



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

Minutes June 23, 2014

Attendance:

Members present: Carol Kososki, John Grego, Sam Holland, Ann Furr, Virginia Sanders, Jim Thomas, Becky Bailey, Glenice Pearson, Margaret DuBard

Absent: Gary Atkinson, Mildred Myers

Others present:

Nancy Stone-Collum, Conservation Department
Charlie Fisher, Conservation Department
Ken Driggers Contract Legal Counsel
Sparty Hammett, Assistant County Administrator
Gerrit Jobsis, American Rivers Southeast Regional Director
Buddy Atkins, former Conservation Director

Chair Carol Kososki called the meeting to order at 4:00pm without a quorum.

Carol requested Gerrit Jobsis proceed with his presentation while waiting for other members to arrive.

American Rivers Grant Presentation

Gerrit and Jeff Wiedner via speaker phone gave a demonstration of the mobile blue trail website platform developed by American Rivers and funded partially by an RCCC grant. The Congaree River mobile site focuses on supplementing and enriching a visitor's experience on a real-time basis and provides an interactive interpretive guide and map. The site will be launched publicly this summer. Gerrit also passed out Wateree River Blueway maps whose third printing was paid for through the FY14 grant.

With the arrival of more Commission members, a quorum was obtained.

Minutes: A motion was made by John Grego and seconded by Jim Thomas to approve the minutes of May 19, 2014 as written. Motion was approved.

Agenda

John moved and Jim seconded the motion to approve the agenda, which was approved.

Report of the Chair

Carol reported the farewell party for Buddy at Belser Arboretum went well and everyone enjoyed touring the property to see the recent stormwater improvements.

Asst. County Administrator's Report

Sparty indicated Administration has requested Buddy's vacant position be advertised as soon as possible. Once the top 3-5 applicants have been selected, Sparty, Tracy Hegler - Director of Planning and Development Services, Carol, and John Green - Chair of Richland Soil and Water Conservation District will be involved in the interview process. It is hoped the position will be filled by the end of August, assuming qualified applications are received.

Treasurer's Report

Virginia referred everyone to their copy of the budget report. The new vehicle has still not arrived. A total of \$123,319.25 is the current unspent balance with a few more invoices to be paid from the FY14 budget.

Conservation Director's Report

Grants

Nancy explained County Council had further questions about various grants during second reading of the budget, with the result that Mr. Washington successfully moved to zero out the grants until third reading. Mr. Pearce moved to restore funding which was approved with one dissenting vote. Carol encouraged everyone to vigorously promote the grant program for FY16, especially in the unincorporated areas of the county.

Nancy reviewed the six incomplete FY14 grants that will need to be carried forward. John reported the grant to Friends of Congaree Swamp for trail improvement and interpretation at the Riverstone Tract in Congaree National Park has hit another snag. Carol, John and Nancy will meet with the park superintendent in July to determine what can be accomplished. The Modjeska Simkins booklet funded under a grant to SC Progressive Network will be unveiled June 26. FY15 grant agreements will be sent out shortly; the fiscal briefing for new grantees will be held July 16.

Owens Field

A community meeting was held to receive input on the Owens Field project on May 28. A neighborhood walk through has been scheduled to better understand how the stormwater issues affect the trail and invasive species problems. Richland School District I insists the large bio-infiltration cell must be fenced. A Memorandum of Agreement between the county, city and school district is still being negotiated.

Cemeteries

Virginia reported she made a presentation to thirty African American ministers and one of the issues discussed was the need to properly identify, map and maintain the old cemeteries. Nancy will provide Virginia with talking points and additional background information for her next meeting with the ministers.

The cemetery survey has uncovered threats to several cemeteries, which county staff and Chicora Foundation are working to resolve. Potential logging has been averted and Dr. Trinkley has agreed to visit Franklin Oaks subdivision to designate a larger cemetery so as to include several unmarked graves.

Olympia Mill Village Museum

The Development & Services Committee will meet June 24 and consider the request from RCCC to contribute \$20,000 toward the purchase of a historic building for the Olympia Mill Village. A Memorandum of Agreement between the County and Olympia Community Education Foundation stipulates the funds will be returned if the building ceases to be used for a museum and/or community space. Nancy approached the Community Development Department about federal funding for the project and it has been included in their budget allocations for next year.

Appearance Projects

A beautification and erosion control project between the administration building and the parking lot was to be paid with FY14 funds from Temporary Alcohol Sales (Appearance Commission source of funding). Since the project has not been completed and the funds cannot be carried forward, approximately \$3,000 will be needed from RCCC FY15 funds for the brick mason. Buddy explained small projects such as this one take up an enormous amount of staff time; therefore, it might be wise to contract with Columbia Green to develop and install a project for FY15. At Carol's suggestion, Nancy will contact Steve Holtschlag about his ideas.

Conservation Committee Report

Easement

John reported the Conservation Committee met via phone to discuss the potential easement of 42 acres on Long Branch in the Beasley Creek Watershed off Hwy. 321. The Committee recommended approval of the easement and purchase of development rights not to exceed \$40,000. The motion was approved unanimously.

Historic Committee Report

Glenice reported the Historic Committee has been meeting to determine what the future scope and direction should be to fulfill the historic charge of the Commission. The Committee will meet July 1 at noon to further refine a proposal to Dr. Bobby Donaldson.

Three historic markers have come in and an unveiling will be planned, probably to be held at the Cornwell Tourist Home. This past weekend SERCO hosted an event in Lower Richland with a focus on history and agriculture. Buddy and Nancy were presenters at the Saturday workshop. Guest speaker/artist Jonathan Green gave a powerful speech about the rice culture; see www.lowcountyriceculture.org

Meeting adjourned 5:20pm. Next meeting is July 28, 2014 at 3:30pm.
Submitted by Charlie Fisher, Administrative Assistant