



**2020 Hampton Street • Room 3063A  
Columbia, SC 29204  
(803) 576-2080  
June 16, 2025  
County Council Chambers  
Meeting Minutes**

**Attendance**

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

<b>Staff &amp; Visitors</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
John McKenzie	Conservation Division
Christian Ridgell	Conservation Division
Stephanie Swenson	DFS Creative Concepts
Rebecca Fenwick	Ethos Preservation
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**

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

**Approval of Minutes**

- **Young moved to approve the May minutes which was seconded by Scott. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Historic Preservation Plan – presentation**

- Rebecca Fenwick from Ethos Preservation presented the second draft of the Historic Preservation Plan. The plan focused on unincorporated areas and included results from public meetings and a survey with over 200 responses. Key themes included the need for equitable preservation, collaboration across departments, and formalizing the County's role through a preservation ordinance and planner position. Topics such as overlays, descendant communities, and preservation goals were discussed. Commissioners were encouraged to provide feedback before the July 1 deadline, with the plan set to be adopted as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan.

## Report of the Chair

- **Goodwill Estates Property – update:** Young reported the State appropriations bill for the Goodwill Estates acquisition had been signed. An event was scheduled at the property for the following Saturday at 9:00 AM, organized by Marie Adams of South East Rural Community Outreach (SERCO), to allow commissioners to tour the site and meet members of the board.
- **Advocacy – update:** Grego reported no new updates.
- **Congaree Biosphere Region (CBR) – update:** Grego reported the CBR has resumed activity and is pursuing grant opportunities, including one focused on synchronous firefly events. They are also considering the use of the Federal Lands Access Program to improve access to Congaree National Park. After years of work, bylaws have been passed and partner agreements are being circulated. Richland County is encouraged to become a partner in the CBR, though it remains unclear whether the Conservation Commission, the Conservation Division, or Community Planning & Development should sign the agreement. If a department other than the Commission signs, it may require administrative approval. The agreement would simply acknowledge participation, not commit funding.
- **Comprehensive Plan Public Comments – update:** Grego reported preparing comments on the Comprehensive Plan to be finalized ahead of the expected approval at the July meeting. Feedback focused on aligning with existing plans and included support for elements from both Plan C (conservation-focused) and Plan B (compact infrastructure). Grego added comments would be consistent with past feedback.

## Report from Community Planning & Development

- **Comprehensive Plan – update:** No new updates were given.

## Treasurer's Report

- **FY24-25 General Budget Status – update:** Epps reported the final invoice for the Mill Creek bridge was submitted.
- **FY25-26 Budget – update:** Epps reported the budget reading was scheduled for the following evening June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 6:00 PM.

## Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) Report

- **Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan Implementation – update:** McKenzie reported the promotional materials and advertising plans for the ENIRCH African American Heritage Tour were completed. The test runs for the tour was described as informative and enjoyable, with only minor adjustments needed for proximity-based starting points. The launch was targeted for July 1, with a special URL being created to support the rollout.

## Natural Resources Committee (NRC) Report

- **Conservation Land Management and Open Space Strategy – update:** Epps reported a vendor was selected for the conservation land management strategy, though costs came in higher than expected, prompting a budget transfer.
- **Watershed Planning – update:** McKenzie reported minor changes to the watershed plan were requested based on feedback from Department of Environmental Services (DES), and the rewrite deadline was set for June 27th.
- **Forestry Stewardship Plan – update:** Ridgell was in the process of contacting individuals about spraying the agricultural field at Cabin Branch and is preparing a Scope of Services for prescribed burning operations for submission to procurement. It was also noted South Carolina Forestry Commission rates would change effective July 1.
- **Mill Creek Bridge ribbon cutting – update:** Epps reported a ribbon cutting is still planned for October.
- **Mitigation Bank Credits – update:** Epps reported one new sale incoming.
- **Broad River Property – update:** Ridgell reported signs had been ordered for the Broad River Property, and a traffic counter was installed to collect usage data. Epps added city plans to install a new sewer line, which may require temporarily closing the property. The city is also continuing work on its broader parks and recreation plan. Current primary uses of the property, outside of the Columbia Rowing Club, include fishing and dog walking.
- **Bates Old River Landing – update:** Grego reported Friends of the Congaree declined to assist with maintenance due to liability concerns.

## Conservation Program Analyst's Report

- **Protected Lands GIS Update to The Nature Conservancy Map – update:** McKenzie reported he had been working with the Nature Conservancy to update the map of protected green spaces in South Carolina. While the term “protected” was found to be less critical in categorization, efforts are focused on improving data accuracy. The County now plans to update property and easement information twice a year. Relevant data, including acquisition dates, was sent to the Nature Conservancy, and Richland County GIS is now in direct contact to ensure regular updates.
- **Ganus Easement Negotiations – update:** McKenzie reported no new updates.
- **Fabel Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported Survey quotes were being collected for the Fabel and Lake Elizabeth properties. Legal guidance was needed to determine whether full-property surveys were required or if surveying specific portions would suffice. The estimate for the Fabel survey was over \$15,000, while Lake Elizabeth’s was around \$30,000. Reducing the scope—such as surveying only the 17 acres excluded from the 102-acre total—could help lower costs.

- **Lake Elizabeth Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported it was clarified lakefront property owners are not required to remove their docks. Language will be added to the documentation to confirm docks may be repaired or improved as needed.
- **FY24-25 RCCC Grants – update:** McKenzie reported final paperwork for the FY24/25 grants was due on June 16, 2025, today.
- **FY25-26 RCCC Grants Schedule – update:** McKenzie reported award notifications for the FY25/26 grants will be sent once the County Council approves the budget. Letters and grant agreements are being prepared. A mandatory training for awardees is scheduled for July 17 from 10:00 to 11:30 AM, and recipients must attend before beginning their projects.
- **Events – update:** McKenzie reported there were no current Comprehensive Plan meetings scheduled, though a third wave is planned.

#### **Conservation Manager’s Report**

- **Ag & Art Tour Volunteers - update:** Epps reported the Ag + Art Tour concluded successfully, drawing over 6000 attendees. The event was seen as a strong success, promoting conservation and farming.

**New Business:** N/A

**Public Input:** N/A

#### **Adjournment**

- **At 5:06 pm, Young moved to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Scott. Motion passed unanimously.**