



2020 Hampton Street • Room 3063A
 P.O. Box 192 • Columbia, SC 29202
 (803) 576-2080

Minutes
January 10, 2022

Attendance

Commissioner	District	Present
Charles Weber	1	Yes
Tim McSwain	2	Yes
Sam Holland	3	No
Glenice Pearson	4	Yes
Vacant	5	--
John Grego	6	Yes
Robert Squirewell	7	Yes
Deborah DePaoli	8	No
Vacant	9	--
Darrell Jackson Jr.	10	No
Gail Rodriguez	11	No

Staff & Visitors	Affiliation
Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
John McKenzie	Conservation Division
Aric Jensen	County Administration
Brian Crooks	Planning Department

Call to Order

Grego welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:36 pm. All members, staff, and guests participated by Zoom video conference.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

⇒ Weber moved to approve the amended minutes of the December 20, 2021 meeting and was seconded by Weber. Motion passed unanimously.

Report of the Chair

- **Lower Richland Tourism Plan Update:** Grego reminded that after the presentation to the Development and Services Committee on Thursday, December 16, a motion passed to conduct a Council workshop and staff is putting this together. We are discussing the format and date, hopefully sooner than later.

- **Annual Plan for County Council:** Grego restated that the FY21-22 Annual Plan is approved by RCCC and we are waiting to present it. It was agreed that it would be presented along with the FY22-23 Annual Plan and that's all depending on the budget cycle. Epps updated that the budget will be submitted by January 17 and we could present to Council in February or March. Council is expected to be very busy in February so we may need to do it in March. Grego summarized each section of the FY22-23 Annual Plan and explained that we try to be deliberately cautious about what we include in them. We are supposed to identify significant resources, provide a financial summary, make recommendations for acquisition, and we include what was in our priority areas for acquisition, as we prefer not to mention it by name. Under Recommendations for Development we list the RCCC grant program and conservation easement program, though potential projects are not named. The Mill Creek bridge and road design work is near completion so it is a realistic goal to have it built. At Pinewood Lake Park there are plans to enhance education programming and interpretive signage. We mention the historic markers program. Under implementation of the LRTP, we list preliminary goals like starting small business training, identifying interested individuals to develop tourism experiences, and to improve the entrance road to the Mill Creek property. We will develop the Forest Stewardship Plan and we would like to be able to cover some of the management costs ourselves. Under the Heritage Tourism Plan, we will develop the plan and it will be adopted on the conservative side and will hope to do more. Pearson added that the plan should be referred to as the Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan.

⇒ **Weber moved to approve the plan which was seconded by McSwain. Motion passed unanimously.**

- **Commissioner Advocacy Plan:** Grego stated that with the late December RCCC meeting and the early January RCCC meeting, there wasn't much time to prepare a discussion. Staff worked from a template used by SWCD members to inform County Council. The template has been customized for RCCC for the same reason. Pearson thought it would be more effective with specific projects mentioned. Grego said district-specific projects could be defined and added by staff. Epps agreed.

⇒ **Weber moved to amend agenda to include an update to the Land Development Code which was seconded by Pearson. Motion passed unanimously.**

- **Land Development Code Update:** Grego stated that at the January 4 meeting there was an item on the General Council Agenda by Councilmember Malinowski to amend the code to reflect density after constrained space is subtracted from total acreage. Crooks reported that the way the motion is written it would apply to the current Code and not the 2021 Land Development Code that we will be moving to. With the current LDC, the open space standards allow for density-based zoning where it supersedes the zoning district lot size standards. In the new code we're going strictly to density-based altogether. What the open space standards do in the current code is basically allows for reductions in lot sizes and setbacks so you don't have to develop at the minimum lot size which in a way limits the amount of lots that you have and increases the size of those lots that are developed as a trade off for preserving land as part of the site. You look at the entirety of the site in question not just that unconstrained acreage so what that motion is saying is that should be looked at.

- **Report from Community Planning & Development:** Jensen reported that with our internal staffing changes and with Ms. Thomas coming on board as the new ACA, we were changing up the way our budget process works a little bit this year so we were a little late in getting out the calendar. There is a draft that council has not approved yet that says: budget requests on departmental operating budgets are due on the 17th, the discretionary hospitality accommodation contractual and statutory and lump sum requests are due on the 5th of February. January 31 - February 17th is when the meetings between the county administrative executive team (Jensen, Mr. Brown, Dr. Thompson and ACA Thomas) and the various departments happen and we go through their budgets and then the target goal is February 24th

for the administrator to make his recommendations back to the departments. March 18 is recommended budget presentation and April 7 is Council budget work session. Jensen continued with a suggestion to hold an LRTP Drop-In for a half-hour or hour before the Council meeting with presentation boards. It would be conducive to conversations but the Commission should discuss how they want to do it. Jensen also recommended that we ask Council to adopt the LRTP as-is as an appendix in the Land Use Master Plan or Comprehensive Plan. Then the plan can stay intact and individual Councilmembers can work from it instead of the long process of reworking the plan by the complete Council. Weber asked about past successes with this method and Jensen replied that it was the best and quickest process.

Treasurer's Report

- **Budget:** Squirewell reported that there are no notable changes and we are on track with the budget. RCCC spending is at 31% year-to-date, Pinewood Lake Park is at 4% YTD and Mill Creek is at 10% YTD.

Conservation Committee Report

- **Mitigation credits potential purchase** – Epps stated there is no change to report.
- **Lake Elizabeth donation acceptance** – Epps reported he has initiated discussions and they are in the process of answering our questions.
- **Cabin Branch purchase** – Epps stated this is on track. It was approved (with a recommendation to purchase) in the D&S Committee and is to be moved on to full Council.
- **Columbia Rowing Club agreement** – Epps updated the agreement is still being reviewed by Legal.

Historic Committee Report

- **Heritage Tourism Marketing - Request for Proposal:** Pearson stated that there are two action items from the committee. The committee approved the RFP with no substantive changes. There was discussion of what the source of funding would be and whether this is an RFP or a Request for Quote. Epps stated that we will estimate an amount for the project and funds will come from the RCCC budget for this year or from the Reserve Fund. Epps added that RFPs can include the quotes.
- ⇒ **The Historic Committee moved to have the RCCC approve and submit to Procurement the RFP, which is seconded by Weber. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **Non-profit formation:** Pearson stated that the Historic Committee approved the investigation, by staff, of the creation of a non-profit (by Pearson and others) to assist other organizations with preparing for increased tourism. There was discussion of legal ties to the County and staff involvement.
- ⇒ **The Historic Committee moved for the RCCC to direct staff to investigate the formation of a non-profit to assist with locating funds and other resources for the Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan and its implementation, which is seconded by Weber. Motion passed.**

Conservation Manager's Report

- **RCCC Meeting dates for 2022:** Epps shared the RCCC meeting schedule and explained the need to move dates because of holidays.
- **Property Management:** Walker is busy bush-hogging at Mill Creek and Cabin Branch. We are working towards cutting to open viewscape at Pinewood Lake Pond.
- **RCCC grants:** Epps reported current grants are at the third quarterly stage. Most grantees have not requested payments. Congaree Baptist Church has withdrawn their grant application. McKenzie reported there was a verbal withdrawal while visiting the church and after several calls and messages left and an email there was no response. Epps added, as far as staff is concerned, the application is officially withdrawn. Those funds could be requested to roll over to FY23 or we could request to use the funds in the Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan which could give us \$50,000 for that. Squirewell asked about the delay in projects and Epps stated this is normal. There is procrastination and unexpected delays and then a scramble near the end of the process. SC Wildlife Federation has completed their bird-friendly window project at the Richland County Library and the Palmetto Conservation Foundation has completed the new parking area for the Wateree Passage but still needs a few small fixes. McSwain stated that the Blythewood Historical Society is moving forward, as well. Epps stated that the deadline for the FY22/23 grant applications is coming up on February 1 and that we will begin the process of reviewing those afterwards.
- **Mill Creek Bridge design:** Epps stated the consultant is nearing completion and will be confirmed at a meeting next week. The consultants may be able to present at the next RCCC meeting. Weber remarked that he hopes that we will soon be able to meet in person again.

New Business

- Grego asked for new business or input. There was none.
- ⇒ **At 4:56 pm, Pearson moved to adjourn the meeting which is seconded by McSwain. Motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,
John McKenzie