



**2020 Hampton Street · Room 3063A Columbia, SC 29204**  
**(803) 576-2083**  
**Minutes**  
**August 21, 2023**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room**

**Attendance**

<b>Commissioner</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Staff &amp; Visitors</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Charles Weber	1	Yes	John McKenzie	Conservation Division
Tim McSwain	2	No	Val Morris	Conservation Division
Wayman Stover	3	Yes	Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
Glenice Pearson	4	No	Aric Jensen	Assistant County Administrator
Kip Dillihay	5	No	Geo Price	Zoning Administrator
John Grego	6	Yes	Bailey Parker	Executive Director of Gills Creek Watershed Association
Robert Squirewell	7	No		
Deborah DePaoli	8	Yes		
Khali Gallman	9	No		
Darrell Jackson Jr.	10	No		
Gail Rodriguez	11	Yes		

**Call to Order**

Grego welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:35pm. Members, staff, and guests met in-person or by Zoom.

**Approval of Agenda**

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

**Approval of Minutes**

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

**Gills Creek Watershed Association Presentation**

Bailey Parker, the Executive Director of the Gills Creek Watershed Association, delivered a presentation on the challenges and threats to the Gills Creek Watershed. The group’s protection is based on four core pillars: conservation, advocacy, restoration, and education. A notable highlight was the Watershed Champions program, where the community is empowered with knowledge about simple yet impactful measures to enhance the watersheds, insights on effective practices in the marketplace and organizing litter sweeps. Parker also briefly shared their advocacy endeavors and the importance of water quality

monitoring. She explained the collaboration with the Congaree Riverkeeper and the City of Columbia where they achieved a significant victory over a scrapyard with a history of environmental violations. Concluding her presentation, Bailey provided updates on various restoration projects and a preview of upcoming events scheduled for September.

### **Report of the Chair**

- **Land Development Code (LDC) – update:** Grego deferred to Jensen for the update on Land Development Codes. Jensen reported the initial reading for the zoning map is currently set for August 29th. Jensen stated that Chairman Walker wants to speed up the process as quickly as possible and if that occurs he anticipates there will be another work session at the end of September. Lastly, Jensen stated council can't start deliberating on the text amendments until they pass the zoning map.
- **Congaree Biosphere Region (CBR) – update:** Grego reported the CBR has reinstated its regular monthly meetings, which are overseen by Greg Sprouse from the Central Midlands Council of Governments (CMCOG). During a recent Zoom meeting involving Grego, Epps, and McKenzie, Sprouse, along with his intern Max Tirouvanziam, presented potential opportunities tied to the Federal Lands Access Program grants. The grant would greatly assist in the promotion of Lower Richland Tourism. The National Parks liaison to the US Biosphere Network is enthusiastic about the prospects presented by the Lower Richland Tourism Plan.
- **Advocacy – update:** Morris reported information from an email sent by Gallman, noting that Gallman and Councilwoman Mackey have arranged to meet this Wednesday.

### **Report from Community Planning & Development**

- **Land Development Code-Remapping Restart – update:** Jensen reported the first reading for the zoning map is scheduled for August 29th. He indicated Chairman Walker has expressed his concern to accelerate the process. Jensen anticipates the likelihood of another work session towards the conclusion of September. In addition, Jensen reported, following the counsel of the county attorney, County Council is advised to defer deliberation on the text amendment until the zoning maps are finalized.

### **Treasurer's Report**

- **FY22–23 General Budget status – update:** Epps reported the monies for the Mill Creek & Cabin Branch Tract and Pinewood Lake Park have been allocated into their budgets.

### **Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) Report**

- **Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan (HTMP) – update:** McKenzie reported Robin Waites from Historic Columbia will be meeting with the Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) to go over a draft of the marketing plan.
- **Historic Preservation Plan (HPP) – update:** McKenzie reported there are no new developments and the matter is still a work in progress. He then mentioned his involvement in an upcoming

two-day webinar hosted by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, which he plans to attend. In a Listserv created through this organization, McKenzie asked for examples of a Request for Proposal (RFP) outlining the scope of services related to historic preservation plans.

- **8909 Wilson Blvd Cemetery – update:** McKenzie reported county development permits are being held, pending investigations, before there can be continued development on the property. He also communicated he had discussions with the Chicora Institute concerning the investigation into the cemetery destruction. Price explained the challenges of cemetery protection in development and recommended the RCCC develop ordinance changes to help protect cemeteries. The Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) will begin the process to recommend a cemetery /memorial protection ordinance to give the County more enforcement options.

### **Natural Resources Committee (NRC) Report**

- **Scout Motor – update:** Weber reported he, Epps, and Grego met with the County Economic Development Director and State Economic Development officials to discuss the letter sent to the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) in response to the ACE 404 Public Notice for the Scout Motors project by the RCCC. At the meeting Weber mentioned he wanted to affirm the letter wasn't sent in opposition to Scout Motors, it was presented to show concerns in the mitigation filing with ACE and to address RCCC concerns.
- **Potential Property Purchase – update:** No new updates but the work is still in progress.
- **Mill Creek Bridge – update:** Epps reported this is still in the Procurement process.
- **Columbia Rowing Club – update:** Epps reported he and Grego are in the process of compiling an informational document for County Administration. This document will include details regarding various aspects, including property information, data collection for capital costs, considerations related to public safety and liability, as well as routine maintenance.
- **Bates Old River – update:** Grego reported Greg Sprouse from CMCG was considering submitting a grant application for the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) to help fund this project.
- **Mitigation Bank Credits – update:** Epps reported there haven't been any significant changes. He mentioned there is a forthcoming 7.6 credit sale which is anticipated to be included on County Council's agenda for August 29, 2023.
- **Forestry Stewardship Plan – update:** No new update but the work is still in progress.

### **Conservation Program Analyst's Report**

- **FY 22-23 RCCC Grants – update:** McKenzie reported he has visited Benedict College numerous of times since the last meeting and there is still no progress on the roof project. It was recommended the HPC contact Benedict College administration for information regarding the project status.

- **FY 23-24 RCCC Grants – update:** McKenzie reported no updates.
- **Events – update:** None reported

#### **Conservation Manager’s Report**

- **Staff vacancies – update:** Epps reported he has selected potential candidates to interview for the Land Programing position and will start the process of calling to schedule a day for interviewing.

**New Business:** None

**Public Input:** None

⇒ **At 5:01pm, Weber moved to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Stover. Motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Val Morris