



2020 Hampton Street • Room 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204
(803) 576-2080
August 18, 2025
4th Floor Conference Room
Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Commissioner	District	Present
Charles Weber	1	Yes
James Young	2	Yes
Wayman Stover	3	Yes
Glenice Pearson	4	No
Kip Dillihay	5	Yes
John Grego	6	Yes
Robert Squirewell	7	Yes
Lacey Lanham	8	No
Khali Gallman	9	Yes
Kendrick Scott	10	Yes
Gail Rodriguez	11	No

Staff & Visitors	Affiliation
John McKenzie	Conservation Division
Christian Ridgell	Conservation Division
Alexis Wallraf	Conservation Division
Aric Jensen	Assistant County Administrator
Synithia Williams	Director of Community Planning & Development

Call to Order

Grego welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:30 pm. Members, staff, and guests met in-person and via Zoom.

Approval of Agenda

Grego suggested amending the agenda to change the Historic Preservation Plan from an action item to an update.

⇒ **Young moved to approve the amended agenda which was seconded by Scott. Motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Minutes

Young suggested amending the minutes to add his expressed concerns over the Historic Preservation Plan.

⇒ **Weber moved to approve the July minutes as amended by staff which was seconded by Squirewell. Motion passed unanimously.**

Report of the Chair

- **Advocacy – update:** No new updates were given.
- **Goodwill Estates Property – update:** Young reported nothing to report now but there may be news in the first half of September.

Report from Community Planning & Development

- **Comprehensive Plan – update:** Williams reported phase three of the Comprehensive Plan kicks off with a series of public forums, beginning with the downtown forum on Wednesday, August 27, from 5:30–7:00 p.m. at 701 Whaley Street, with the presentation starting at 6:00. Additional meetings were scheduled for September 3 at Meadow Lake Park, September 10 at the Operational Community Center, September 15 at the Garners Ferry Adult Activity Center, and September 17 at the Piney Grove Community Center. Additional forums were planned for Ballentine, Northeast Richland, and Lower Richland. This phase focused on presenting two maps—a general framework map and a draft future land use map—alongside recommendations for priority investment areas and identification of secondary growth areas. These investment areas, required under the State Planning Act, could emphasize either economic development or preservation.

Treasurer’s Report

- **FY25-26 Budget – update:** Grego reported no new updates.

Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) Report

- **ENRICH Tour – update:** McKenzie reported the ENRICH Tour continued to perform well, with over 2,800 participants to date. Advertising efforts have been extensive, including national outreach through the app developer, using geolocation to trigger ads near relevant historical sites or when users show interest in related content, and billboard placements in targeted cities. These efforts generated approximately 750,000 ad impressions.
- **Cedar Creek Cemetery USC Grant Revision – action item:** McKenzie reported the USC grant for the Cedar Creek Cemetery study required revisions due to ineligible travel expenses. Travel costs for two visiting professors and student assistance were removed, reducing the total grant amount to \$ 26,648.00.
 - ⇒ **Young moved to approve the revised grant which was seconded by Stover. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **Ascension Lutheran Church grant eligibility – action item:** McKenzie requested approval for grant eligibility for Ascension Lutheran Church, a 115-year-old structure notable for its Tiffany stained glass series and unique architecture.
 - ⇒ **Squirewell moved to approve the church’s eligibility for potential Historical Preservation Grants which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **Congaree Action Now Conference (Historical Marker) – action item:** McKenzie reported a new historical marker was approved by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History for placement at the corner of Assembly and Pendleton Streets to commemorate the Congaree Swamp National Preserve Association conference held on September 20, 1975, which drew 700 attendees. Grego abstained from this vote due to his involvement in the application process.
 - ⇒ **Weber moved to approve funding of the historic marker for Congaree Action Now which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **Historic Preservation Plan – update:** McKenzie reported the Historic Preservation Plan, submitted on July 1, 2025 has not yet been approved. While the plan has been presented twice and available for 45–75 days, concerns were raised about limited review time, lack of feedback opportunities, and document access issues. Some commissioners recommended focusing on substantive revisions rather than style preferences. Young suggested hiring an outside editor to

finalize the document. A presentation from the Historic Preservation Committee to the full commission was requested.

Natural Resources Committee (NRC) Report

- **Conservation Land Management and Open Space Strategy – update:** McKenzie reported no new updates.
- **Eastover Solar Project – update:** Weber reported the Midlands Council of Governments (COG) presented to the NRC a potential grant for a solar project at the Eastover library and mayor's office. While the committee expressed general support, some concerns remained unresolved, including the proposed site not being county-owned. Jensen added the project was small in scale, and the town and library lacked the capacity to manage it. The county administrator tentatively agreed to allow county staff to manage the grant and oversee procurement and resource allocation, should the project move forward.
- **Firefly Tourism Grant – update:** Weber reported the COG also presented on the grant application to explore options to expand public access and investment in firefly-related tourism, and the committee expressed strong interest.
- **Watershed Planning – update:** McKenzie reported the watershed planning project may appear on the August 26, 2025 County Council agenda. He is continuing to refine the Request For Proposal (RFP) scope for Quinton's review, with plans to submit it to Procurement following council approval.
- **Forestry Stewardship Plan – update:** Ridgell reported issues with the selected vendor for herbicide spraying on the Cabin Branch North agriculture field due to registration problems, prompting consideration of an alternative vendor. Work was still underway on the prescribed burn scope, and South Carolina Forestry Commission rates remained mostly unchanged.
- **Jordan Boat Ramp Restoration – action item:** Jensen explained the Barney Jordan boat ramp project and the County's desire to make timely repairs and improvements. While the project does not involve county funds, concerns were raised about its pace, timing, and future maintenance costs and responsibilities. A motion was proposed to begin planning and reach out to the state delegation for funding. The dock is partially closed, and the majority of the estimated \$900,000 cost is tied to parking lot replacement. The state is expected to contribute 25%, with the remainder potentially covered by a National Fish and Wildlife grant. Grego stressed the need for due diligence, clear planning, and contingency options in case funding falls through. Risk management concerns were also discussed, with DNR identifying the dock as a high-priority site.
 - ⇒ **Weber moved to authorize staff to begin planning efforts and initiate contact with the state delegation to request funding which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **Mill Creek Bridge ribbon cutting – update:** Ridgell reported the ribbon cutting is planned for November.
- **Mitigation Bank Credits – update:** Weber reported no new updates.
- **Broad River Property – update:** Weber reported no new updates.

- **Bates Old River Landing – update:** Grego reported Quinton Epps suggested he (Grego) speak with Councilwoman English.

⇒ **Weber moved to extend meeting by 10 minutes which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously.**

Conservation Program Analyst’s Report

- **Ganus Easement Negotiations – update:** McKenzie reported County Council did not approve the termination of the Ganus easements. Negotiations with Christopher Ball and the Ganus family will continue, with a possible amendment to the easement under consideration. Land trust partners will be consulted to explore alternatives.
- **Fabel Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported a full survey is required for the Fabel Easement, which is expected to be costly. Josh Fabel expressed urgency in completing the process before the end of the year for tax purposes.
- **Lake Elizabeth Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported no new updates.
- **FY25-26 RCCC Grants Schedule – update:** McKenzie reported currently everything is on track. He will meet on Thursday, August 21, 2025 with the Richland County Recreation Commission grants manager at the walking trail grant project and they should have some revisions to be considered.
- **Events – update:** McKenzie reported several events were scheduled and are included on the agenda.

New Business: N/A

Public Input: N/A

Adjournment

- **At 5:10 pm, Squirewell moved to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Scott. Motion passed unanimously.**