



2020 Hampton Street · Room 3063A Columbia, SC 29204
(803) 576-2083
Minutes
July 17, 2023
4th Floor Conference Room

Attendance

Commissioner	District	Present
Charles Weber	1	Yes
Tim McSwain	2	Yes
Wayman Stover	3	Yes
Glenice Pearson	4	No
Kip Dillihay	5	Yes
John Grego	6	Yes
Robert Squirewell	7	Yes
Deborah DePaoli	8	Yes
Khali Gallman	9	Yes
Darrell Jackson Jr.	10	No
Gail Rodriguez	11	No

Staff & Visitors	Affiliation
John McKenzie	Conservation Division
Val Morris	Conservation Division
Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
Aric Jensen	Assistant County Administrator
Diana Llaca-Curiel	Visitor

Call to Order

Grego welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:34pm. Members, staff, and guests met in-person or by Zoom.

Approval of Agenda

⇒ **Weber moved to approve the agenda which was seconded by Squirewell. Motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Minutes

⇒ **Stover moved to approve June minutes with minor modifications recommended by Grego which was seconded by DePaoli. Motion passed unanimously.**

Report of the Chair

- **Land Development Code (LDC) – update:** During the Development and Services Committee (D&S) meeting, Grego reported a motion was put forth to postpone the first reading of the Zoning Maps until a workshop on the Zoning Maps is scheduled by County Council. As a result of this deferment, it is likely the first reading for the maps will take place in September. Jensen reported County Council has confirmed the workshop, to be held at the end of August 2023. Additionally,

Epps reported County Council has decided to extend the approval date for the maps to May 2024, allowing them ample time to incorporate any necessary modifications.

- **Advocacy – update:** Grego inquired if the letter he had prepared for Councilman Weaver, explaining the grant that was awarded to SC Progressive Network, an organization Weaver had questioned regarding its liberal ideologies had been sent. McKenzie replied the letter from Grego and books partially funded by RCCC were being prepared to be delivered to the Clerk of Council for Councilmember Weaver this week. Squirewell expressed the letter should not be sent, citing the inappropriate nature of the question. Weaver was elected on a non-partisan basis and RCCC does not take into consideration political persuasions. Grego responded stating the matter needed to be addressed. Epps reported a brief discussion with Councilman Pugh concerning prospective commissioner Jim Young, who is to replace McSwain. McSwain reported, per Councilman Derek Pugh's request, Epps organized a meeting for observing fireflies at the Mill Creek property. The gathering was attended by Dr. Traci Young-Cooper, McSwain, Jensen, and a few members from their respective families. McSwain added he and Dr. Cooper will meet one-on-one to discuss the Crickentree property and the new developers who purchased it. DePaoli reported a meeting with Councilman Overture Walker, during which they engaged in an extensive conversation regarding the Lower Richland Tourism Plan (LRTP) and the Historic Preservation Grants. Gallman reported she saw Councilwoman Jessica Mackey last week and they are scheduled for a meeting later this week.

Report from Community Planning & Development

- **Land Development Code-Remapping Restart – update:** Jensen provided an update on the Zoning Map work session planned by County Council. Council has asked for the work session to take place before the first reading. Jensen also reported County Council has enlisted the services of Clarion Associates to handle the preparation of the text amendments.

Treasurer's Report

- **FY22–23 General Budget status – update:** Squirewell reported the overall budget was approved for about \$4 million and the budget is looking good. Grego raised a question about the transfer to the General Fund. Epps explained the balance has not been populated yet due to a delay with finance, however, all of the funds that were requested from Council in the Professional Services budget for the Historic Preservation Plan (HPP), Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan (HTMP), Mill Creek bridge replacement and the acquisition for Cabin Branch have been allocated.

Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) Report

- **Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan (HTMP) – update:** McKenzie provided an update, stating Historic Columbia is currently in the process of transferring all of their materials to the marketing firm to prepare a marketing strategy. Gallman shared her participation in the Destination Analyst survey, which yielded results highlighting over 50 historical sites identified for HTMP.
- **Historic Preservation Plan (HPP) – update:** McKenzie reported he didn't have an update for HPP due to the two grant periods overlapping each other in the past two weeks and he would

place the HPP at the top of his priority list next week. McSwain shared how he and McKenzie were instrumental with assisting a person from District Two getting information regarding their family cemetery, Crankfield-Lawhorn Cemetery. There was much dialogue between the commissioners regarding a cemetery on Wilson Boulevard, where new property owners bulldozed the headstones off of the property. McKenzie shared a picture dated March 2023, which showed a number of red flags on the property. This possibly signified grave markings and recent real estate marketing photos showed no red flags. McKenzie stated the property is up for sale and in the sales ad, there was no mentioning of a cemetery listed on the property. He discussed the matter with the Department of Archives of History and made an official report of the disturbance. Epps stated he reported the disturbance to Richland County Map and Zoning Department which has placed a hold on any development permits until the issues surrounding the grave have been resolved.

Natural Resources Committee (NRC) Report

- **Scout Motor – update:** Grego reported he received a generic email response from the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) indicating receipt of the comment letter regarding Scout Motors public notice. Grego also mentioned Jeff Ruble, the recipient of South Carolina Economic Development award, was interested in meeting with him and Epps.
- **Executive Session: – Potential Property Purchase – update:** Epps reported he has obtained approval from County Council to move forward with the Conservation Bank Acquisition application which is due by July 31st. Additionally, Epps reported he is currently engaged in the process to finalize the purchase of the property.
- **Mill Creek Bridge – update:** Epps reported with the new FY23-24 budget the monies were available to proceed with the replacement for the Mill Creek Bridge. A requisition has been submitted, and it is currently in the procurement process. Following the procurement, the next step would be selecting a vendor to carry out the construction on the bridge, making County Council aware we have the money and a vendor, and waiting for County Council’s final approval. Lastly, Epps mentioned he has reached out to other departments in the County to see if there are any grants available to offset the cost for the replacement of the bridge.
- **Columbia Rowing Club – update:** Epps reported on a meeting he had with County Administration, during which they visited the Columbia Rowing Club site on County’s Broad River property. Jensen reported after the meeting there were some concerns raised by County Administration about the lack of permanent personnel assigned to regularly monitor, maintain and patrol the area surrounding the dock. In light of this, Administration views it as a public safety concern and a liability issue. Epps reported there are patrols and maintenance that is being done at the property. Epps also mentioned there are a number of unmanned parks in Richland County and across the state that are open 24 hours. In his conclusion, Jensen stated Administration is working towards finding solutions to address these concerns.
- **Bates Old River – update:** Grego reported he filed a freedom of information act request from three different divisions asking for the last three years of their expenditures for maintenance on the Barney Jordan and Highway 601 landing and dock.

- **Mitigation Bank Credits – update:** Epps reported there were no changes since the last month’s meeting.
- **Forestry Stewardship Plan – update:** Epps reported he is still working on recommendations for the NRC to go forward with timbering operation.

Conservation Program Analyst’s Report

- **FY 22-23 RCCC Grants – update:** McKenzie reported the Gills Creek Watershed project has been postponed. There was contact made with Benedict College, where he discovered the college had already hired a contractor to carry out the roof repairs. As per their plan, the roof project is expected to be completed by the end of July. Lastly, Hyatt Park shared a letter with McKenzie, providing an update on the kiosk delivery. The park is planning an upcoming unveiling ceremony for the kiosk. In addition to this event, Ballentine Library is also scheduled to hold an unveiling ceremony for their pollinator garden on August 8, 2023.
- **FY 23-24 RCCC Grants – update:** McKenzie reported he will be leading a fiscal briefing for the new grantees on July 20, 2023. During this session, he will cover topics such as the expectations set by RCCC, emphasizing the significance of initiating projects promptly and completing them within the designated timeframes. Additionally, he will guide the grantees on correctly filling out paperwork and familiarize them with their various responsibilities.
- **Events – update:** McKenzie shared the Friends of Harbison State Forest Annual Meeting will be Thursday, July 20, 2023 at 5:30pm and RCCC is encouraged to attend.

Conservation Manager’s Report

- **Staff vacancies – update:** Epps reported he offered the Land Program Planner position to a potential candidate and it was declined. The candidate had taken another job.
- **Ag + Art Tour – update:** Epps shared a 3-minute video showcasing some of the tour sites visited during the Ag + Art Tour weekend. He spoke of the number of tour guests who participated and explored the various tour sites in Richland County. Epps concluded his report by sharing the Ag + Art Tour Committee (ATTC) is currently accepting sponsors and donations for the 2024 Ag + Art tour.
 - View video: [video recap of the event is available here](#)
 - To donate: https://www.paypal.com/donate/?campaign_id=9LWZ5PYVKFHT2

New Business: None

Public Input: None

⇒ **At 5:03 pm, DePaoli moved to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Squirewell. Motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,
Val Morris