION REQUIRED**

- a. I move that 15% of each prior year's collections of accommodations tax be allocated for affordable housing in alignment with Sect. 6-1-530(7) of the SC Code of Laws', workforce housing and home ownership promotion requirement and Act 57 of 2023's "mortgage assistance" requirement. This allocation is to directly focus on down payment assistance for homeownership for Richland County employees, public safety, EMS and Richland One and Two teachers. [MACKEY, BARRON, and TERRACIO - September 10, 2024] - No action was taken.

6. **ADJOURNMENT** - Mr. Pugh moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Livingston.

In Favor: Pugh, Livingston, Weaver, and Walker

Not Present: McBride

The vote in favor was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:09 PM.

**RICHLAND COUNTY
ADMINISTRATION**

2020 Hampton Street, Suite 4069
Columbia, SC 29204
803-576-2050



Agenda Briefing

Prepared by:	John McKenzie	Title:	Analyst
Department:	Community Planning & Development	Division:	Conservation
Date Prepared:	September 26, 2024	Meeting Date:	October 22, 2024
Legal Review	Patrick Wright via email	Date:	October 8, 2024
Budget Review	Maddison Wilkerson via email	Date:	October 17, 2024
Finance Review	Stacey Hamm via email	Date:	October 15, 2024
Approved for consideration:	Assistant County Administrator	Aric A Jensen, AICP	
Meeting/Committee	Administration & Finance		
Subject	Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan Implementation		

RECOMMENDED/REQUESTED ACTION:

Conservation Division requests approval for the award of a contract to DFS Creative Concepts to implement the Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan (HTMP) by producing an interactive tour of Richland County’s African American historic sites.

Request for Council Reconsideration: Yes

FIDUCIARY:

Are funds allocated in the department’s current fiscal year budget?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
If not, is a budget amendment necessary?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No

ADDITIONAL FISCAL/BUDGETARY MATTERS TO CONSIDER:

Through the Procurement process, DFS Creative Concepts was selected to prepare and promote the ENRICH Tour for the amount of \$243,700.00. The necessary funds are available in Fund 1209; Cost Center 4510 (Conservation Commission).

Applicable department/grant key and object codes: Fund 1209
Cost Center: 4510 (Conservation Commission)
Spend Category: Professional Services

OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT & CONTRACTING FEEDBACK:

A Request for Proposals was publicly advertised, # RC-650-P-24, "Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan Implementation" was issued on February 26, 2024, and there were three (3) responses to this solicitation. A duly appointed evaluation team of three members reviewed the submittals. DFS Creative Concepts was the highest ranked offeror.

COUNTY ATTORNEY’S OFFICE FEEDBACK/POSSIBLE AREA(S) OF LEGAL EXPOSURE:

There are no legal concerns regarding this matter.

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE:

Not applicable.

MOTION OF ORIGIN:

There is no associated Council motion of origin.

STRATEGIC & GENERATIVE DISCUSSION:

Conservation Division requests approval for the award of a contract to implement the Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan (HTMP) by means of the ENRICH Tour of Richland County's African American historic sites (See attached Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan RFP and ENRICH Marketing Plan). The Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC) voted to proceed with this project at its January 22, 2024 meeting (minutes attached).

In 1998, Richland County Council established the RCCC through an ordinance. Tasked with safeguarding the natural, historical, and cultural resources spread across Richland County (County), the RCCC is comprised of 11 members, each appointed by a County Council member, who volunteer in representing their respective Council districts on the RCCC.

The RCCC and its staff drive the protection of historical and cultural resources through initiatives in tourism enhancement, education, marketing, and historic preservation grant programs as outlined in the RCCC's 2022 updated Strategic Plan. The RCCC has also been involved in numerous special projects documenting and preserving the County's history.

The purpose of this project is to prepare a GPS based self-guided tour as recommended in the ENRICH plan, prepared by Historic Columbia and their marketing partners. A smartphone, tablet, or laptop can be used to engage in carefully curated audio tours that uniquely deliver high-quality content and include a user-friendly interactive map, a GPS-triggered audio narration, and text/images/weblinks.

This content is accessible anywhere, on-site and remotely, and users travel at their own pace. Stories play automatically at exactly the right place, hands free. No data or cell service is required once the tour is downloaded. Audio, text, and virtual exhibit halls of images and links attract and orient visitors, inviting them to explore, stay longer, and support our mission.

ASSOCIATED STRATEGIC GOAL, OBJECTIVE, AND INTIATIVE:

Goal: Foster Good Governance

Objectives:

- Develop realistic and achievable goals
- Create a shared vision with agreement by County leadership
- Collaborate with other governments

Goal: Plan for Growth through Inclusive and Equitable Infrastructure

Goal: Achieve Positive Public Engagement -

ATTACHMENTS:

1. HTMP Implementation RFP
2. ENRICH Marketing Plan
3. RCCC January 22, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan (HTMP) Implementation Request for Proposals

Background

In 1998, Richland County Council established the Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC) through an ordinance. Tasked with safeguarding the natural, historical, and cultural resources spread across Richland County (County), the RCCC is comprised of 11 members, each appointed by a County Council member, who volunteer in representing their respective Council districts on the RCCC.

The RCCC and its dedicated staff drive the protection of historical and cultural resources through initiatives in tourism enhancement, education, marketing, and historic preservation grant programs outlined in the RCCC's 2022 updated Strategic Plan. The RCCC has also been involved in numerous special projects documenting and preserving the County's history.

Richland County boasts a rich array of historically significant African American structures, narratives, visuals, and themes that contribute to the complete story of the County, necessitating preservation, presentation, and interpretation for a comprehensive understanding of our past.

Aligned with the 2022 RCCC Strategic Plan and the 2015 Richland County Comprehensive Plan, the RCCC contracted vendors to develop the HTMP to promote and protect County historical and cultural resources with a focus on African American sites. The HTMP implementation will emphasize education and engagement for citizens, students, and tourists. The plan, renamed ENRICH: African American History Tour of Richland County (ENRICH Marketing Plan – Attachment 1) was conceived and developed to bring awareness of opportunities here to numerous visitors of the International African American Museum (IAAM) in Charleston and all potential visitors to Richland County and South Carolina.

HTMP Plan Objectives

The purpose of this project is to implement the recommendations proposed in the ENRICH Marketing Plan to provide and promote a self-guided tour of the African American cultural resources within Richland County. The tour should be designed to allow for additional tour sites and organizations to be included in the future.

Objectives of the ENRICH Marketing Plan include the following:

- Determine brand designation with staff/RCCC
- Create an audio tour application (app) designed to allow for the addition of sites when desired
- Create the website landing page for app and tour download
- Design digital and printed materials for promotion
- Prepare Targeting email and recipients
- Create video products (applicable to video ads and CTV)
- Develop geofencing and geotargeting campaign
- Create wayfinding/interpretive panels and signs and determine placement
- Develop digital billboard campaign
- Ability to measure participation
- Ensuring expandability of the tour app for growth and alternative tours

Scope of Services

Please see below for an outline of the specific services requested:

Tour creation and promotion

1. Design and create tour

- Work with County staff/RCCC to create a primary tour sites/stories list
- Develop a method to elicit community and partner input on immediate and future sites
- Create a list of secondary sites for possible addition at a later date
- Create a list of points-of-interest sites to note on tour map
- Complete the narratives for each site
- Compile the photographs or videos for each site
- Work with County staff/RCCC to determine upgrades (see ENRICH tour features)
- Create the most efficient route for the tour
- Work with app vendor to complete tour
- Ensure expandability of the tour app for growth and alternative tours

2. Create the website landing page for app and tour download with the following attributes

- To be linked from County website
- To be linkable from partner websites

3. Design digital and printed materials with branding

- Rack cards
- Posters
- Wayfinding signs and interpretive panels
- Billboards
- Targeted email
- Digital banner ads - geofencing & geotargeting
- Social media

4. Prepare targeting email

- Develop email list
- Send out email blast
- Share with partners for email & newsletters

5. Create digital banner ads - geofencing & geotargeting

- Via desktop & mobile

6. Video production

- Create video ads
- Place geotargeted video ads & streaming TV

7. Wayfinding/Interpretive panels and signs

- Design template of signs with branding

8. Digital Billboards

- Target the core markets (Atlanta, Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, Charleston-North Charleston, Augusta-Aiken, Greenville), beginning with Charleston

9. Measuring use and participation

- Provide a method of sharing data of website and app use

Deliverables/Products:

- Final design, with selected branding, of all digital and printed materials
- Method to elicit community and partner input on immediate and future sites
- Completed and published tour app
- Website landing page with app details and downloads
- Rack cards and posters
- Email address lists and email blasts
- Video/Banner ad products campaign and placements
- Wayfinding/Interpretive panels, signs and templates for future signs
- Billboard campaign and placement
- Method of sharing data of website and app use

Additional Deliverables/Products:

1. Project Timeline and meetings - At the start of the project, the vendor will develop a project timeline for each deliverable and provide to the Conservation Division staff for review and comments. Within one week of notice-to-proceed, the vendor will schedule a kickoff meeting with the Conservation Division staff to introduce the project team members and discuss the schedule and communications protocols.

2. Invoicing and reporting – Vendor will provide a progress report with a monthly invoice. The progress report will include a summary by task of work performed during the period of performance (as it corresponds to the scope of services) and will summarize upcoming planned steps.

3. No fewer than three meetings including the kickoff meeting with staff, a progress meeting with the Historic Preservation Committee to receive input, and a presentation meeting with the RCCC.

Information Furnished by Richland County

1. Available meeting space
2. Available historic resources, special project information, survey data, and maps
3. Other available information as requested

ENRICH: African American History Tour of Richland Co.

An Exploration of African American Landmarks and Legacies In Richland County, SC

Overview of Marketing Plan:

To effectively brand and package African American history assets throughout Richland County for tourism marketing and visitation. With collective and ongoing research, our teams will work to make improvements to existing sites, and seek potential development of new sites, giving way to opportunities for future tourism and marketing initiatives.

Target Audience & Locations (by way of Destination Analysts):

The objective is to promote Columbia as a historic destination, incorporating activities, and highlighting 'products' (tour) centered around African American History. We will strive to close the gap of noted 'unsure/unfamiliar with offerings' by promoting the tour clearly and effectively.

- 45% of respondents will prioritize experiences with historical significance in the next 12 months.
- 71% of respondents noted unique history & heritage as a motivator for visiting Columbia
- Historic sites are #3 of 13 desired Columbia activities

We will target travelers who are visiting African American Museums, particularly in the driveable Southeast. As well as those who are showing interest in historic sites and planning travel to Columbia. We will also prioritize and make direct links to the Charleston IIAAMC *.

Recap of Core Source Markets:

- Atlanta, GA 39%
- Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC 17%
- Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, NC 17%
- Charleston-North Charleston, SC 12% *
- Augusta-Aiken, GA-SC 7%
- + Greenville, SC

Tour Locations:

We've compiled a comprehensive starting list of 15 sites that are either currently available for visitation and managed by Historic Columbia, or 'undiscovered' sites which are not currently being managed/promoted but have potential for development and future use.

The following list runs geographically within Richland County - beginning West, running North, then South (towards Charleston)

- 1-Pine Grove Rosenwald School - 937 Piney Woods Rd (St. Andrews)
- 2-Monteith School - 6808 Main St (St. Andrews)
- 3-Bethel Baptist Church - McNulty Road (Blythewood)
- 4-Mann-Simons Cottage - 1403 Richland St. (Downtown)
- 5-Modjeska Monteith Simkins House - 2025 Marion St. (Downtown)

- 6-1898-1925-The Waverly Historic District (Waverly)
- 7-Allen University, Chappelle Building - 1530 Harden Street (Waverly)
- 8-Dr. Matilda A. Evans House - 2027 Evans Street ("for sale") (Waverly)
- 9-Heidt-Russell House (Waverly)
- 10-Harriett Barber House - 116 Barberville Loop (Hopkins)
- 11-Horrell Hill Rd - Beulah Church / House #2204
- ... New Light Beulah Baptist Church - 1330 Congaree Road (Hopkins)
- 12-Siloam School - 1331 Congaree Rd (Hopkins)
- 13-Magnolia Plantation - 427 Adams Hayne Rd (Eastover)
- 14-Goodwill Plantation - North side of US Highway 378/Wateree Heritage Preserve (Eastover)
- 15-St. Phillip School - 4350 McCords Ferry Road (Eastover)

Google Map for reference:

<https://www.google.com/maps/@34.0041288,-81.6344401,9z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m3!11m2!2sfGTSwc64RtCU2zRc0l1XeA!3e3?entry=ttu>

Design | Brand Exploration:

The Brand Exploration presented aims to encompass a unified look, feel and messaging that can be carried out through advertising and marketing of the mentioned sites, across multiple platforms, and by multiple entities.

Impending (3) Phases for Marketing & Advertising in 2024:

Priorities for marketing & advertising are represented here in Phases 1,2, and 3, according to a specified timeline and budget line items.

PHASE 1 (January thru April)

1) TravelStory's App, Audio + Driving Tour:

TravelStory's offers carefully curated audio tours that uniquely delivers high-quality content and includes a user-friendly interactive map, a GPS-triggered (or beacon-triggered, for indoors) audio narration, and text/images/weblinks.

This content is accessible anywhere, on-site and remotely, and users travel at their own pace. Stories play automatically at exactly the right place, hands free. No data or cell service required once the tour is downloaded.

TravelStory's audio, text, and virtual exhibit halls of images and links attract and orient visitors, inviting them to explore, stay longer, and support your mission.

TravelStory's GPS produces the tour in their App with collaborative guidance, feedback, and approvals from HC, ECSC & PNB, to include: locating story sites; researching, writing, and

recording scripts; collecting images; including links; uploading content to the app; and in-house testing. We will test the tour with TravelStorysGPS guidance.

Tour Features:

One Tour Totaling 15 Geotags

Mode of Travel: Driving

Tour Types: Driving economic development and tourism

Geotags: 15 geolocated story sites with audio narration, images, and text

Audio: 15 authentic, place-based audio stories; up to 45 [15 geotags x 3] mins. audio, 3-minute story max.

Images: 3-5 per geotag

Text: Audio story scripts viewable on the tour

Overlays: Tour routes and colored geotag icons on the base map

Full Production: \$27,000

+ 15% Project Management Fee \$4,050

Upgrades:

Sound Effects: 5 sites -\$1,125

Point of Interest Flags: 3 sites -\$135

TravelStory's Website Plugin™ Facsimile Tour: 2 Websites -\$500

Digital Wayfinding: 3 sites -\$450

Yearly Subscription (Ongoing Yearly Subscription Fee Coverage) -\$5,400

Full Production with 15 Sites, + Project Management + Upgrades @ \$38,660

2) Website Landing Page (to include securing URL):

Choose URL and design/develop a web landing page to house relevant information about the tour, but most importantly a Call to Action to download the App. A link to this page will also live on all tourism sites IE ECSC, Historic Columbia, Etc.

-One 1 Page branded static landing page, with provided content/images

-Three (3) rounds of revisions

-Deliverable: Sketch file, JPG Mockup, PDF

-Full development of page (Wordpress Custom Build) - Admin access to be passed off to client upon completion

Design & Development begins @ \$8,000

3) Digital & Printed Materials:

Graphic Design

@ \$150 per hour

Printed Rack Cards
500 Quantity @ \$250

PHASE 2 (May - August)

1) Targeting Email | E-Blasts | Newsletters:

Email serves as an invaluable communication forum for engaging individuals who have demonstrated an interest in history, African American history, and history tourism, particularly when promoting Richland County history tours.

- By leveraging email, we can deliver tailored and relevant content directly to a receptive audience, ensuring that our messages align with their passion for historical exploration.
- This platform allows us to intricately weave the narrative of Richland County's history, highlighting its cultural significance and especially its ties to African American heritage.
- Through compelling storytelling and visual elements, we can provide a glimpse into the unique experiences offered by our history tours, fostering a sense of exclusivity and curiosity.

How it works ...

- We work with a data company to curate a list of people interested in history tourism.
- We curate several emails to tell the story and significance of our tours and include links to download the tourism app.
- The email design can be used to reach people on the Experience Columbia and Historic Columbia email lists (duplications will be omitted)
- Email is inexpensive, creates an opportunity for story telling, and is a passive medium. People can save the information for a rainy day.

Reach approximately 30,000 people begins @ \$1,400

*Budgets are dependent on how many people you want to reach, and how often

2) Video Production (applicable to Video Ads and CTV)

Begins @ \$5,000

3) Geofencing & Geotargeting - Digital Banner Ads | Video Ads (via Desktop & Mobile):

The heart of intent lies in location, especially when capturing the interest of potential tour participants. Location not only reflects their current mindset but also unveils valuable insights into their behavior. We can harness the power of proximity targeting to captivate history enthusiasts when they are in the vicinity of culturally significant landmarks, steering their immediate and future engagement.

A combination of Banner ads and :15 or :30 Video ads is ideal. Video to tell your story and Banner ads to take viewers directly to a link that would allow you to download the app.

How It Works ...

We establish a cultural perimeter around specific landmarks tied to African American history or points of interest. As individuals' step into these historically charged areas and connect to our

network, they become eligible to receive personalized invitations and compelling ads, both while on site and after leaving the location (retargeting).

- It is ideal to create the list and perimeters 4-6 weeks before outreach (fill the funnel to retarget these people)
- We can also geotarget to only retarget to people within a certain radius of Richland County. For example, we will target people who visited the International African American Museum in Charleston, but we want those receiving the ad to be able to visit the Richland tour. The radius retargeting allows us to omit the people who have traveled back to another far away state.
- It's ideal to have a list of 40+ Historical sites (addresses) that would have relevant visitors.

Display Banner ad entry point @ \$2,000/month

Video ads entry point @ \$3,500/month

*Campaigns should be at least 6 months and budget determines frequency

PHASE 3 (September thru December)

1) Informational Wayfinding Signs:

Interpretive Panels begin @ \$6,000 each

2) Digital Billboards:

We will want to target the 5 core markets, beginning with Charleston, choosing at least 1 board in each market start.

Tier 1 @ \$2,100/month

Charleston West LHR 10'6 x 36' 64.5K2
I 26 N/S, Nexton Pkwy

Greenville North RHR 10'6 x 36' 45.6K2
2798 S. 14 Highway

Tier 2 @ \$3,400/month

Charleston East LHR 14'0 x 48'0 321.5K2
I-26, 1 mi. W/O I-526

Charleston West RHR 14'0 x 48'0 330.0K2
I-26, 1 mi. W/O I-526

Charlotte North LHR 16'0 x 23'0 135.1K2
I-77 MM 5.5 at Exit 6, Billy Graham Pkwy

Charlotte South RHR 16'0 x 23'0 155.7K2
I-77 MM 5.5 at Exit 6, Billy Graham Pkwy

Tier 3 @ \$4,000/month

Greenville North LHR 14' x 48' 172.6K2
I 385 E/S, AT I 85

Greenville South RHR 14' x 48' 218.1K2
I 385 E/S, AT I 85

3) CTV (Connected/Streaming TV):

CTV allows you all the benefits of regular television: site, sound, storytelling, the evoking of emotion, with a new very important element - the layering of data.

How it works:

We work to build a behavioral profile of the perfect Richland County visitor. The profile is built by combining data from multiple companies that track where and how people spend their time, where they spend their money, and what they research online. In addition to the data, we can layer in age and location to deliver television only to the homes of people that are likely to engage in our tour.

- When buying TV programmatically we don't have to worry about which station we air on, or which streaming service we buy. The data profile is created and finds the perfect viewer where they are watching.
- The Programmatic TV provider has access to 75% of all tv screens in the country and delivers on Rokus, Apple TVs, Firesticks, Smart TV's, etc
- Delivery takes place on hundreds of platforms, like Sling, Hulu, LG, Peacock, Tubi, and hundreds of others.
- Ultimately you land in front of the right customer, in a highly engaged environment.
- CTV campaigns are built by looking at how long you need to consistently reach people and how many times you may need to reach them.

Begins @ \$3,000-\$9,000/month for a statewide campaign

\$18,000 nets approximately 375,000 impressions, in front of the custom built audience profile
*375,000 impressions equals approximately 2,200 viewing hours of a :30 second video



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	Staff & Visitors	Affiliation
Charles Weber	1	Yes	John McKenzie	Conservation Division
James Young	2	Yes	Val Morris	Conservation Division
Wayman Stover	3	Yes	Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
Glenice Pearson	4	Yes	Aric Jensen	Assistant County Administrator
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		

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