



**2020 Hampton Street • Room 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204
(803) 576-2080
November 17, 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	Yes
Robert Squirewell	7	Yes
Lacey Lanham	8	Yes
Khali Gallman	9	No
Kendrick Scott	10	No
Gail Rodriguez	11	Yes

Staff & Visitors	Affiliation
Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
John McKenzie	Conservation Division
Alexis Wallraf	Conservation Division
Aric Jensen	Assistant County Administrator
Matthew Smith	Community Planning and 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

- ⇒ **Weber moved to approve the agenda with an amendment to move the Community Planning and Development report ahead of the Report of the Chair which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Minutes

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

Report from Community Planning & Development

- **Comprehensive Plan – update:** Smith reported the draft conservation and development map is currently available online. The full draft document is scheduled for review by the Planning Commission on December 3rd, with potential recommendations forwarded to County Council in February. The draft plan will be posted online at the time of the Planning Commission presentation, and notifications will be sent to public forum participants and others on the department's email list once the information becomes available.

Report of the Chair

- **Advocacy – update:** Grego reported no new advocacy updates.
- **Goodwill Estates Property – update:** Young reported there are several potential options being explored, though details cannot be discussed in a public setting. A meeting with state and county-level stakeholders is scheduled for Thursday to explore possible workarounds. Young stated he would report back if there is a potential role for the county moving forward.
- **Congaree Biosphere Region – update:** Grego reported the Congaree Biosphere will require recertification next year, and there were questions raised about how the process will work following the United States’ withdrawal from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Grego noted recertification may still be possible without reporting through the Secretary of State.
- **Greenway Advisory Committee – update:** Grego reported updates were provided on several greenway projects across the county. For the Rocky Branch Greenway, land previously held by CSX (railroad) was purchased by Vulcan, which could result in condemnation proceedings. Stakeholders along Crowson Road met to discuss issues with Gills Creek Greenway, including the bus station. A route around the car wash on the south side of Garners Ferry Road is not yet resolved. The Saluda River Greenway is expected to be completed by July 4th, 2026.
- **Holiday Drop-In - update:** McKenzie reported the Holiday Drop-In is scheduled for Tuesday, December 2, 2025 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Council members will be invited, and attendees were encouraged to greet them if they attend.
- **December RCCC Meeting – action item:**
 - ⇒ **Weber moved to cancel the December RCCC Meeting which was seconded by Stover. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **RCCC 2026 Meeting Schedule – action item:**
 - ⇒ **Weber moved to approve the RCCC 2026 Meeting Schedule which was seconded by Stover. Motion passed unanimously.**

Treasurer’s Report

- **FY25-26 Budget – update:** Squirewell reported balances in the accounts and noted expenditures related to professional services. These services support ongoing work in conservation, land management, open space planning, forestry stewardship implementation, and historic preservation efforts.

Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) Report

- **Cemetery Mapping – discussion:** McKenzie reported a meeting with South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) archaeologists to discuss improving how cemetery locations are identified, mapped, and documented. The County’s current survey marks cemeteries as single points without clear boundaries, and a newer mapping approach uses digital

tools to better define locations and approximate boundaries. McKenzie and Epps suggested ways the County could support this effort, potentially through staff and volunteer involvement or grant funding while coordinating closely with administration due to legal and political considerations. The project builds on earlier survey work and would allow cemetery data to be integrated into mapping systems used by the County and State, helping protect burial sites during development and permitting. While the data is still approximate and requires disclaimers, improved mapping could reduce accidental damage to cemeteries. Training may be needed for use of the mapping tools, and next steps will follow guidance from administration after further discussion.

- **ENRICH Tour – update:** McKenzie reported tour participation has slowed, which was expected as most interested users have already taken part. The tour continues to attract a national audience, and advertising efforts have generated strong overall reach with average engagement rates. Future marketing will focus on more cost-effective approaches, particularly digital advertising.
- **Historic Preservation Plan – update:** McKenzie reported the final agreement has been reached on the content and wording of the Historic Preservation Plan, and consultants are completing final graphic updates. The plan will be presented to County Council for acceptance, with the intent to include it as an appendix to the comprehensive plan. A presentation to Council is anticipated in February.

Natural Resources Committee (NRC) Report

- **Lost Creek/Harbison Property – update:** Epps reported this is moving forward to County Council for approval.
- **Conservation Land Management and Open Space Strategy – update:** Epps reported this remains in the procurement phase and is awaiting final contracts.
- **Eastover Solar Project – update:** Jensen discussed he had gone with maintenance staff while they evaluated the roofs of the fire station, library, and town hall and determined rooftop solar is not ideal due to roof types and conditions. A ground-mounted solar array between the library and town hall was identified as the most feasible option based on utilities and access.
- **Firefly Tourism Grant – update:** Grego reported there were no updates on this federal grant at this time, as the recent government shutdown had just ended.
- **Westwood Property – update:** Epps reported no new updates.
- **Watershed Planning – update:** Crane Creek Watershed Management Plan: Epps reported the project remains in procurement and under review by legal, finance, and grants. Lower Richland Watershed Management Plan: Weber reported he contacted the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services staff responsible for the Lower Richland Watershed and plans to follow up with Grego separately to discuss next steps.
- **Forestry Stewardship Plan – update:** Weber reported no new updates.
- **Jordan Boat Ramp Restoration – update:** Epps reported letters have been sent to the Richland County Legislative Delegation and the SCDNR Director requesting funding for the Jordan Boat Ramp project.

- **Mill Creek Bridge Ribbon Cutting – update:** Epps reported no new dates.
- **Mitigation Bank Credits – update:** Weber reported a mitigation credit sale approved two months ago has been canceled. New credit sales are moving forward to County Council for consideration, including new requests from Lancaster County and York County.
- **Broad River Property – update:** Jensen informed the commission there was an interested party in acquiring the property.
- **Bates Old River Landing – update:** Epps reported no new updates.

Conservation Program Analyst’s Report

- **Fabel Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported a boundary survey was determined to be sufficient for this and the Lake Elizabeth easement. Survey quotes have been received and are considered reasonable. The matter will be brought back to the NRC for further discussion and decision-making.
- **Lake Elizabeth Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported no new updates.
- **FY25-26 RCCC Grants – update:** McKenzie reported two projects have already been completed, and all remaining projects are well underway. The Technetics Group experienced challenges but is now making strong progress and was recently featured on the front page of the Columbia Star.
- **FY26-27 RCCC Grants – update:** McKenzie reported grant advertising is currently running in the Columbia Star, the Carolina Panorama, and the Free Times.
- **Events – update:** McKenzie reminded participants about the Palmetto Cemetery historical market unveiling scheduled for Wednesday, December 10th at 11:00 a.m., followed by a community reception at the nearby Palmer Memorial Chapel and a reminder will be sent.

Conservation Manager’s Report

- **USC-SBDC Workshops & Trainings – update:** Epps reported County Council held a 10-year capital improvement projects work session in October, reviewing a range of major initiatives funded through a mix of sources, including ARPA funds and general funds. Following discussions with administration, three projects were submitted for consideration: improvements to the Barney Jordan Boat Ramp funded by grants, development of phases two and three of the Mill Creek Mitigation Bank, and a master plan for the Mill Creek and Cabin Branch properties. Grego noted any submitted projects should be anticipated to be funded through conservation funds.

New Business

- N/A

Public Input: N/A

Adjournment

- **At 4:55 pm, Stover moved to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously.**