



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

## Minutes October 21, 2019

### Attendance:

Members present: Carol Kososki John Grego, Charles Weber, Buddy Atkins, Tim McSwain  
Gail Rodriguez, Robert Squirewell

Absent: Jim Thomas, Sam Holland

Vacant: Districts 4 and 10

### Others present:

Quinton Epps, Conservation Division  
Nancy Stone-Collum, Conservation Division  
Chris Hansen, Conservation Division  
Charlie Fisher, Conservation Division  
Chanda Cooper, Conservation Division  
Kenny Mullis, Richland Soil & Water Conservation District

### Call to Order

Chair Carol Kososki welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with a quorum at 4:15 in the Mill Creek Lodge. Gail Rodriguez was introduced as a new member representing District 10. She is from Seattle, Washington, served in the US Army for 20 years, and is a structural engineer working on bridges for a company out of Texas. Quinton announced Chris Hansen has turned in his letter of resignation effective October 29. In his new position, Chris will be monitoring Red Cockaded Woodpecker populations and cruising timber at Ft. Gordon Army Garrison near Augusta, Ga. Carol thanked Chris for his service which occurred during a difficult time with Pinewood Lake Park. Carol stated Glenice Pearson has resigned since she is not able to effectively participate from a distance. She will notify Chairman Livingston and suggest some potential replacements. Ken Driggers, who has been counsel to the Commission since 2002, will no longer represent the RCCC since his contract expires November 1, 2019. County Council decided the attorney's position should be advertised and although RCCC asked Council to extend the contract until a new attorney is procured, it was denied. County Attorney, Larry Smith will serve as counsel to RCCC until the position is filled and will be in charge of procuring a new contract attorney.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Charles Weber made a motion to approve the agenda and was seconded by Robert Squirewell. Motion carried.

### **Approval of Minutes**

John Grego moved to approve the minutes of September 16 and was seconded by Charles. Motion carried.

### **Report of Chair**

Carol said she had nothing further to report. Charles questioned the status of the RFP to obtain new legal counsel. The status of the process is unknown at this time.

### **Election of Treasurer**

Councilwoman Chakisse Newton's appointment of Gail Rodriguez to be her representative means the office of treasurer, previously held by Virginia Sanders, is vacant. The treasurer serves on the Executive Committee which meets once a month by phone to set the agenda for the monthly meeting. Carol asked for nominations and Robert Squirewell said he is willing to serve in the position. Charles moved to accept the nomination by acclamation. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Report of the Community Planning & Development Director**

Clayton Voignier was unable to attend at the last minute but sent an email that couldn't be opened at the lodge. His answers are below in blue ink.

1. **Legal Contract** – At the October 1 Regular Meeting of Council, the Council moved and approved to procure legal services on behalf of the RCCC through the County Attorney's Office by way of standard procurement methods. The current contract expires on November 1.

Carol requested Quinton contact Clayton about providing a job description for the Request for Qualifications.

2. **CDBG-DR new funds** – the federal register for the CDBG-DR MIT funding has been issued (attached) and Richland County is allocated \$21.9 million. The Action Plan for this funding is due March 2, 2020 and the grant period is 12 years with 5% eligible for Administration. The Disaster Recovery Working Group met early in 2019 and identified mitigation projects related to stormwater, roads, and emergency services prior to the issuance of the federal register. The group has also identified additional housing that will be funded through this allocation, which is allowable per the federal register. The County had previously executed a task order for Tetra Tech, the County's consultant for disaster recovery efforts and implementing contractor for Single Family Homeowner Rehabilitation Program (SFHRP), to facilitate the development of the Action Plan for CDBG-DR MIT funds. The current goal is to complete the Action Plan in December for review and approval by the Blue Ribbon Committee and final approval by County Council in February. Additional information on CDBG-DR MIT funds can be found here: <https://www.hudexchange.info/news/materials-posted-2019-cdbg-dr-problem-solving-clinic/>

3. Policy of retention of revenues from conservation lands - After some consideration and discussion with Administration, since the RCCC functions under the auspices of Council, requests that require a decision be made or direction be given as to the actions of RCCC or appropriateness thereof should move to the body that oversees them. Prior to routing such a request to Council, the appropriate due diligence would be to obtain a legal opinion from Council's legal counsel, i.e. Mr. Larry Smith, either directly or through staff, however RCCC chooses, on whether the ordinance language allows for the use of revenues generated from assets acquired with and/or activities funded by Conservation Commission Special Revenue Funds in the manner proposed by RCCC.

Carol proposed that the perceived process of Administration sending all requests for decisions involving the RCCC to Council be confirmed before further actions are initiated.

4. Capital Improvement Projects Process – Budget Director Hayes is compiling a list of the top five projects from each entity that previously submitted CIP requests during the biennium budget process. Once the list is compiled, Mr. Hayes will be scheduling a meeting for each to present their projects to the County Administrator for review. The County Administrator will then make a recommendation to Council.

Quinton has submitted the top five capital improvements projects drawn from the Lower Richland Tourism Plan that were in the CIP request submitted in January 2019.

### **Conservation Division Manager's Report**

#### **Community Tree Strategies**

Quinton and Nancy spoke with staff from the Green Infrastructure Center (GIC) and SC Forestry Commission (SCFC) concerning a grant for GIS mapping of the county's tree canopy. An abundance of trees decreases stormwater runoff and can help reduce flooding. GIC would train county GIS staff on using software to do remote sensing analysis of tree canopy over time. Once the tree canopy is mapped, GIC and SCFC will assist county staff in determining plantable areas, the number of trees that can be planted on public and private lands, as well as setting location specific goals and budgeting for tree planting. Nancy has talked with GIS staff and they are interested but need approval from the GIS director [since given]. Buddy made a motion to move forward with obtaining the grant subject to GIS participation, explaining there were many environmental services the canopy study will provide. Charles seconded the motion which carried unanimously. Planning staff should also be included in the project. Carol wants Forest Acres involved in the mapping and strategic plan.

#### **Greenway Funding Realignment**

RCCC supported recommendations from the Penny Project Development Team to reallocate funds from several non-viable greenways to viable ones. First reading was given to an ordinance to allow the realignments on Oct. 15. Second reading will be November 5. A public hearing and third reading and will take place mid-November.

### **Lower Richland Tourism Plan Action Steps**

Quinton gave a brief overview of the 175-page detailed plan. The main objective is to leverage and increase Congaree National Park visitor spending in Lower Richland and grow new and

future businesses that will provide accommodations, food services, visitor sites and activities for an increasing number of tourists. Gateway communities outside national parks are thriving and boosting economic value in their area. The more encompassing idea is heritage tourism which involves the whole Lower Richland area. A heritage center could be located at the historic Hopkins Village Green or on the Cabin Branch property the county owns on Lower Richland Blvd.

RCCC and staff proposed moving forward with plans for projects listed in the Capital Improvement Project budget for Mill Creek; however, the proposed budget was not approved by Council and is undergoing further review. A councilmember told staff the councilmember wanted a change in focus from Mill Creek to the Heritage Center. Buddy Atkins pointed out the difficulty of the Commission's situation since Council hasn't adopted the Lower Richland Tourism Plan and controls the spending for any new buildings. John suggested working on more than one project at a time. Gail expressed concern there isn't enough of a draw to bring tourists to the Hopkins area and local residents wouldn't be interested in the heritage center. Carol said RCCC should identify a small project at Mill Creek, specifically road improvement, to jump start the plan. Charles urged staff to take something to Council. Quinton pointed out the need for support from councilmembers in the involved districts. Tim McSwain spoke about RCCC's responsibility for managing our current assets. Nancy mentioned the original reason for this item on the agenda was for Glenice Pearson to discuss a community engagement strategy and getting residents thinking and planning for the economic opportunities from increased nature and heritage tourism.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20pm for the cookout.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charlie Fisher