



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

**Minutes
 July 20, 2020**

Attendance

Commissioner	District	Present
Charles Weber	1	Yes
Tim McSwain	2	Yes
Sam Holland	3	No
Vacant	4	--
Buddy Atkins	5	Yes
John Grego	6	Yes
Robert Squirewell	7	No
Carol Kososki	8	Yes
Vacant	9	--
Vacant	10	--
Gail Rodriguez	11	Yes

Staff & Visitors	Affiliation
Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
Nancy Stone-Collum	Conservation Division
Clayton Voignier	Community Planning & Dev.
Dr. Lydia Brandt	UofSC
Charlotte Sarkar	Columbia Rowing Club
Scott Thoman	Columbia Rowing Club

Call to Order

Chair Carol Kososki called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:32pm. All members, staff, and guest participated by video conference due to the closure of county offices as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Approval of Agenda

Charles Weber moved and Tim McSwain seconded the motion to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Gail Rodriguez made a motion to approve the minutes of June 15, 2020 and was seconded by John. Buddy Atkins requested a change in one sentence under CDBG-MIT to read “Buddy reemphasized his concern about the weighting criteria and recommended revisiting the weights and conducting a sensitivity analysis to determine the degree and extent various weights impact the final infrastructure project scores and rankings.” The motion with the language change was approved.

Treasurer’s Report

Nancy Stone-Collum referred members to the financial report for FY20 and mentioned that one final grant payment of \$20,000 will increase the actual lump sum expenditures to \$214,204. The balance for grant expenditures, once the six extended grants have been completed, should be about \$8,900. A financial report for FY21 indicates general funds for Mill Creek and Pinewood Lake Park have not yet been pulled out of the RCCC operating expenses. Buddy asked whether there would be a 10% cut for Mill Creek and Pinewood Lake Park, to which Clayton Voignier replied yes. Tim questioned why the salaries line item for FY20 showed a

deficit. Quinton Epps explained this has been an ongoing item with the budget. The salary and benefit line items are controlled by Finance and based on information from them, any overage is deducted from the unexpended RCCC funds that roll into the Conservation Fund.

Report of the Community Planning & Development Director

Clayton reported the CDBG-MIT Action Plan was slightly revised. Comments and responses to the comments were included in the final document and the plan was sent to Council for adoption on July 21. The Tetra Tech consultant believes a sub-recipient agreement can be worked out with Forest Acres. Clayton will talk with the local HUD representative to discuss an agreement with the town. An amendment to the Action Plan would be necessary to fund any Forest Acres projects. The \$21.9 million will be spent over a twelve year period so it may be some time before this project is started.

Asked about plans for re-opening county government, Clayton said he didn't know of a specific plan but Richland County is in phase one in gearing up to open; however, COVID-19 cases continue to increase and a downward trend is necessary to re-open. Training is ongoing for what needs to happen for returning employees, housekeeping, dealing with ADA and Family Medical Leave Act requirements.

State House Monuments Presentation

Nancy introduced Dr. Lydia Mattice Brandt, a professor at the University of South Carolina in the School of Visual Art and Design where she teaches the history of architecture, American art, and the theories and methods of historic preservation. Dr. Brandt has received three grants from RCCC – to write National Register of Historic Places nominations for 1200 Main Street and Cornell Arms, a historic district nomination for Five Points, and to research the monuments on the State House grounds. Her guidebook on the monuments will be published next spring.

Dr. Brandt gave an overview of the more than 30 monuments on the capitol grounds, when and why they were placed and where they have moved over the years, stressing the need to understand the physical and ideological relationship of the monuments and buildings. She focused on two narratives - the Lost Cause and the memory of Reconstruction – and how they are intertwined. The latter theme reminded white Southerners of the trauma of federal interference and the “horrors” of African American empowerment.

Begun in 1856 with enslaved labor, the capitol was not completed until 1903. A monument to the Confederate dead was installed near the State House in 1879. The grounds were managed haphazardly for decades but a City Beautiful plan commissioned for Columbia envisioned a symmetrical, classically inspired plan for the State House grounds, arguing for the importance of the space as civic grounds. Shortly after the death of Wade Hampton III in 1902, a large equestrian statue of the Civil War general and governor who led the Redeemers to restore white rule was erected. Statues of John C. Calhoun, Vice President and proponent of states' rights and nullification, and Ben Tillman, white supremacist governor and US Senator, were erected in the 1940s during the Jim Crow era. In 1962 the General Assembly voted to raise the Confederate flag over the capitol which was moved to the Confederate Soldier's monument in 2000 and removed altogether in 2015. The tradeoff for removal was passage of the Heritage Act which silences further discussion of State House monuments or buildings named for historic figures on public property by requiring a 2/3 vote of the General Assembly to make changes. They also decreed the grounds were full and no more monuments could be added. Since the construction of the capitol, the monuments have been in flux, some moving as many as four times.

Buddy commented on how timely the presentation was and wondered if the Commission should reconsider its emphasis on historic programs. John asked about what interpretation is being done; Dr. Brandt replied the State House has a brochure with a map and list of monuments but no interpretation. Historic Columbia has a

virtual tour (<https://www.historiccolumbia.org/online-tours/state-house-monuments-tour>) based on Dr. Brandt's research and had offered a few in-person tours before the pandemic.

Columbia Rowing Club Concept Plan

Charlotte Sarkar, President of the Columbia Rowing Club (CRC), presented the need for a differently designed dock after two were destroyed by floods in 2015 and 2020. In addition to the impact from high velocity water, large trees are swept down river causing serious damage. CRC proposes to build a dugout wet launch which would be dug out of the land, perpendicular to the Broad River. It could be a combination of the two launches at Saluda Shoals with a ramp inside the dugout. The cost will be lower than a traditional dock and should be more sustainable but is more rudimentary. John asked about building a dock within the dugout which Ms. Sarkar said would be desirable although club members would like to see how well the dugout withstands high water first. Charles offered that Fairfield County was studying the Saluda Shoals dugout and may build one with Winnsboro Blue Granite.

CRC wants to partner with the county to draw up official design and construction plans. Carol asked if they were asking for funding; Ms. Sarkar replied they need funding to proceed with the design but didn't know how much that would be. John expressed a desire to know about permitting issues. Quinton recommended getting RCCC approval of the concept plan, then staff will contact Administration about working with Public Works and Operations to determine if/how they can assist. John made a motion to approve in-bank launch as a concept which Charles seconded. Buddy suggested the engineering study for the dugout should include an analysis of hydrology, water surface elevations, and materials to determine the best elevations for the dugout steps. He also suggested the "steps" should be oriented parallel to the "streamflow lines" to minimize turbulence and damage to the steps during high flow events. Charles challenged CRC to find corporate sponsors to help fund construction. The motion carried unanimously.

Charles moved to extend the meeting by 15 minutes. Tim seconded the motion which was approved.

Conservation Coordinator's Report

FY20 Grants Presentation

Nancy showed a slide presentation on the FY20 grants. Six projects were not completed due to the pandemic. Opportunities for touring grant sites include: re-opening of Modjeska Simkins House in September, walking tour of Wales Garden, Wavering Place visit, and a hike on the new Eagle Trail when the Eagle Shelter has been reroofed.

Historical Markers

Nancy reported there are three historical markers in the works. The text has been approved by the SC Department of Archives and History for the Olympia Mill School. An application by the Blythewood Historical Society has been submitted for Bethel School and Historic Columbia will apply for a marker for the Rollin Sisters, early African American suffragists.

Conservation Committee Report

Due to lack of time, John did not give a report but reminded members of another Land Development Code work session on Monday, July 27 at 3:30.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Stone-Collum