



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

Minutes
April 20, 2020

Attendance

Commissioner	District	Present
Charles Weber	1	Yes
Tim McSwain	2	Yes
Sam Holland	3	Yes
Vacant	4	--
Buddy Atkins	5	Yes
John Grego	6	Yes
Robert Squirewell	7	Yes
Carol Kososki	8	Yes
Jim Thomas	9	On leave
Vacant	10	--
Gail Rodriguez	11	Yes

Staff & Visitors	Affiliation
Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
Nancy Stone-Collum	Conservation Division
Charlie Fisher	Conservation Division

Call to Order

Chair Carol Kososki called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:30pm. All members and staff participated by video conference due to the closure of county offices and the shelter in place order as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Approval of Agenda

Gail Rodriguez moved to amend the agenda to add an action item for the Action Plan for CDBG-Mitigation comments. Tim McSwain seconded the motion which carried.

Approval of Minutes

Buddy Atkins made a motion to approve the minutes of March 16, 2020 and was seconded by John Grego. Motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report

Robert Squirewell reported the budget was on target and there were no overruns. Both Professional Services and Acquisition have large balances. Buddy recommended keeping an eye on the budget and the Capital Fund [Conservation Fund] because the county will be taking quite an economic hit due to the pandemic.

Report of the Community Planning & Development Director

Clayton Voignier emailed he had a conflict and would not be able to participate.

Report of the Chair

Carol said she would reserve her comments for particular agenda items.

Conservation Committee Report

Land Development Code Rewrite

John reviewed the letter RCCC sent in June 2019 concerning comments on Module 1 of the code rewrite. Many of the issues raised have not been addressed in the combined module document such as cemetery protections, the need for more diagrams, better representative photos, stronger water quality buffers, and lack of Conservation Division involvement. Members discussed increasing the width of water quality buffers beyond 50', acknowledging it will be difficult. Quinton pointed out that many of the streams in Richland County are impaired and have Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) standards that dischargers have to meet, including a 100' buffer. John expressed concerns about the Land Preservation and Rural Crossroads Districts, and the Water Resources Overlay. He will work on refining his comments and consult with the Conservation Committee to present draft comments to the RCCC. It is not clear when the deadline for comments are.

Action Plan for CDBG-Mitigation

Carol serves on the Blue Ribbon Committee, a stakeholder group that met regularly from 2016-2018 to make recommendations to Richland County about flood recovery efforts and how best to use CDBG-Disaster Recovery funds. The Committee met for the first time since then in February 2020 and were surprised to learn the list of projects and the prioritization scheme approved in 2018 were not addressed in the action plan for the distribution of \$21.9 million in CDBG-Mitigation funds. Carol stated the committee was not involved in any discussions of the direction of the plan nor the construction of the budget and was disturbed the plan did not stress mitigation.

Buddy Atkins spent considerable time reviewing the 116-page plan and prepared comments with input from staff and the Conservation Committee. He emphasized the lack of public input and collaboration with interested parties in the development of the plan. Buddy was particularly critical of the mitigation needs assessment since most of the hazards (tornados, wildfires, liquefaction, etc.) analyzed are beyond the scope of the mitigation funds; the analysis and action plan should be flooding centric. John pointed out the maps are incorrect for the Congaree River and Gills Creek. Use of the Community Lifelines Implementation section was also deemed largely irrelevant since the analysis is for response, not mitigation and enhancing long-term resilience from future flooding events.

The plan provides little information on the methodology and analytic techniques used to determine a budget that is overly broad. Additional detail is needed to justify the budget expenditures, including a ranked listing of the actual projects identified for funding, the scoring criteria used to rank projects, and an explanation as to how each project builds resilience for future flood events. Robert Squirewell asked about the budgetary method used and who will be tracking expenditures. Quinton replied he understood Community Planning & Development would be hiring three people to administer the funds.

Buddy questioned the suitability of using stormwater assets, the Richland County Public Works Project Database Tool, and the 25-year Roadmap and Stormwater Management Plan in determining the infrastructure budget based on the listed criteria, scoring methodology, and weighting. A fire suppression water supply system is incorporated in the plan despite having been rejected for previous funds since it serves limited number of residents and does not mitigate future impacts from flooding. Oddly, Gills Creek Watershed is not mentioned in the action plan despite having been strongly affected by the 2015 floods.

John moved on behalf of the Conservation Committee to submit comments with minor edits from the meeting under Carol's signature. The motion passed unanimously. Carol requested Administrator Brown be copied and asked for an updated timeline for the process of submitting the action plan. Clayton had indicated through email that the May 1 deadline for comments had been extended until June 5. (Letter and timeline are on file.)

Buddy made a motion seconded by Charles Weber to extend the meeting an additional 15 minutes. Motion carried.

Conservation Division Manager's Report

Holy Grail Mitigation Letter

Quinton explained the Holy Grail project has submitted plans to the US Army Corps of Engineers to acquire permittee-responsible mitigation credits from the Edmund Landfill in Lexington. RCCC is asked to approve a letter from Carol requesting the Corps require the mitigation credits be obtained from the Mill Creek Mitigation Bank based on reasons outlined in the Corps 2008 rule on preference. Buddy moved to approve the letter which John seconded; motion passed unanimously.

Updates

The amendment to increase the scope of work for the Walden Pond Feasibility Study by \$17,500 for WK Dickson to do survey work (that was to have been supplied through the Penny project for Spears Creek Road) will have to go before Council for approval since it exceeds 10% of the cost of the project.

An addendum to the agreement between Richland County and the Columbia Rowing Club (CRC) for a five-year extension was approved by Council on April 7, the date the current addendum to the agreement was to expire. After the Council approval, an addendum to the agreement for a 5-year extension with 1-year renewals was provided to the CRC President for review and signature. The CRC President believed Council recommendations included a 5-year agreement with automatic 1-year renewal, not renewal each year by Council, provided neither party had any issues, and requested to have this changed in the addendum. The agreement contains a clause stating either party can terminate the agreement with 90-days' notice at any time.

Quinton reported he is working with Gail to develop a request for proposals to hire an engineer to evaluate the bridge at Mill Creek to determine whether to replace as is or build one that will allow for public access in the future. Bill Peters, director of Fleet Services, recommended purchasing a 4-wheel tractor with front end loader to use at Mill Creek and Cabin Branch. This would be more economical than hiring contractors to mow and clear the roads. Bill thought it may be possible to buy one for \$25,000 - \$30,000.

Conservation Coordinator's Report

Nancy reviewed a request to carry forward six grant projects that cannot be completed by June 30 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Sam Holland moved and was seconded by John to approve the extension and send the request to Clayton to move it forward to Council. The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:18.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Stone-Collum