



**2020 Hampton Street • Room 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204
(803) 576-2080
February 24, 2025
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	No
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
Alexis Wallraf	Conservation Division
John McKenzie	Conservation Division
Synithia Williams	Community Planning & Development
Val Morris	Government & Community Relations
Aric Jensen	Administration

Call to Order

Grego welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:30 pm. Members, staff, and guests met in-person and via Zoom.

Approval of Agenda

- **Young moved to approve the agenda which was seconded by Stover. Motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Minutes

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

Report of the Chair

- **Goodwill Estates Property – update:** Young reported the submitted Department of Natural Resources (DNR) budget had a request of \$17.5 million dollars for purchase of Goodwill property with one million dollars for annual operating expenses. Young and other Commissioners discussed their desire to protect the historic portions of the property.
- **Advocacy – update:** Grego stated he spoke with a reporter from the Post & Courier about work on the Thompson Cottage as well as Randolph Cemetery. Grego stated there was a Post & Courier article about the Lower Richland Tourism Plan. Grego stated he spoke with Councilmember Alleyne about filling the District 8 Richland County Conservation Commission

(RCCC) seat. Stover reported District 3 Councilmember Little spoke at his Neighborhood Association Meeting and was very well received. Jensen reported on the Administration's review of the Conservation Department budget and stressed the importance of communicating potential projects to appropriate council members before County Council addresses the budget.

- **Annual Plan Presentation to March 18 Council meeting – update:** Grego reported the Annual Plan will be presented at the County Council meeting on March 18, 2025. Epps reported the Annual Plan would be given to Williams and Jensen to preview and make edits as necessary before the Council presentation.

Report from Community Planning & Development

- **Comprehensive Plan – update:** Williams reported they are wrapping up Phase 1, otherwise known as the Discovery Phase. The survey actively has 546 participants and will remain open to gain additional feedback from constituents. Williams will give a preliminary analysis of feedback at the next RCCC meeting. So far respondents have stated they would like to see sustainable and equitable development, economic vitality through the support of small businesses and commercial infill, environmental and cultural stewardship which aligns with RCCC goals, accessibility and connectivity through transportation and transit options, promotion of quality of life and recreation activities as well as collaborative growth management within and outside of the county. Phase 2 will be an existing conditions assessment and report from consultants which will be shared with the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee on March 24th, 2025. In April, planners will seek more in-depth stakeholder feedback and in May will have more public forums and drop-ins.

Treasurer's Report

- **FY24-25 General Budget Status – update:** Squirewell reported no significant spending and noted no significant spending from the Pinewood Lake Park section as there is no personnel there.
- **FY25-26 Budget – update:** Epps reported a budget meeting was held with Administration. Epps noted the proposed budget for next year includes minor changes from last year's budget to address policy changes and other items. The large changes in the proposed budget from this year's budget include an increase of \$400,000.00 to the acquisition budget for a potential purchase of conservation lands, and the \$50,000.00 added to the overall Grant program raising it from \$250,000.00 to \$300,000.00.

Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) Report

- **HPC Grant Recommendations – presentation:** Gallman thanked Rodriquez for participating in the grant presentation meeting. McKenzie shared a brief description of each grant applicant's project. Scott asked the reasoning behind the applications which were not recommended for funding, and McKenzie stated the project budgets, timelines, and public access issues were not well formulated in these projects. Jensen added that in his experience for profit preservations were often more sustainable than other types of projects.
- **Historic Tourism Marking Plan Implementation – update:** Gallman reported meeting with the consultants to finalize the initial tour sites for mapping and content creation.

- **Historic Preservation Plan (HPP) - update:** Gallman reported the upcoming open forums at Hopkins Park for the public to share input on the HPP. McKenzie added there are two different meeting times, noon and 6 p.m. and participants can join by Zoom.

Natural Resources Committee (NRC) Report

- **NRC Grant Recommendations – presentation:** Weber presented the NRC grant applications and shared a brief overview of each applicant’s project plans. Five of the six applicants were recommended. Weber stated he would be recusing himself from voting as a member of the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD) applications, as he is a RSWCD Associate Commissioner.
- **Conservation Land Management and Open Space Strategy – update:** Epps reported the Request for Proposal had been turned in to procurement.
- **Cabin Branch Easements – update:** Epps reported he is working on an agenda briefing for the easement proposal which will be provided to Williams and Jensen for comments. Then it will be presented to the appropriate County Council Committee meeting to be held on March 25, 2025.
- **Forestry Stewardship Plan – update:** Epps reported no new updates.
- **Rural Tourism and Community Service (RTCS) Zoning for LRTP – update:** McKenzie reported he is now attending the meetings with the comprehensive planners to make sure items of RCCC interest are being addressed.
- **Mill Creek Bridge – update:** Epps reported they are doing final inspections to prepare to pay the final invoice.
- **Mitigation Bank Credits – update:** Epps reported no new updates.
- **Broad River Property – update:** Weber reported no new updates.
- **Bates Old River Landing – update:** Epps reported Williams had provided him with a new contact and plans to have a meeting set up soon.

FY25-26 RCCC Grant Recommendations – action item: Grego stated the recommendations of RCCC and a suggested allocation put forth for the Historical Preservation Committee.

- ⇒ **Squirewell moved to approve the RCCC grant recommendations of both committees which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously with two recusals.**

Conservation Program Analyst’s Report

- **Ganus Easement Negotiations – update:** McKenzie reported the matter is being considered by Administration.
- **Fabel Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported no new updates.

- **Lake Elizabeth Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported no new updates.
- **FY24-25 RCCC Grants – update:** McKenzie reported there have not been many recent expenditures but expects it to increase as projects progress.
- **Events – update:** McKenzie repeated details for the Historic Preservation Plan Public Meeting: February 27, 2025 12pm -1pm & 6pm - 7pm -- Hopkins Adult Activity Center, 144 Hopkins Park, Hopkins, SC 29061

Conservation Manager's Report

- **Lower Richland Tourism Plan-Small Business Development – update:** Epps reported the Memorandum of Agreement with the Small Business Development Center is under review with the County Attorney's Office and Administration.
- **Richland County Homepage - update:** Epps demonstrated how to access the events page on the Richland County website by searching for "richlandcountysc.gov" on Google and navigating to the homepage.
- **Staff Vacancy – update:** Epps reported the Land Program Planner had been filled and the Conservation Division will be fully staffed on March 10th, 2025.

New Business: N/A

Public Input: Morris noted Councilmember English will be holding a meeting on February 24th, 2025 at the Bluff Road Gym about re-zoning and another Town Hall type on February 27th, 2025 at the same location.

Adjournment

- **At 4:42 pm, Young moved to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Stover. Motion passed unanimously.**