



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

Minutes February 27, 2017

Attendance:

Members present: Carol Kososki, John Grego, Virginia Sanders, Glenice Pearson, John Grego, Lee Rambo, and Sam Holland

Absent: Margaret DuBard, Charles Weber, Becky Bailey, Jennifer Carter, and Jim Thomas

Others present:

Quinton Epps, Conservation Department
Nancy Stone-Collum, Conservation Department
Charlie Fisher, Conservation Department
Tracy Hegler, Richland County Planning Director

Chair, Carol Kososki welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order without a quorum at 3:35 pm.

Report of the Chair

Carol reported the second public meeting concerning the Gills Creek Greenway Section A Project held at Dreher High School was heavily attended. The first public meeting was held one year ago and drew lots of opposition to the plan from homeowners in the Hamptons. The revised plan moved placement of the trail to the west side of the creek. City of Columbia will provide policing and maintenance of the greenway. Overall, attendees at this meeting were generally in favor of the plan; however, bogus emails have been sent to generate opposition. A Gills Creek Greenway Comment Sheet is included in everyone's packet and members are encouraged to respond. Comments are due March 9.

Reorganization and Biennial Budget updates

Tracy Hegler, Richland County Planning Director, reported on the Blue Ribbon Committee for Flood Recovery. Hurricane Matthew has opened up additional funding sources for buy outs. Currently 63 FEMA buy outs are proposed. CBDG funding can be used for rehab and refurbishing. Third reading of the ordinance to restructure county departments was deferred to work out details. The biennial budget is moving forward; for FY18 the budget must remain within a 3.5% growth rate. Clarion has been hired to undertake the two-year process of rewriting the zoning ordinance and land development regulations to match the Land Use Plan approved in 2015. Stakeholder meetings will be held March 27-29 with a special one for the conservation community. Virginia Sanders pointed out it will be important to get the Lower Richland Tourism recommendations into the rewrite.

A quorum was achieved at 3:45 with the arrival of Sam Holland and John Grego

Approval of Agenda: John Grego moved and Virginia Sanders seconded the motion to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes from January 30, 2017

John moved and Lee Rambo seconded the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Virginia referred everyone to their copy of the treasurer's report. Carol asked for an explanation for the difference between Conservation and Conservation Commission on the report. The smaller amount for Conservation is for the Richland Soil & Water District and covers salary for Chanda Cooper and partial salaries for Quinton and Charlie. All operating expenses come from the Commission budget.

Conservation Director's Report

Pinewood Lake Management

Quinton reported discussions are ongoing with Administration and the Pinewood Lake Foundation (PLF) to resolve lingering issues before the Conservation Commission takes responsibility July 1st. PLF became the owner of the dam in November 2016 when they accepted transfer of ownership from SCALE Inc. The county has notified PLF it will not work on the dam while it is privately owned. The Director of PLF, Ms. Hart, will have to take up the ownership matter with their board. The question was raised as to what does management control mean? Quinton replied he believes PLF could continue to do events and new county personnel could manage the facility if approved during the budget process. He is working with Administration on the timeline and the transition.

Strategic Planning

Staff had hoped to obtain three quotes from strategic plan facilitators but Procurement says a request for proposals will need to be issued.

Conservation Committee Report

Sentinel Landscape Support

John asked Nancy to report on the Sentinel Landscape Focus Area. Six Sentinel Landscapes have been designated around the country. These are partnerships between military bases, governmental agencies, and non-profits that collaborate to promote natural resource sustainability and the preservation of agricultural and conservation lands uses in areas surrounding military installations. The purpose is to recognize and incentivize landowners to continue maintaining these landscapes in ways that contribute to the nation's defense.

A designation application will be submitted in late March for the five military bases that make up the Midlands Area Joint Installation Consortium, known as MAJIC, and letters of support have been requested. A goal setting session was held earlier in the month but the results have not yet been compiled. The MAJIC boundary will likely be expanded to include the COWASEE focus area. The organizer has suggested letters of support list specific activities, initiatives, or programs the partner will commit. Planning and Conservation staff will discuss what can be brought to the table in addition to general support. A draft letter will be prepared for RCCC to approve at the March 20 meeting.

NE Landfill

Larry Leblang from DHEC called John after the agency received letters from RCCC and Friends of Congaree Swamp about the NE Landfill annual report. John concluded there is more leverage than he would have thought in addressing methane gas exceedances at the boundary. This landfill does not have a buffer that is required now so they could be required to purchase more land or to take stronger remedial measures. John said he felt DHEC was backing away from delineation of the plume. He will continue to follow up and monitor the situation.

History Initiative

Glenice expressed her desire that the strategic plan would develop a specific mission for the historical charge of RCCC. She shared her concerns with how RCCC perceives its role with regards to the county's history. Glenice wants the community more involved, to give feedback on our role and performance. She suggested the ordinance may need to be amended; said RCCC hasn't had a meeting to discuss our role in history; there isn't adequate staff support; and the Commission only pays attention to grants but doesn't connect them with other historical resources.

Sam reported the Historic Committee met with Local History Librarian Debbie Bloom to review Dr. Donaldson's report in the effort to make it more accessible/usable. Ms. Bloom agreed to identify Richland Library resources that were omitted. Nancy explained the report did offer pages of recommendations for research that should be conducted. Listening sessions with various groups were promoted. Sam said RCCC historical grant projects could be added to the inventory website. It is anticipated the facilitator who will help develop the long range strategic plan will be able to determine a direction for the historical mission of RCCC and bring cohesion to the program.

Conservation Coordinator's Report

New and Current Grants

17 Applications were submitted for Historical Grants totaling \$511,954 with \$170,000 available. The total for 10 Conservation Grants is \$128,893 with \$80,000 in available funding. Grant presentations are being scheduled for the middle of March. Both Committees have evaluated and approved grant reallocation of budget items, one from Congaree National Park and one from Historic Columbia.

Rosenwald/Pine Grove events

The movie about Julius Rosenwald was well attended and enhanced by an exhibit of historical photos of African American schoolhouses in Richland County. Becky, Jim and Charles attended. Total RCCC expenses for the movie and theater rental was \$1,280. The highlight of the celebration at Pine Grove was the dramatization of Julius Rosenwald and Booker T. Washington visiting the school. Mrs. Cureton-Cummings, drama teacher at Eau Claire High School, researched and wrote the script which was acted out by her and four students.

Gunrod Gut Easement

The conservation easement is on hold indefinitely due to Councilwoman Myer's concerns with not having a strategic plan for easements in District 10.

Tree Planting

AC Moore Elementary School has located a site where a tree could be planted to honor Ann Furr.

Carol questioned the status of the LR Tourism project. Asakura Robinson, the consultant, is working on their final report which is due in March.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlie Fisher, Administrative Assistant