



**2020 Hampton Street • Room 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204
(803) 576-2080
May 19, 2025
County Council Chambers
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
Lacey Lanham	8	Yes
Khali Gallman	9	Yes
Kendrick Scott	10	No
Gail Rodriguez	11	Yes

Staff & Visitors	Affiliation
Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
Alexis Wallraf	Conservation Division
John McKenzie	Conservation Division
Christian Ridgell	Conservation Division
Synithia Williams	Director of Community Planning & Development
Joan Klingel	Community Planning & Development Administrator Coordinator
Aric Jensen	Administration
Jim Johnson	USC SBDC Small Business

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

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

Approval of Minutes

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

USC SBDC Small Business Consulting/Workshop for LRTP – Presentation

- Jim Johnson from the University of South Carolina (USC) Small Business Development Center (SBDC) explained how the SBDC, a Small Business Administration funded program hosted by USC, provides free, confidential consulting and educational workshops to support small businesses across South Carolina. They work closely with the Lower Richland Tourism Plan recommendations, hiring a dedicated consultant and partnering with the Richland County Library System to offer regular workshops and consulting sessions, including in Eastover. Their efforts are focused on connecting entrepreneurs with resources, assessing business feasibility, and encouraging ventures aligned with tourism—such as agritourism, food, lodging, and sustainable practices.

Report of the Chair

- **Goodwill Estates Property – update:** Young reported the Goodwill Estates purchase was progressing, with the appropriations bill moving through the legislature and both houses having approved it ahead of a conference committee meeting.
- **Advocacy – update:** Young reported he had attended the Comprehensive Plan meeting in Blythewood.
- **Greenway Advisory Committee – update:** Grego reported he attended the Greenway Advisory Committee meeting and noted concern from the City of Columbia and the Gills Creek Watershed Association over stalled projects like the Gills Creek Greenway, which faces challenges with the South Carolina Department of Transportation, Crossroads Commons, and a proposed car wash. Despite this, projects such as the Saluda River Greenway Connector and Jackson Creek Greenway are moving forward, and there appears to be support for a new project within the city. Director of Public Works Mike Maloney mentioned hiring a bike/pedestrian coordinator and a program coordinator.

Report from Community Planning & Development

- **Introduction of Administrator Coordinator:** Williams had introduced Joan Klingel as the new Administrative Coordinator for the Community Planning & Development Department.
- **Comprehensive Plan – update:** Williams reported an upcoming public forum for the Comprehensive Plan Update on Wednesday at the Garners Ferry Activity Center (5–7 PM). Three land use scenarios will be presented: staying the 2015 course, focusing development near infrastructure, and a conservation option. The final plan will likely combine elements of all three. A survey is available on the Reimagine Richland website for those who can't attend. Another public meeting is set for June 26 in Eastover. County Council will have a work session on June 4 and the Olympia Overlay District draft will go to the Planning Commission on June 2. Williams mentioned a “Rich Land” planning scenario and Weber noted a local 501(c)(3) using “Rich Land” in their title.

Treasurer's Report

- **FY24-25 General Budget Status – update:** Squirewell reported spending is on target, with \$1.6 million remaining in the capital budget. Pinewood Lake Park area is 66% on track and the Mill Creek Bridge project is complete. Professional fees haven't been used, 90% of the repair and maintenance budget remains, and there are no service contracts. Epps added the Administration had requested staff reduce spending in General Fund areas, no large items needed service and we are ramping up with our new Land Program Planner.
- **FY25-26 Budget – update:** Epps reported Director of Budget and Strategic Management Brittany Hammond presented the FY 25-26 budget and there were no questions asked about the Conservation Division portion. Council members are familiar with the program and commissioners have been in communication.

Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) Report

- **Historic Tourism Marking Plan Implementation – update:** McKenzie reported the ENRICH Tour is making great progress. Scripts have been reviewed and input had been given. Rewrites are pending and will be reviewed before recording. Marketing material had also been reviewed and remarks have been made for edits.
- **Historic Preservation Plan (HPP) - update:** McKenzie reported the first draft of the HPP was presented to the HPC. Ethos Preservation will present a revised draft at the June RCCC meeting.

Natural Resources Committee (NRC) Report

- **Conservation Land Management and Open Space Strategy – update:** Epps reported solicitation evaluations have been completed. Procurement is underway for vendor selection.
- **Cabin Branch Easements – update:** Epps reported this had been declined by the Administration and Finance Committee due to the County wanting the study of county-owned lands to be completed first. Williams and Jensen previously spoke with Epps and suggested for future discussions, having information on why the properties were purchased readily available will help as Administration proceeds through their evaluation of county-owned lands. The timing of the request was the concern, not the concept of placing the easements.
- **Forestry Stewardship Plan – update:** Ridgell reported new rates and updated contracts from the South Carolina Forestry Commission will come out in July. Prescribed burns will not be taking place until late fall/winter. Epps added the estimated cost is \$22,000.00 (collected from last year's rates) for all properties with the project lasting close to 5 years to complete all burns.
- **Mill Creek Bridge – update:** Epps reported an outlook for October for a ribbon cutting. He had met with contractors and is collecting final invoices to be paid out to officially close the project.
- **Mitigation Bank Credits – update:** Epps reported no new updates.
- **Broad River Property – update:** Epps reported no new updates.
- **Bates Old River Landing – update:** Grego reported he wanted to discuss the Friends of Congaree taking on the responsibility of maintenance for a potential improvement project.
- **Strategic Plan Review – update:** Weber reported a review had been completed by the NRC and announced there will be no NRC meeting the coming month.

Conservation Program Analyst's Report

- **Watershed Planning – update:** McKenzie reported the grant request had been submitted and he had received confirmation. He expects notification on the grant in June.
- **Ganus Easement Negotiations – update:** McKenzie reported approval by County Council.

- **Fabel Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported Josh Fabel was comfortable with the contract. The contract lacks specific protected acreage and the next step involves getting a survey completed.
- **Lake Elizabeth Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported no new updates.
- **FY24-25 RCCC Grants – update:** McKenzie reported four grant projects are complete. There have been more payment requests and we will see more projects added to the completed list as they are processed.
- **Events – update:** McKenzie shared the Ag & Art Tour could use more volunteers and the dates of June 7th & 8th for the tour dates. There are upcoming Comprehensive Planning meeting dates: Wednesday, May 14, 2025 5:00 PM-8:00 PM Doko Manor (District 2) & Wednesday, May 21, 2025 5:00 PM-8:00 PM Garners Ferry Adult Activity Center (District 11).

Conservation Manager's Report

- **Ag & Art Tour Volunteers - update:** Epps reported the tour is on June 7th and 8th and asked Commissioners to continue to spread awareness of the tour.

New Business: N/A

Public Input: N/A

Adjournment

- **At 4:56 pm, Young moved to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Weber. Motion passed unanimously.**