



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

Minutes
June 17, 2019

Attendance:

Members present: Carol Kososki, John Grego, Charles Weber, Buddy Atkins, Virginia Sanders, Sam Holland, Robert Squirewell, and Glenice Pearson via telephone

Absent: Andrea Williams, Jim Thomas, and Tim McSwain

Others present:

Quinton Epps, Conservation Division
Nancy Stone-Collum, Conservation Division
Chris Hansen, Conservation Division
Charlie Fisher, Conservation Division
Clayton Voignier, Community Planning & Development Department

Call to Order

Chair Carol Kososki welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:30 with a quorum.

Approval of Agenda

Charles Weber made a motion to approve the agenda and was seconded by Virginia Sanders. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Charles moved to approve the May 20 minutes as presented. Virginia seconded the motion which carried.

Report of Chair

Carol welcomed Charlie Fisher back from her surgery. Carol said she would make comments later regarding the Fund Balance Plan and other issues as they are addressed in the agenda. She recently attended the County Council meeting for third reading of the budget and various meeting of the Ad Hoc Transportation Committee.

Treasurer's Report

Virginia referred everyone to their copy of the financial report. John Grego asked if the unexpended funds from the Professional Service line item would go into the Conservation Fund which Quinton

assured him it would. Hospitality Tax funds of \$75,000 in the last FY18 and 19 budgets have been removed from the FY20 budget.

Fund Balance Plan

Because Council members have raised questions about agency and department fund balances, Carol requested Quinton draft a report on the Conservation Fund (aka Acquisition Fund) with recommendations for how the funds should be used. Information from the Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports for Richland County was used to show Fund revenues, expenses, and transfers from 2014-2018. The balance in the Fund as of June 30, 2018 is \$1,385,676.

Carol commented that RCCC has on-going responsibilities and obligations under the fund but not everyone understands what those are. Quinton reminded members of the commitment to pay back the county for the loan to purchase the Upper Tract of Mill Creek - \$100,000 each year for 18 years plus interest. He recommended maintaining \$500,000 for the next five years of debt service payments. The other recommendations were \$600,000 for easements and/or other land purchases and \$285,676 for selected projects from the Lower Richland Tourism Plan (LRTP).

Robert Squirewell asked about the interest (2.4%) and whether the funds are invested (no, not for or by RCCC). Discussion about what projects could be funded and how resulted in Quinton agreeing to list more options from the LRTP.

Charles brought up the motion by Mr. Malinowski:

Fund balances for inside and outside departments/agencies receiving funds from Richland County should not exceed a certain percentage of their operating budget. This is a request to address this matter and determine what reasonable percentage that should be.

The motion was sent to Finance Director Stacey Hamm and her recommendation will go to Administration and Finance Committee. Charles expressed concern the fund balances could be under attack in order to fund large capital projects. He emphasized the need to better understand why the Fund exists so as to defend it with Council members. Buddy Atkins made the point RCCC would be penalized for saving funds to make optimal land deals if a percentage is determined. Quinton was charged with making edits to the plan that articulate what the fund balance is to be used for, including reference to the RCCC ordinance.

Report of the Community Planning & Development Director

Clayton reported staff was not available today to discuss the Land Development Manual but they will be available to speak at the July meeting. During third reading of the budget, Council requested a review of all capital improvement projects submitted to Administration, which will include RCCC projects (in support of LRTP). Council approved a total dollar amount but not a breakdown of individual projects. Carol asked Clayton to confirm the amount of funds and their source. Mr. Leonardo Brown has been hired as the new County Administrator and will start July 15. Mr. Brown is the current Administrator for Smith County, Texas.

Carol questioned the status of RCCC's policy to re-program Penny Greenway funds previously sent to Council. It is not on the agenda for Council's Transportation Penny work session nor was it taken up

by the Ad Hoc Transportation Committee. Carol was told by four Council members the policy would be discussed at the work session; however, Jim Thomas called Mr. Jackson and was told it probably could not be added to the agenda. Glenice Pearson also tried to make contact with Chairman Livingston.

Nancy asked about the status of the LRTP after the meeting staff had with Assistant County Administrator Ashley Powell. Clayton explained Council is generally supportive of approving the plan if the Heritage Center is moved up as first priority in the phasing process as opposed to the Mill Creek property. John suggested trying a different tack by stressing the historical nature of Mill Creek with Goose Pond featured in *Tales of Congaree* and the Mill Creek tract being part of the SC Land Commission. Council should understand just how significant the property is.

Conservation Committee Report

Code Re-write Module 1 Comments

John referred everyone to their draft letter to Tommy DeLage, Interim Manager for Planning Services, regarding the Land Development Code rewrite. The Conservation Committee met and suggested enhancements reflected in the latest version of comments on Module 1. Many more issues will be addressed under Module 2 which should be released in late summer. John reviewed each section critique.

John explained that density-based zoning is the bedrock of Module 1 which allows houses to be configured differently to provide more open space. The average number of houses per acre isn't changing but minimum lot sizes are eliminated. Although not present, the concerns Tim McSwain has expressed were brought up. He argues that a house on a large lot provides more conservation/open space than clustered housing with joint open space. John responded that the purpose of density-based zoning is to reduce sprawl, protect natural resources, and provide connectivity. Tim also fears future developers could develop the open space set aside for clustered housing. John suggested code enforcement and covenants could protect that from happening. Quinton proposed having a minimum lot size if the developer doesn't use open space standards but John said the whole rewrite is based on density-based zoning which he supports. John agreed to add more language about transition area or compatibility with adjacent development.

John commented he saw a need to expand the scope of several districts to address how to conserve important water resources, working lands, and open space. A larger discussion is needed about whether the Land Preservation District and Agricultural District should be applied to the areas designated in the Comprehensive Plan. Glenice asked how past inequity issues related to land access figures in the discussion. John predicted spirited discussions about rural residential vs. agricultural zoning and the use regulations for those districts. Buddy argued the whole county should be under a water resources overlay. Water quality buffers need to be increased to 100 feet instead of 50 feet. Several people commended John on the time and effort he put into writing the comments. Buddy made a motion seconded by Charles to approve the letter with an additional sentence expanding compatibility. Motion carried unanimously.

John made a motion to extend the meeting an additional 20 minutes until 5:10pm. Motion carried.

Crickentree

The request to rezone the Crickentree golf course from Traditional Recreation Open Space to Residential Single Family – Low Density was disapproved by the Planning Commission on a 6-2 vote. The low density zoning would still allow 600+ houses to be built on the 183 acres. Council will hear the rezoning request June 25.

Historic Committee Report

Sam reported the Request for Proposal for a Historic Trail was cancelled by Administration in order to develop more specificity and possibly narrow the focus. Carol asked who was representing Administration in discussions. Nancy replied she had asked to meet with Clayton and Ashley Powell.

Conservation Division Manager's Report

Chris Hansen reviewed the 2nd annual Pinewood Lake Park Operation and Management Plan. The most important changes relate to staffing and park hours. John asked about the Pinewood Lake Park Foundation and Quinton replied the plan says staff has been unsuccessful in working with the Foundation. Virginia Sanders said she had advised the Foundation to sue the county for lack of payment (not RCCC related). Robert Squirewell asked if the plan replaces the Foundation to which Quinton said there was no attempt to replace the Foundation and they could still be involved if they wanted to be. Reservations have gone smoothly. Changes at the park include the addition of the pollinator garden, new signs, equipment, and a new/used truck. Attendance continues to increase – average 5-day week is 320, average weekend is 167 visitors. John moved, seconded by Charles to approve the updated plan. Motion carried.

Conservation Coordinator's Report

The Forest Stewardship Plan is moving forward. Brandon DuRant with American Forest Management met with Chris and Quinton at the Mill Creek and Cabin Branch properties. The plan will be available in July. The Sims Stackhouse grant ran into a major problem because they did not first check with the city Preservation Office about changing out a window for a double door on the façade. A stop order was issued as the door was being installed. Research by city staff indicates there were windows on either side of the main door originally while the General Federation of Women's Clubs disagrees. The Design/Development Review Committee heard the case on July 13 and denied the request to remove the window; therefore the grantee will not be reimbursed for the cost of the door. The Ag & Art Tour in Richland County will be held June 29-30 at five farms. Everyone is invited to attend the Ebenezer Lutheran Church service on June 30 at 10:30 in recognition of two recent grants.

Report not given: Tim, Charles, Ken, and Nancy attended the tour of Statehouse monuments led by grantee Lydia Mattice Brandt. The historic marker unveiling for Blythewood School was held May 24; Councilwoman Dickerson and Tim McSwain spoke at the ceremony. This is the fifth marker unveiling in FY19, a record. Nancy made a presentation to Columbia Rotary on June 3, the city's largest Rotary group. It was scheduled through the efforts of former Commission member Lee Rambo.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlie Fisher