



2020 Hampton Street • Room 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204
(803) 576-2080
May 18, 2025

4th Floor Conference Room
Richland County Conservation Commission 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
Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
John McKenzie	Conservation Division
Alexis Wallraf	Conservation Division

Call to Order

Grego welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:31 pm. Members, staff, and guests met via Zoom.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

⇒ **Young moved to approve the April minutes which was seconded by Weber. Motion passed unanimously.**

Report of the Chair

- **Advocacy – update:** Stover reported a discussion with Councilwoman Little.
- **Goodwill Estates Property – action item:**
 - ⇒ **Young moved to grant the Conservation Fund \$1 million dollars toward acquisition and management of the Goodwill Estate Property which was seconded by Stover. Motion passed.**

Discussion later highlighted conservation, tourism, and economic benefits associated with protecting the property. A one-page fact sheet and draft motion were distributed to support

County Council discussions, and County Council added the matter to the upcoming executive session for further review. The motion ultimately passed with one abstention from Weber.

- **Greenway Advisory Committee – update:** Grego reported on several greenway projects. The Rocky Branch Greenway continued moving through parcel acquisition and design. Gills Creek Greenway progressed with property appraisals and redesign efforts around the busy bus stop area. Crane Creek Greenway moved toward final bid documents, with construction expected to include a bridge crossing and completion targeted for 2027. At Jackson Creek, negotiations with a key property owner were unsuccessful, shifting their focus toward alternate routes. Significant progress continued on the Saluda River Greenway boardwalk, with completion anticipated by July 4 or sooner, while discussions continued regarding future bridge connections and public access. Updates remain available through the Penny Project website.

Report from Community Planning & Development

- **Comprehensive Plan – update:** No update given.

Treasurer’s Report

- **FY25-26 General Budget status – update:** Squirewell reported approximately 17% of the Soil & Water Conservation budget remained, while the Mill Creek budget retained roughly half of its funds, primarily for operating expenses. Conservation funds still held a significant remaining balance, though planned allocation acquisition would reduce overall remaining funds. Most anticipated spending for the remainder of the year involved salaries and fringe costs.
- **FY26-27 Budget – update:** Epps reported several budget workshops were held, with another workshop scheduled for May 19th, 2026.

Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) Report

- **Historical Preservation Plan – update:** McKenzie reported the committee did not meet during the month. Discussion focused on development of a historic preservation ordinance, identified as the top priority moving forward. Outreach began with several groups interested in participating in a county preservation partnership effort, and coordination with planning and legal staff was planned to adapt information into the provided ordinance template. Concerns were also raised about the template appearing to narrow in scope.

Natural Resources Committee (NRC) Report

NRC Action Items:

- **Broad River Property Informational Agenda Briefing – action item:**
 - ⇒ **Natural Resources Committee moved to approve the Broad River Property Informational Agenda Briefing which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **Metze Property Donation – action item:**

⇒ **Natural Resources Committee moved to approve the Metze Property Donation which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously.**

NRC Active Items Requiring Updates:

- **Lost Creek/Harbison Property – update:** McKenzie reported the project continues to move forward smoothly. Funding assistance was not expected until August, though discussion included potentially providing funds earlier since approval already occurred during the current fiscal year and spending may need to occur this year.
- **Conservation Land Management and Open Space Strategy – update:** McKenzie reported another meeting was held regarding the upcoming public survey, including development of survey questions. Discussion focused on gathering public input about existing conservation efforts, current resources, and future priorities for conservation and open space planning.
- **Westwood/Abingdon Property-City of Columbia – update:** Epps reported the City of Columbia explored installing drainage infrastructure across county-owned property at Westwood/Abingdon. Staff received additional information from the city and planned to respond due to concerns the original request may not have been fully understood.
- **Crane Creek Watershed Planning – update:** McKenzie reported the project remained in the procurement phase, with the open bid period continuing through May 27th.
- **Mitigation Bank Credits – update:** Epps reported a list of mitigation bank credits was included in the packet, with another credit sale scheduled for County Council consideration the following evening. These requests are typically approved and generally do not generate significant discussion.

NRC Active Items Not Requiring Updates:

- **Forestry Stewardship Plan Implementation – update:** Epps reported no new updates.
- **Jordan Boat Ramp Restoration – 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.
- **Eastover Solar Project – update:** McKenzie reported no new updates.
- **Firefly Tourism Grant – update:** Weber reported no new updates.
- **Bates Old River Landing – update:** Weber reported no new updates.

Conservation Program Analyst's Report

- **FY25-26 RCCC Grants – update:** McKenzie reported a one-month reminder email and required forms were sent out to grant recipients who had not completed their projects. Additional assistance may be needed for the South Carolina PTA project following a leadership transition.

The Ridgewood Park Walking Trail project was completed and awaiting final paperwork. A request was made for signage to recognize funding support by the commission.

- **Events – update:** McKenzie reported the Ag + Art Tour was scheduled for June 6-7, with promotional event planned for May 30th, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Soda City Market. A reminder was also given regarding the next RCCC meeting. Director Mullikin of Department of Natural Resources was scheduled to attend an upcoming meeting as part of his visits with counties across the state of South Carolina. Members were encouraged to attend in person due to the importance of the discussion and presentation.

Conservation Manager’s Report

Quinton reported the Ag + Art Tour needed volunteers for the promotional event at Soda City Market on May 30th. Volunteer duties included speaking with attendees and distribution of information materials.

New Business: N/A

Public Input: N/A

Adjournment

- **At 4:30 pm, Young moved to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Stover. Motion passed unanimously.**