



2020 Hampton Street · Room 3063A
 Columbia, SC 29204
 (803) 576-2083

Minutes
October 17, 2022
4th Floor Conference Room

Attendance

Commissioner	District	Present
Charles Weber	1	Yes
Tim McSwain	2	Yes
Wayman Stover	3	Yes
Glenice Pearson	4	Yes
Kip Dillihay	5	No
John Grego	6	Yes
Robert Squirewell	7	No
Deborah DePaoli	8	Yes
Khali Gallman	9	Yes
Darrell Jackson Jr.	10	No
Gail Rodriguez	11	No

Staff & Visitors	Affiliation
Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
John McKenzie	Conservation Division
Aric Jensen	County Administration
Amy Moore	City of Columbia Planning

Call to Order

Grego welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:37pm. Members, staff, and guests met in-person or by telephone.

City of Columbia (CofC) Preservation Planning presentation

Amy Moore explained the CofC’s Historic Districts and the review process for alterations to any features viewable in the public right-of-way. CofC ordinance sets out what can be reviewed by staff and what needs to be reviewed by the Design/Development Review Commission (D/DRC). The staff of three reviews around 75-80% of projects. The remaining reviews and 100% of new construction and demolition reviews are handled by the D/DRC. Historic Districts are formed by making agreements between neighborhoods and the CofC. Staff conducts surveys of the properties to make sure there is enough to qualify and explains guidelines and options to residents and the process takes several months. A proposal for a district goes to the D/DRC and the City Planning Commission for recommendation and then to City Council for final approval. Moore stated the regulatory side of their duties includes observations, calls from the public, and discussions with property owners about potential changes and projects.

Pearson asked about work on a home in the Waverly Historic District once moved off the Allen University campus. Moore explained it was in disrepair and bulldozers were there without permits and demolition was stopped immediately. It is now being reviewed by the D/DRC. Epps asked about the

differences in ordinances and guidelines and Moore explained the guidelines were now incorporated in the ordinances to keep it clear. Staff strives for transparency and consistency in its reports and recommendations to D/DRC and the City Planning Commission. Moore detailed the steps in creation of a Historic District with respect to the time periods, architecture, and physical boundaries. Staff makes a recommendation of the boundaries to the neighborhood. All of this is based on criteria from the National Park Service (NPS), the founding program. Epps asked if the County should have districts like the City and a similar program. Moore stated the density of structures in rural areas, outside of city limits, does not lend itself to historic districts.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

- ⇒ **DePaoli moved to approve the minutes of the August meeting which was seconded by McSwain. Motion passed unanimously.**

Report of the Chair

- **Lower Richland Tourism Plan (LRTP) – update:** Grego reported the LRTP was on the Planning Commission’s agenda a second time. The Planning Commission had concerns they were dictating terms to County Council and they had questions, which were answered by Epps & Jensen. They passed a revised motion that will be on Council’s agenda soon to add the LRTP as an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan. Epps added it was going to be at the Zoning Public Hearing, possibly in November.
- **Land Development Code (LDC)-Remapping Restart – update:** Grego reported he drafted a letter about the changes that took place over the last couple of Planning Commission meetings. Not many amendments were added to the LDC and many of those went along with the RCCC recommendations. They continue to build flexibility into the permitted uses for the Homestead properties (typically 3 acres). There is a request for a waiting period after adoption of the LDC for land owners in the agricultural zones to be able to come in and petition, at no charge, to change to a different designation, based on land use.

Grego suggested the Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC) push back on the resistance to density-based cluster development zoning (“the Green Code”), established 10 years ago. Grego expressed his concern the new AG designation did not meet its original intent to preserve large tracks of high-quality farmland and higher densities in rural areas could degrade rural character. Grego stated people in Lower Richland want the ability to subdivide property to pass on to family. Jensen reported he was in a Planning Commission workshop earlier where they discussed the HM, AG, and the RT classifications RU is being divided into. Grego asked about the format for upcoming meetings and Jensen answered the Planning Commission hopes it will be a dialogue-based meeting.

- **Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan – update:** Grego reported the plan was presented as a motion of the Development and Services committee on September 27, 2022 and passed without discussion. It made the Council agenda within a week and it was also passed there without discussion.
- **General Commission Strategic Plan - Goals 3&4 – action item:** Grego stated Goal 5 would be visited by the Executive Committee before the next RCCC meeting.
- ⇒ **Executive Committee moved to approve the General Commission Strategic Plan - Goals 3&4 which was seconded by Weber. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **Advocacy – discussion:** DePaoli reminded she updated and spoke with Councilmember Overture Walker and Pearson stated she had worked with Councilmember Livingston recently. Pearson added she will reach out to people she knows in other districts and encourage them to contact their Councilmembers.

Report from Community Planning and Development

- **Update:** Jensen stated there was nothing to add.

Treasurer’s Report

- FY22 General Budget status – update: Epps reported there were no significant expenses to report.

Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) Report

- **Strategic Plan - Goal 2 – action item:**
- ⇒ **Historic Preservation Committee moved to approve the Strategic Plan - Goal 2 which was seconded by DePaoli. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **Sandy Level Baptist Church Grant Agreement modification – action item:** McKenzie explained the changes in the agreement and showed photographs. The Church had originally proposed to remove the vinyl siding, clean and repair the original siding, and fix a few windows. The new agreement, based on the lesser grant award, would allow them to replace the 16 problematic windows in the sanctuary.
- ⇒ **Historic Preservation Committee moved to approve the revised Sandy Level Baptist Church Grant Agreement which was seconded by DePaoli. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan – update:** Pearson stated everything is moving along and she looks forward to meeting with the vendors as soon as possible.
- **SC African-American Tourism Conference – update:** Pearson shared her appreciation for the application technology available for tourism and marketing. DePaoli agreed and added there was

a lot to offer, including a keynote speaker sharing the growth of cultural tourism, especially African-American tourism. Now the goal is to translate what was learned to Richland County. Epps added the QR codes also track where people are from for purposes of reporting for hospitality and accommodation tax numbers for grants. There were many more people from the Midlands in attendance this year. Gallman stated there will be a bigger conference in Greenville in the Spring and then a regional one in Miami next year where attendees can get more ideas and stories.

- **Special Reserve Fund Motions – action item:** Pearson explained the motion was to begin discussions about purchases to protect historic properties. Weber expressed concerns over including “using Special Reserve Funds” in the motion and how it could limit us. He also warned the discussions could appear to be the County taking these properties that are not on the market. Pearson clarified there have already been discussions with the owners of the Mack House and they are prepared to sell, if conditions are met. Pearson stated her goal is to first acquire the property to keep it from destruction and then later work out the management and maintenance and preparation for a future museum.
- ⇒ **The Historic Preservation Committee moved to authorize the staff to investigate the purchase of the Benjamin Mack House and the Randolph Cemetery which was seconded by Gallman. Motion passed unanimously.**
- ⇒ **The Historic Preservation Committee moved to authorize the staff to arrange a meeting with staff, the HPC and Dr. Donaldson of UofSC which was seconded by Weber. Motion passed unanimously.**

Natural Resource Committee Report

- **Strategic Plan - Goal 1 – action item:**
- ⇒ **The Natural Resources Committee moved to approve the Strategic Plan - Goal 1 which was seconded by Stover. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **Ag & Art Tour – action item:** Weber stated the Ag & Art Tour has existed for many years but is stronger in other counties. Grego added the coordination is time consuming and too much for a volunteer. This proposal will create a position to promote and coordinate the 2023 tour only. Grego also clarified there can be H-tax funds used for this in the future but not in a timely fashion for the upcoming tour.
- ⇒ **The Natural Resources Committee moved to approve \$10,000 for support of the 2023 Ag & Art Tour program, pending approval of the final proposal from the Richland Soil & Water Conservation District Commission’s meeting on October 17, 2022 at 6pm which was seconded by Stover. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **Lake Elizabeth HOA donation – action item:** Weber reported, after 18 months of discussions with the HOA and then Councilmember Barron, the committee has concluded there are more liabilities than benefits in the acceptance of the donation of the former Lake Elizabeth lakebed and dam/causeway/highway.

- ⇒ **The Natural Resources Committee moved to recommend the County not accept the property donation proposed by the Lake Elizabeth Home Owners Association which was seconded by Stover. Motion passed unanimously.**
- ⇒ **Grego moved to extend the meeting by 15 minutes which was seconded by Stover. Motion passed unanimously.**
- ⇒ **The Natural Resources Committee moved to have Squirewell, McSwain, and Epps, as a committee of three, to communicate the decision made to the Lake Elizabeth Home Owners Association and to offer alternatives which was seconded by Pearson. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **Special Reserve Fund Recommendations**
 - **Mill Creek Bridge – action item:** Weber stated this project has been underway for two or three years and money has already been spent on the design work, which is complete.
- ⇒ **The Natural Resources Committee moved to proceed with the Mill Creek bridge replacement project using Special Reserve Funds which was seconded by Pearson. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **Columbia Rowing Club – work in progress/no action needed**
- **Bates Old River – work in progress/no action needed**

Weber reported remaining agenda items were works in progress with no action needed.

Conservation Program Analyst’s Report

- **FY2022-2023 RCCC Grants** – McKenzie reported most grantees have turned in Quarterly Reports, with the exception of Sandy Level Church, The Children’s Garden, and UofSC, who have all returned calls. Benedict College has not returned emails or calls.
- **Fabel Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported preparation of the potential easement was on track.
- **Events/Celebrations – update:** McKenzie stated the SC State Library sent out invitations to the RCCC for the unveiling of a historical marker on November 3, 2022. McKenzie reminded of the upcoming Rosenwald School Workshop at the Pine Grove Rosenwald School on Wednesday, October 19, 2022. McKenzie reported attending, with McSwain and Stover, the open house held at the Blythewood Museum to celebrate renovations paid for, in part, from a RCCC grant.

Conservation Manager’s Report

- **Staff vacancies – update:** Epps stated the new hire for the Administrative Assistant position will start on November 7 and there have not been any well-qualified applicants to date for the Land Program Planner position. Gallman suggested using LinkedIn.
- **Mitigation Bank Credits – update:** Epps reported, through the processes and sales, the County has gone from 800 wetland credits to 594 and about 30,000 stream credits down to about 19,000. This brought in about \$3.2 million to the County, which goes to the Penny program. The County has saved about \$3 to \$4 million in purchasing credits because we used credits for County projects. Weber stated he wants Commissioners to be more aware and educated about Mitigation Banking as it becomes more of a focus.

New Business

Pearson stated the quick note version of Robert’s Rules of Order she shared was not the best version available. Epps added we plan to have the County lawyer come to the next meeting to update the Commission on this and other responsibilities.

Weber reminded the Holiday Drop-in is coming up on Tuesday, December 13, 2022.

Public Input

There was no public input.

- ⇒ **At 5:04pm, Weber moved to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Pearson. Motion passed unanimously.**