



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

Minutes August 15, 2016

Attendance:

Members present: Carol Kososki, Ann Furr, John Grego, Jim Thomas, Charles Weber, Sam Holland, Glenice Pearson, Becky Bailey, and Jennifer Carter

Absent: Virginia Sanders, Margaret DuBard

Others present:

Quinton Epps, Conservation Department
Nancy Stone-Collum, Conservation Department
Charlie Fisher, Conservation Department
Ken Driggers, Contract Legal Counsel
Dalhi Myers, Richland County Council, District 10

Chair, Carol Kososki welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:35pm

Approval of Agenda: Ann Furr moved and Jim Thomas seconded the motion to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes from June 20, 2016: John Grego moved and Charles Weber seconded the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Report of the Chair

Carol sent around an article from the *Columbia Star* about Council approval of the purchase of the Upper Mill Creek tract by RCCC. The interest rate for borrowing money from the General Fund was negotiated down from 3.5% to 1.84%, same as a 20-year treasury note. RCCC paid \$500,000 from its Capital Fund and will repay the county \$105,000 for 20 years. Consideration now turns to funding management and maintenance on the property. WIS TV featured a segment on the unveiling of the Rocky Shoals Spider Lily outreach project at Riverfront Park funded by an RCCC grant.

Treasurer's Report

Nancy referred everyone to the end of year 2016 report. Professional Services had a balance of \$6,981.05, the lowest amount of unexpended funds ever. The Lump Sum Appropriation has a balance of \$24,205 because several grantees were not able spend all of their funding; this amount does include \$5,400 for the Olympia Mill Museum which has been requested to be rolled over. The 2017 budget shows \$761,924.00 in Acquisition which is money moved from the Capital Fund. Of that amount, \$500,000 is for the Upper Mill Creek Tract and \$90,833.00 was paid to Ted Hopkins for the Oldfield 2 and Pincushion easements. One installment still remains for the Pincushion easement in FY17.

Conservation Committee Report

The Conservation Committee met via conference call to discuss two conservation properties and approved bringing them forward for RCCC action. John reported Mungo has offered a donation of three parcels for a total of 5 acres adjacent to the 236-acre Longtown donation RCCC accepted in 2010. One of the parcels has high ground that lends itself to parking if trails are someday built. There are three schools that adjoin the Longtown and the nearby Rice Creek property, allowing for outdoor classroom and cross-country track possibilities. Neighborhoods in four council districts (2, 7, 8, 9) would be able to participate in activities on the two large properties. John made a motion seconded by Ann to accept the Mungo donation. Motion carried unanimously

A landowner is interested in selling an easement on 186 acres known as Gunrod Gut, which is primarily wetlands and is close to the Mill Creek Tract and Congaree National Park. John said the Committee requested staff negotiate a price of no more than \$500 per acre for a total of \$93,000 to obtain the easement. Ann seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

History Initiative

The Historic Committee met via conference call. Glenice Pearson reported they discussed whether to change the way historical markers are handled. It was decided the current procedure is fine where Nancy keeps a running list of people that have contacted her. Once SC Dept. of Archives and History has accepted an application, she will notify the committee. Although the history initiative deadline was extended until Aug 15 to receive deliverables, no communication from Dr. Donaldson has been forthcoming. The contract was signed by the director of Sponsored Awards Management at USC. Staff will contact USC by letter in an attempt to resolve the matter. A mobile app is being developed for African American historic tours featuring rural communities that we will want to have input on. An October event is being planned to solicit input from several people in each council district as to what the role of RCCC should be in researching/interpreting/preserving the county's history.

Conservation Directors' Report

Quinton reported the purchase of the 769-acre Upper Mill Creek tract closed August 12, 2016. PIO will assist with publicity outreach on the new acquisition.

FEMA disaster recovery grant funds will probably not be approved until the end of the year or later due to the flooding in Louisiana. Priorities have been developed on how to spend the funding: housing rehabilitation, stormwater infrastructure, and economic development. Homeowners from three communities have requested special tax districts to raise the funds necessary to rebuild their failed dams.

Staff has been negotiating the scope of work for the Lower Richland Concept Plan. Once finalized, it will be provided to Procurement for incorporation in the contract. Glenice requested a copy of the information being sent to Procurement.

The Owens Field project is finally underway and a groundbreaking ceremony will be held this Saturday, August 20th at 10:00am. Much more old construction debris has been uncovered than originally suspected. The cost of hauling and disposing of it is being investigated. The Spring Valley mitigation work is going well. The site is checked on a weekly basis by Quinton to ensure the stream restoration and wetlands enhancement are being properly handled. Commissioners are welcome to attend a site visit being planned for Sunday afternoon.

Dalhi Myers, recently elected to County Council to serve District 10, arrived and was introduced to RCCC.

Charles commented on Palmetto Utilities' decision to withdraw their request to discharge into Spears Creek and instead build a pipeline to the Wateree River. RCCC comments sent to Council in October 2015 were vindicated by the actions of Kershaw County and the resulting decision.

Conservation Coordinator's Report

SC Conservation Bank

Nancy referred everyone to their draft copy of a memo to Councilman Pearce concerning counties as eligible recipients for the SC Conservation Bank. With reauthorization legislation of the Conservation Bank being introduced in 2017, this is the opportunity to change the law so as to allow counties to apply for Bank funds for the purchase of public lands and easements. After review of the memo, Charles made a motion seconded by Ann to send the memo to Councilman Pearce and the legislative delegation. Motion passed unanimously.

Website

Richland County Administration has decided the county will utilize a single Richland County Government Facebook page, a single Twitter account, and a single YouTube account. All other social media accounts should be deleted no later than August 24, 2016. A discussion on the merits of a consolidated website versus a targeted audience site ensued. Nancy may send a memo requesting an exemption.

Wateree River Heritage Preserve

Nancy, Charles, Jennifer Carter, Virginia Sanders, and Councilwoman Myers attended the Wateree River Heritage Preserve public meeting on July 14. The meeting was well attended and well facilitated. All but one of the fall Saturday hunting dates have been moved to weekdays, thus keeping the preserve open during prime hiking days. SCDNR recently met with Marsha Hewitt, the SC Dept. of Agriculture Equine Representative, to hash out rules and regulations for equestrian use on the property. An open house will be held at the Preserve on September 10. Details will be sent as soon as staff receives them. Ms. Myers has requested RCCC and others be allowed to see the Management Plan before it is finalized. She is interested in creating economic development opportunities so Lower Richland residents can benefit from eco-tourism activity at the preserve.

Updates

The Lincoln Tunnel/ Vista Greenway opened last month. After the Owens Field Groundbreaking on Saturday, a guided tour of the Orchard will follow to show the improvements funded by an RCCC grant. The Melrose Heights National Register Historic District was approved by the State Board of Review and will be sent to the Secretary of the Interior for listing. Charles and Councilman Manning attended the ribbon cutting for the new boardwalk and bridge at Sesqui. The Slave Dwelling conference is scheduled for September 19-21 and coincides with the next RCCC meeting date of September 19. Becky Bailey made a motion seconded by Charles to move the RCCC meeting to September 12, one week earlier than normal. Motion carried. Commissioners interested in attending the Slave Dwelling Conference need to let Nancy know so their registration can be paid.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlie Fisher, Administrative Assistant