



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

Minutes August 24, 2015

Attendance:

Members present: Carol Kososki, John Grego, Jim Thomas, Charles Weber, Becky Bailey, Ann Furr, Margaret DuBard, Glenice Pearson, Virginia Sanders, and Sam Holland

Absent: Jennifer Myers

Others present:

Quinton Epps, Conservation Department
Nancy Stone-Collum, Conservation Department
Charlie Fisher, Conservation Department

Chair, Carol Kososki called the meeting to order 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 July 27: Nancy explained she made an addition clarifying John Grego's motion to move into Executive Session after the minutes were emailed. Charles Weber moved to approve the minutes and was seconded by Ann. Motion carried.

Report of the Chair

Carol was pleased to report construction on the Saluda River portion of the Three Rivers Greenway and Lincoln Tunnel Greenway Project should begin late this year and early 2016 respectively. The Land Plan Group is the design firm working on Middle Gills Creek Watershed Greenway. A Sept 2 Greenway Advisory committee meeting will provide more details. A spokesman from the Transportation Penny Program Development team will be invited to update commission members regarding greenway projects at the next meeting.

Members were referred to a single page in their packets from the Richland County Clerk of Council detailing changes to the SC Freedom of Information Act related to agendas. This information should be placed in member's handbook for future reference.

Treasurer's Report

Nancy reported very little has changed this early in the fiscal year. No grant payments have been made and the requested rollovers funds should be available in late September.

Conservation Director's Report

Concept Plan RFP

Quinton indicated he received and incorporated feedback from several members regarding the Request for Proposal (RFP) concept plan for rural economic development of recreation and tourism. Kenya Bryant, Asst. Director of the Richland County Recreation Commission (RCRC) met with Quinton and indicated passive recreational activities including greenways fits into RCRC's ten-year master plan currently being developed. Mr. Bryant was optimistic and thought a partnership between the two commissions would be beneficial. A concept plan and model will provide means for developing nature-based recreation and economic uplift for the community and is estimated to cost fifty to seventy-five thousand dollars. John Grego made a motion to move forward with the RFP. Ann seconded the motion which was approved unanimously. Members want to be notified when the RFP is posted to Procurement's web page.

Glenice would like for an Ad Hoc Committee to be created to help locate sources of funding to implement the concept plan. The formation of an Ad Hoc Committee will be addressed at the Commission's September meeting.

Mungo Tract

Discussions have been held with the owners of the Mungo tract at Cabin Branch which is adjacent to a large tract already owned by Richland County. RCCC is being asked to pay for the purchase of several acres with the remaining 40-60 acres being donated. In order to move forward, a Request of Action (ROA) needs to be presented to Council for discussion and approval. Charles made a motion to proceed with the ROA. John seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Project U

Since there has been discussion regarding easements and acquisition, Quinton requested Ken Driggers provide a review of RCCC's authority. A list of RCCC easements and county conservation properties was provided. RCCC was created by Council in 1998 to identify, preserve, and protect natural and historical resources. The ordinance gave a broad mandate and a list of ways to protect resources, excluding condemnation. One-half mil was established to fund the Commission. Later, a special fund was created for unspent RCCC funds to be used for capital acquisition purposes.

Councilman Washington has stated he is not interested in pursuing this property unless there is a plan for eco-tourism in Lower Richland. Margaret made a motion to move into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing property negotiations. Charles seconded the motion which carried.

John moved to come out of Executive Session, seconded by Margaret, which carried. John moved to approve **the negotiation of an option as discussed in Executive Session**. Charles seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Wateree River Heritage Preserve

Quinton and Carol attended the South Carolina Heritage Trust Advisory Board meeting earlier in the month at Table Rock State Park. SCDNR is running behind with their management plan for the Wateree River Heritage Preserve but have hired two employees, a property manager and biologist. Willie Simmons, SCDNR Regional Manager for the Preserve will update members at the September meeting. A stakeholders meeting will be set up once the draft management plan is ready. Nancy submitted a list of Hopkins/Eastover stakeholders to Mr. Simmons. The preserve will have a soft opening on September 15; a dedication will be held at a later date this fall and commission members will be invited.

Owens Field

The consultant for Owens Field is finalizing the drainage calculations for permitting. Once the permit is submitted to DHEC, construction documents will be sent to City of Columbia Procurement to bid out the project. Betsy Kaemmerlen from Fuss and O'Neill will be invited to a future meeting to provide an update.

Conservation Committee Report

Nancy submitted comments to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for RCCC concerning the Dominion gas pipeline. A copy of the letter is included in each member's packet. John discussed issues related to DHEC's draft NPDES permit for Carolina Water Services in Lexington County.

Historic Committee Report

The Committee met with Dr. Donaldson and his graduate student, Alexandria Russell. Dr. Donaldson is interested in hearing any questions or concerns members have which should be funneled through Nancy so questions won't be duplicated. Nancy and Alexandria attended the Dutch Fork Genealogy Society last week and discussed the History Initiative and other RCCC projects.

Conservation Coordinator's Report

John made a motion to move into Executive Session to discuss acquisition of property. Charles seconded the motion, which carried. John moved to come out of Executive Session and was seconded by Charles. Motion carried. John made a motion for staff to negotiate easement purchase price with property owner under conditions discussed in Executive Session. Charles seconded the motion and all approved.

Nancy mentioned that discussions have been held with Rev. JP Neal, South East Rural Community Outreach (SERCO), and Neighborhood Planning about a three-acre parcel Rev. Neal owns that is the heart of the historic village of Hopkins. The Lower Richland Master Plan recommends this area be a community green and potentially Lower Richland Heritage Corridor visitor center. A proposal **concerning a village green** needs to be developed for review by the Historic Committee.

October 2 will be the date for the unveiling of a historic marker about the ferries crossing the Congaree and a ribbon cutting for the Bates Ferry hiking trail in the eastern section of Congaree National Park. The marker is sponsored by RCCC but was paid for by Norfolk Southern as mitigation for the train trestle removal and the trail was funded by RCCC through the Friends of Congaree Swamp. The Curtiss Wright Hangar is being purchased by Hunter Gatherer for a micro-brewery. Use of historic tax credits and a preservation easement will ensure the building is authentically restored.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05.

Charlie Fisher, Administrative Assistant