



2020 Hampton Street · Room 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204
(803) 576-2080
March 16, 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	No
John Grego	6	No
Robert Squirewell	7	Yes
Lacey Lanham	8	Yes
Khali Gallman	9	Yes
Kendrick Scott	10	Yes
Gail Rodriguez	11	Yes

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

Call to Order

Weber welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:32 pm. Members, staff, and guests met via Zoom.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

⇒ **Scott moved to approve the January minutes which was seconded by Squirewell. Motion passed unanimously.**

Report of the Chair

- **Advocacy – update:** None to report.
- **Goodwill Estates Property – update:** Young reported a new proposal involved purchase through the Conservation Bank grant and later transfer to the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (DNR), expected to serve as long-term owner. No final decision was anticipated until the next Conservation Bank cycle. County-level discussions included potential support for transaction costs, estimated at \$300,000 to \$700,000, with council expected to raise questions on funding responsibilities. Efforts were underway to simplify the deal and reduce carrying costs. An endowment was proposed to support long-term maintenance and preservation of the historic portion, with potential contributions from interested stakeholders. DNR expressed

limited interest in managing the historic component, creating a need for an alternative approach. Council was expected to seek assurance on how historic preservation would be handled, with the endowment offering a path for long-term oversight and influence.

- **Annual Work Plan - update:** McKenzie reported the presentation has moved to April 14, 2026 and Grego is scheduled to present the plan.

Report from Community Planning & Development

- **Comprehensive Plan – update:** Williams reported the Planning Commission is scheduled to review the comprehensive plan on April 13th, with hopes of making a recommendation for adoption. A briefing document is planned for submission ahead of the April 21st, council meeting, pending the Commission’s recommendation.

Treasurer’s Report

- **FY25-26 General Budget status – update:** Squirewell reported finances remained on target, including Mill Creek and Pinewood Lake Park operations. Most funds had been spent, with acquisitions funds unused from the year. Remaining balances included professional services and training funds and no concerns were raised regarding payroll or operations.
- **FY25-26 Budget proposal – update:** None to report.

Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) Report

- **Historical Markers – update:** McKenzie reported the demand for historical markers remained high, with funding available to support them. Sponsoring groups handled permitting, text, and applications through the State Archives process. The Historic Preservation Committee planned to review four proposed markers for potential co-funding.
- **Congaree Action Now Historical Marker – update:** McKenzie reported extra funding was needed for the breakaway post and the location is still to be determined.

Natural Resources Committee (NRC) Report

- **Broad River Property – update:** Weber reported a meeting was held with Grego, Jim Manning and Councilman Paul Livingston. No decisions were made.
- **Lost Creek/Harbison Property – update:** Weber reported no new updates.
- **Fabel Conservation Easement – update:** Weber reported no new updates.
- **Lake Elizabeth Conservation Easement – update:** Weber reported no new updates.
- **Conservation Land Management and Open Space Strategy – update:** McKenzie reported a kickoff meeting with consultants was scheduled.
- **Eastover Solar Project – update:** McKenzie reported no new updates.
- **Firefly Tourism Grant – update:** McKenzie reported a study of properties for firefly-related tourism was planned and efforts are underway to identify property owners interested in hosting

future events and festivals.

- **Westwood Property/Abingdon Property-City of Columbia – update:** Epps reported no new updates.
- **Watershed Planning – update:** McKenzie reported no new updates.
- **Forestry Stewardship Plan Implementation – update:** Weber reported prescribed burns remained pending, awaiting suitable weather conditions and scheduling availability.
- **Jordan Boat Ramp Restoration – update:** Weber reported no new updates.
- **Mill Creek Bridge Visit – update:** Weber reported Commissioners visited the site and discussed future meetings and potential events at the location.
- **Mitigation Bank Credits – update:** Weber reported no new update.
- **Bates Old River Landing – update:** Weber reported no new updates.

Conservation Program Analyst’s Report

- **FY25-26 RCCC Grants – update:** McKenzie reported no changes with no new expenditures or updates. No issues were reported with any grants, and four projects were noted as completed.
- **Events – update:** McKenzie reported committee meetings were scheduled for April 1st. A District 7 town hall meeting on rezoning was planned for Wednesday. Attendees were advised to check the county website for updated details. The annual work plan for the Conservation Commission will be presented at the Special Called Council Meeting on April 14th, 2026.

Conservation Manager’s Report

- **University of South Carolina Small Business Development Centers – update:** Quinton reported activity supporting the Lower Richland tourism plan. A staffing transition occurred and an intern was added. The program worked with multiple clients and hosted several workshops focused on funding, business acquisitions, and conservation landowners. Additional workshops are being planned and collaboration with the program will continue over the next several years.

New Business

- Young shared a granite mine was being considered along the Broad River north of Ben Lippen School, with efforts underway to obtain permits. Discussion included the potential for expansion by an existing operator.

Public Input: N/A

Adjournment

- **At 4:12 pm, Young moved to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Scott. Motion passed unanimously.**