



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

Minutes October 27, 2014

Attendance:

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

Absent: Sam Holland, Mildred Myers

Others present:

Quinton Epps, Conservation Department
Nancy Stone-Collum, Conservation Department
Charlie Fisher, Conservation Department
Ken Driggers, Contract Legal Counsel
Tony McDonald, Richland County Administrator
Sparty Hammett, RC Assistant Administrator
Monique McDaniels, Clerk for County Council
Bob Perry, SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR)
Titus Durren and Barbara Weston
Deborah Brooks, Marie Adams, Tom Milliken, Jennifer Stone, W.M. Robinson
Dawn Hinshaw, State Newspaper

Chair Carol Kososki called the meeting to order at 3:35pm with a quorum present.

Agenda: Carol requested the Conservation Committee report be moved ahead of the Historic Committee report. Becky Bailey made a motion to make the change; Virginia Sanders seconded the motion which was approved. Ann Furr moved to approve the agenda as amended. Virginia seconded the motion and all approved.

The September minutes were not taken up.

Cooks Mountain / Goodwill Plantation Management Plan

John Grego, Conservation Committee Chair explained Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC) has been asked by County Council to review and comment on the SCDNR management plan for the Cooks/Goodwill mitigation properties known as Wateree River Heritage Preserve as presented to Council on October 7, 2014. Bob Perry, Director of the Office of Environmental Programs for SCDNR, was invited to address previously submitted questions about the planned public uses.

Mr. Perry reported the Record of Decision and 404 permit for the Haile Gold Mine were issued earlier today from the US Army Corps of Engineers. SCDNR plans to take title of the two Richland County mitigation properties on or about January 2, 2015. A letter from County Council acknowledging the transfer from private ownership to the State of SC is required by the Joint Bond Review Committee.

EPA has approved the wetland and stream restoration plan for the properties according to Mr. Perry. A copy of the enhancement and restoration plan will be provided to RCCC members. The costs have not been calculated and funding sources were not supplied.

Mr. Perry explained that of the 111 days set aside for hunting, 49 will be for deer, hog, and turkey hunting with no other access for safety reasons. The other 62 days for waterfowl and small game hunting will permit limited access. Hunting with dogs will not be allowed with the exception of small game hunting (quail and rabbit). No specifics were given on ways to encourage African American hunting opportunities.

In discussing historical resources, Mr. Perry stated there were none on the preserve property, only underground resources that would be determined through archaeology. The historic buildings will remain in possession of the current property's owner. A comprehensive cultural resources survey will be conducted and reviewed by SC. Department of Archives and History. The results of the survey will lead to an interpretive program. When asked about the ditches and dikes built by enslaved Africans, Mr. Perry said they would be protected, and since they had been naturalized, there would be no restoration activities affecting those features.

Virginia Sanders expressed her dismay and anger because SCDNR did not have any public meetings with residents of Lower Richland during this process and environmental justice issues have been ignored. She asked about funding to operate and maintain the properties. Haile Gold Mine will provide a 4.5 million endowment over a 15-year time period. Other funding will come from hunting and fishing license fees, timber sales, federal and Heritage Trust money, and grants. The yearly budget is projected to be \$300,000; funds not used will be escrowed. Mr. Perry postulated it was possible the endowment and additional funds could be stretched over a 45-year period.

Carol asked about staffing for Heritage Trust and at the preserve. Mr. Perry said there were ten Heritage Trust land managers and an additional ten more in administration for all of the sites. Initially a staff of three people is anticipated plus an archaeologist to do the survey. Staff will be interchanged from other locations when necessary. Glenice Pearson questioned what was being planned to encourage economic development in the area. Mr. Perry stated SCDNR is not involved with eco-tourism but will conduct interpretive tours for groups and school children.

SCDNR had been asked about data on hunting licenses issued in Richland County and a break down by race. Mr. Perry replied this information was not available at this time without the creation of a special computer program. John Grego voiced concern over the exclusive use of hunting, citing statistics from US Fish & Wildlife Service showing 90% of hunters are white. The preserve is in an area of the County that is 65% black. Mr. Perry said the preserve gave African Americans an opportunity to hunt locally.

John also asked about the Mill Creek Mitigation property the County bought early this year. SCDNR had questioned the ability of Richland Soil and Water Conservation District to hold the easement given its close relationship with the County and was critical of the condition of the property on a visit in March after an ice storm had created much damage. Mr. Perry replied SCDNR had concerns about both of issues and it was a normal part of the review process.

Historic Committee Report

Glenice explained the committee has spent many months developing a research proposal that will provide a framework to enhance and expand the historic activities of the Commission. As envisioned, a team of scholars and professionals will inventory available resources by era and analyze the gaps for future research. Recommendations on a variety of topics will be proposed. The goal is to give structure to the historic program and a pro-active approach to initiating and funding projects cohesively. Glenice made a motion to submit the proposal to Richland County's Procurement Department. Jim Thomas seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.

Public Input

Titus Duren, a resident of Lower Richland has hunted in Lower Richland and knows many African American who also like to hunt. Discussions have been ongoing in the community regarding possible economic and educational impact and he feels this endeavor will benefit the community.

Barbara Fleming Weston said her great grandfather owned property in Eastover across from Goodwill Plantation but the family was never invited to visit the property until eight years ago when the new owner took over. The opportunity for the public to visit the property and enjoy the rich history associated with the property should not be endangered.

Conservation Coordinator's Report

Chicora delivered three copies of the cemetery survey in a 4-inch binder. The next step is to integrate the information with the county's GIS online mapping service. Chicora Foundation will make a presentation about the results and their recommendations at the next Commission meeting. On November 3, at 5:00pm RCCC members will have an opportunity to meet the volunteers working to restore the interior of the B-25 bomber at Owens Field. An email with further details will be sent out. On November 8, 2014 the Thompson Cottage will host a workshop on historic masonry and ironwork.

Meeting Adjourned 5:00pm

Submitted by Charlie Fisher, Administrative Assistant