



2020 Hampton Street · Room 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204
(803) 576-2080
April 21, 2025
County Council Chambers
Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Commissioner	District	Present	Staff & Visitors	Affiliation
Charles Weber	1	Yes	Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
James Young	2	Yes	Alexis Wallraf	Conservation Division
Wayman Stover	3	Yes	John McKenzie	Conservation Division
Glenice Pearson	4	No	Christian Ridgell	Conservation Division
Kip Dillihay	5	No	Synithia Willams	Director of Community Planning & Development
John Grego	6	Yes	Aric Jensen	Administration
Robert Squirewell	7	No		
Lacey Lanham	8	Yes		
Khali Gallman	9	Yes		
Kendrick Scott	10	Yes		
Gail Rodriguez	11	Yes		

Call to Order

Grego welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:34 pm. Members, staff, and guests met in-person and via Zoom.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

- **Stover moved to approve the March minutes which was seconded by Weber. Motion passed unanimously.**

Report of the Chair

- **New Commissioner Introduction** – Grego introduced Lacey Lanham as the new commissioner for District 8 appointed by Councilmember Alleyne.
- **Goodwill Estates Property – update:** Young reported the Goodwill acquisition is in an appropriations line item passed by the Senate Finance Committee and is now being debated in the full Senate. It is included in the Senate’s proposed appropriation for the South Carolina Land Conservation Bank. A recommendation letter was written to support the project as the Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC) has already approved support.

- **Advocacy – update:** Weber reported he spoke with a councilmember out of Fairfield County and had encouraged them to look into our programs in hopes to implement those ideas in the Fairfield County area. Gallman met with Councilwoman Mackey and plans to meet again soon. Gallman also met with Councilwoman Tyra Little and they discussed the commission’s activities, including grants and the Historic Preservation Plan.
- **Annual Plan Presentation – update:** Grego reported the Annual Plan presentation went well, and council members were kind and encouraging. Priorities were emphasized, including the request for an extra \$50,000 for the grants program and the change in the land acquisition budget from \$1.6 million to \$2 million.

Report from Community Planning & Development

- **Comprehensive Plan – update:** Williams reported the advisory committee met in late March to discuss upcoming public forums and drop-in meetings in May. Another virtual meeting is scheduled to finalize information for the meetings. The first public forum in May will be held on May 1st from 5 PM to 7 PM at the Edventure Children’s Museum. Future land use scenarios will be presented at the May meetings, including a scenario showing the continuation of the current growth pattern. The three scenarios will be presented as; Current land use and development trends, economic development/commercial growth and conservation, protection and preservation. Feedback will be gathered from the citizens at the meetings and via an online survey. The scenarios will be run through a model to provide analytics and data on housing needs, growth, infrastructure, and public safety impacts.

Treasurer’s Report

- **FY24-25 General Budget Status – update:** Squirewell reported spending is on track and Epps reminded there will be more spending for Land Program Planner salary and benefits in the 4511 (Pinewood Lake Park and Cabin Branch) and 4512 (Mill Creek) cost centers.
- **FY25-26 Budget – update:** Epps reported the budget had been submitted, and a County Council budget work session is scheduled for May 15th. The work session will cover grants and special revenue.

Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) Report

- **Historic Tourism Marketing Plan Implementation – update:** Gallman reported progress is being made and a South Carolina native has been confirmed as the voiceover artist. The tour sites have been identified, and completion is expected by June. McKenzie stated the scripts will be reviewed to ensure satisfaction with content.
- **Historic Preservation Plan (HPP) - update:** Gallman reported the plan is progressing, with feedback from public meetings in February being incorporated. A draft version of the full plan is expected in May for review, with the aim of having final plan by July. The goal is to adopt the plan as part of the comprehensive plan, handing it over to William’s team. Williams added discussions have begun regarding an architectural review board’s role in future historic designations and architectural standards.

- **Bailey Bill – update:** McKenzie reported the Grovewood House, located on Congaree Road, had been approved for the Bailey Bill. The Bailey Bill allows property owners to maintain their current tax rate for 20 years after completing approved historical rehabilitation work. McKenzie continued the Grovewood House qualified automatically due to being on the Richland County Bicentennial list and the National Register of Historic Places.

Natural Resources Committee (NRC) Report

- **Conservation Land Management and Open Space Strategy – update:** Epps reported solicitation is out to hire experts to help decide what to do with these lands and to review what others are doing across the state and southeast. A final vendor should be selected by the end of May.
- **Cabin Branch Easements – update:** Epps reported this is coming before the Administration and Finance committee. The administration plans to evaluate all county-owned properties and may want to finish this evaluation before putting easements on the land. Putting easements on the property could generate almost \$700,000.
- **Forestry Stewardship Plan – update:** Weber reported progress is being made, and Ridgell is still becoming acquainted with the properties. Epps reported the county was working with the SC Forestry Commission to implement prescribed burning, with their new contracts expected in July to begin the approval process.
- **Mill Creek Bridge – update:** Weber reported still waiting on minor tasks to be completed. A final inspection and payment are pending.
- **Mitigation Bank Credits – update:** Epps reported no new updates.
- **Broad River Property – update:** Weber reported no new updates.
- **Bates Old River Landing – update:** Epps is developing different scenarios for protecting Bates Old River Landing to present to the administration and the NRC.

Conservation Program Analyst’s Report

- **Watershed Planning – update:** McKenzie reported there is a 15-year-old management plan for Crane Creek Watershed that needs updating due to changes in the watershed. They will hire someone to update the plan. McKenzie also reported they are applying for grant money to update the plan from the SC Department of Environmental Services (formerly DHEC) with a deadline of May 15th.
- **Ganus Easement Negotiations – update:** McKenzie reported everything had been agreed upon by the property owner, administration, and county attorney’s office. This will be in next month’s County Council meeting for approval.
- **Fabel Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported no new updates.
- **Lake Elizabeth Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported no new updates.

- **FY24-25 RCCC Grants – update:** McKenzie reported four grant projects are complete. Third quarter reports indicate projects are progressing well.
- **Events – update:** McKenzie shared next month’s RCCC meeting date of May 19th, 2025 3:30pm, Envirothon on April 25th 9am-2:30pm, and Ag+Art Tour June 7th-8th. An attachment was also handed out with other meetings and events coming up.

Conservation Manager’s Report

- **Lower Richland Tourism Plan-Small Business Development (SBDC) – update:** Epps reported they had four different workshops this year. Upcoming workshops: May 15th – Third installment of the marketing series; May 24th – Workshop on how to start a business. The contract is finalized and signed. Epps shared publicizing will be through the Public Information office (PIO). SBDC consultants will provide services at the Southeast Library Branch every Thursday morning. On the third Thursday of each month, the SBDC business consultant will be at the Eastover branch. Epps reported Jim Johnson, head of the USC SBDC suggested a trail run at the Mill Creek property. Potential runs of five, three, and two miles were considered as an introduction to the property. This idea is still under consideration and needs to be discussed with the NRC and administration.
- **Development Impact Fee Feasibility Study – update:** Epps reported a study had been completed, and a link was provided to the Development and Services Committee meeting where it was discussed. The initial study recommended a longer, more intensive study to determine the county’s actions. Epps described there was a potential opportunity to direct impact fees into conservation-related items for larger land purchases. The original study analyzed whether further exploration was worthwhile, with the consultant recommending six categories for impact fees.
- **Ag & Art Tour Volunteers - update:** Epps reported the tour is on June 7th and 8th with 17 sites. Epps disbursed handouts for volunteer sign-ups and suggested everyone give them out at any events to encourage volunteers.

New Business: N/A

Public Input: N/A

Adjournment

- **At 4:47 pm, Stover moved to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Lanham. Motion passed unanimously.**