



**2020 Hampton Street • Room 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204
(803) 576-2080
September 15, 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	No
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
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

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

Approval of Minutes

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

Report of the Chair

- **Advocacy – update:** Grego reported a public Planning and Development meeting is scheduled with significant discussion expected and noted an invitation to a stakeholder meeting, which he will attend. Young added the Cedar Creek community had a large turnout with strong pushback on changing the area’s designation from rural to mixed-use and mentioned Councilmember Pugh may attend the next Comprehensive Plan meeting. Gallman shared positive conversations with Councilmembers Terracio, Baron, Little, and Pugh at the 803 Day Mixer, where all voiced support for the Historic Preservation Plan and the ENRICH Tour of African American heritage sites.

- **Goodwill Estates Property – update:** Young reported there was to be an answer last Friday, however it had been deferred to today, September 15th, 2025. No new updates are available.

Report from Community Planning & Development

- **Comprehensive Plan – update:** Williams reported phase three community planning meetings, including Garners Ferry and Pine Grove Community Center, drew strong attendance and positive feedback, with comments forwarded to the consulting team. Map revisions will occur when all meetings conclude.

Treasurer’s Report

- **FY25-26 Budget – update:** Epps reported no major spending occurred, aside from an unbudgeted \$18,817 annual lease for two staff vehicles, now charged to the Conservation Division. This change reflects a shift in how the county manages vehicle costs, moving away from a pooled fleet model toward tracking actual vehicle use and maintenance within individual budgets. The goal is to better understand the true cost of services and adjust future budgets accordingly. The fleet budget will be monitored closely, and any income from vehicle resale after five years will return to the fund.

Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) Report

- **ENRICH Tour – update:** McKenzie reported 3,339 people have taken the Enrich Tour or portions of it, with notable remote engagement from places such as New York (474 users), Raleigh, Columbia (249), Chicago (162), Vancouver, Texas, and Louisiana. A request was made to update engagement numbers monthly and include them in future agendas. The Historic Preservation Committee was encouraged to review the tour annually to decide whether it should be updated or expanded for continued growth over time.
- **Cedar Creek Cemetery/University of South Carolina (USC) Grant Revision – update:** McKenzie reported the previously agreed revisions to the grant agreement with Cedar Creek Cemetery/USC were made. He had not yet received a newly signed copy. Once received the project can proceed.
- **Gadsden Historical Marker – action item:** Gallman requested approval of the Gadsden historical marker replacement. The marker will include text updates.
 - ⇒ **Gallman moved to approve the funding of the Gadsden historical marker replacement which was seconded by Weber. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **Historic Preservation Plan – action item:** Gallman requested approval of the Historic Preservation Plan with changes: 1.) moving the equity statement to the executive summary, 2.) modifying keywords that reflected equity, and 3.) shifting the “Realities of Plantation Life” section to the end of the Richland County Portion.
 - ⇒ **Gallman moved to approve the Historic Preservation Plan which was seconded by Weber. Motion passed unanimously.**

Natural Resources Committee (NRC) Report

- **Conservation Land Management and Open Space Strategy – update:** Epps reported the project had been approved and is currently in the procurement process.

- **Eastover Solar Project – update:** Weber reported the NRC committee is reviewing the proposal from Central Midlands Council of Governments for a potential solar project on county property in Lower Richland, assessing feasibility and next steps before moving forward.
- **Firefly Tourism Grant – update:** Weber reported the NRC committee is awaiting further details on the Firefly Tourism Grant if the grant is awarded.
- **Watershed Planning – update:** McKenzie reported staff is preparing a Request for Proposal and Scope of Services for the Watershed planning project with the goal of getting it to procurement as soon as possible.
- **Forestry Stewardship Plan – update:** Ridgell reported a spring herbicide spray was completed at Cabin Branch North, covering about 17-18 acres. The next step in the plan is to mow/mulch the treated area before conducting the prescribed burn.
- **Jordan Boat Ramp Restoration – update:** Weber reported the project was approved by council with certain caveats.
- **Mill Creek Bridge ribbon cutting – update:** Epps reported a potential event in late October or early November, pending weather.
- **Mitigation Bank Credits – update:** Epps reported no significant changes to mitigation bank credits; however, County Council had approved several mitigation credit sales over prior weeks.
- **Broad River Property – update:** Epps reported no new updates.
- **Bates Old River Landing – update:** Grego reported no new updates.

Conservation Program Analyst's Report

- **Ganus Easement Negotiations – update:** McKenzie reported no new progress on negotiations, with no recent proposals received from the property owner.
- **Fabel Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported his continued work with Josh Fabel to address all required details.
- **Lake Elizabeth Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported discussions continue as they remain interested in pursuing the conservation easement. A board meeting is scheduled for Thursday the 25th, where questions will be addressed in person. The required survey could cost at least \$30,000, which would likely trigger a procurement process and add time to completion. Council has final approval authority for the easement, although Administrator Brown can authorize up to the \$100,000, he may refer the matter to council if any concerns arise.
- **FY25-26 RCCC Grants Schedule – update:** McKenzie reported the USC/Cedar Creek Cemetery grant was still pending as details needed addressing to complete the grant agreement. All other projects were progressing. Over the last four grant seasons, about \$800,000 in conservation grants leveraged over \$1.2 million in total project costs through required matches, donations, and volunteer time.

- **Events – update:** McKenzie reported a celebration of the Master Gardeners’ relocation of the demonstration garden, though the date is still being finalized. Other upcoming events are listed on page two of the agenda. Young added Cedar Creek Community had formed a neighborhood association and invited all commissioners and staff to its annual Fall Festival on Saturday, September 20th.

Conservation Manager’s Report

- **Capital Improvement Project requests – update:** Epps reported on anticipated capital improvement projects, highlighting the \$800–\$850K boat ramp restoration funded entirely by reimbursable grants, the development of phases two and three of the Mill Creek Mitigation Bank with Eco-Capital, and master plans for the Mill Creek and Cabin Branch properties following the countywide open space strategy. He noted mitigation bank expenses may be recouped through Penny funds, but timelines depend on staff capacity, approvals, and coordination with the Natural Resources Committee. Developing credits on county-owned land could cut costs by 50–75% and speed progress, which is critical given the three- to five-year lag on mitigation projects and the urgency to secure stream credits for Penny 2.

New Business: N/A

Public Input: N/A

Adjournment

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