



**2020 Hampton Street · Room 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204
(803) 576-2080
May 20, 2024
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
Deborah DePaoli	8	Yes
Khali Gallman	9	No
Kendrick Scott	10	Yes
Gail Rodriguez	11	No

Staff & Visitors	Affiliation
John McKenzie	Conservation Division
Val Morris	Conservation Division
Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
Emma Holsclaw	Conservation Division
Aric Jensen	Administration
John Sherrer	Historic Columbia

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 or by Zoom.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

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

Report of the Chair

- **Announcement and Introductions:** Morris announced she will be transitioning from the Conservation Division to be the Government Community Relations Associate under Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Jensen. Grego introduced John Sherrer, Director of Preservation for Historic Columbia and Emma Holsclaw, the new Agritourism Intern for Richland Soil and Water Conservation District.
- **Introduction of New Commissioner:** Grego introduced the new commissioner for District 10, Kendrick Scott and Scott shared information about his background.

- **Economic Impact of Historic Preservation - Presentation:** Sherrer shared the results of a recent report commissioned by Historic Columbia about the positive impacts of historic preservation and how they are measurable in jobs, investment, tourism revenues, and property value growth.
- **Greenway Advisory Committee – update:** Grego reported on the early May meeting and shared current work and projections for greenways. Grego reported Epps put together a list of potential greenway projects to be considered for the Penny 2 program.
- **Congaree Biosphere Region – update:** Grego reported the group was still organizing and planning a website and suggested the Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC) should decide how to be a part of the group.
- **Advocacy – update:** Weber reported he spoke with Councilmembers Branham and Weaver about the grants budget and the Ag + Art tour and both showed appreciation for the work done.

Report from Community Planning & Development

- **Administration – update:** Jensen provided an update on the progress in choosing a consultant for the Comprehensive Plan update and hopes they can start on July 1, 2024. There will be a large outreach process in each district. The goal is to wrap up the plan by December 2025 to meet State requirements. He also reported the acceptance of the Forestry Stewardship Plan by County Council at their last meeting.

McKenzie added the timing of procuring a consultant for the Historic Preservation Plan should allow that report and plan to be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

Treasurer’s Report

- **FY23–24 General Budget – update:** Epps reported the challenges of the new software, Workday.
- **FY24-25 General Budget – update:** Weber stated he attended County Council’s budget workshop and there were no questions about the RCCC grant recommendations. Epps explained the schedule and process going forward.

Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) Report

- **Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan Implementation – update:** McKenzie reported the project is currently in the procurement process and is in a negotiation stage.
- **Historic Preservation Plan (HPP) – update:** McKenzie reported the project is currently in the procurement process and a firm has been chosen. Epps added both projects will need to be approved by County Council.
- **Cemetery Protection Ordinance – update:** McKenzie shared the recent passage of the ordinance at County Council.

Natural Resources Committee (NRC) Report

- **Cabin Branch Easements – action item:** Weber introduced the concept of having conservation easements placed on some of the RCCC conservation properties. Epps added because these were not ideal mitigation opportunities, they could be further protected in this manner with administration’s approval.

⇒ **Weber moved to allow staff to proceed with steps to consider conservation easements on conservation lands. which was seconded by Young. Motion passed unanimously.**

- **Recycling Center - update:** No updates were reported.
- **Forestry Stewardship Plan – update:** No updates were reported.
- **Potential Property Purchase – update:** No updates were reported.
- **Rural Tourism and Community Service (RTCS) Zoning for LRTP – update:** No updates were reported.
- **Mill Creek Bridge – update:** Epps reported the project is moving forward with a few contractor’s permitting issues to resolve.
- **Bates Old River – update:** No updates were reported.
- **Mitigation Bank Credits – update:** No updates were reported.

Conservation Program Analyst’s Report

- **City of Columbia Waterworks Grant Project – action item:** McKenzie explained the request from the grant manager to move funds within that grant budget to pay for new hardware that was determined to be necessary.

⇒ **Grego moved to approve the City of Columbia’s grant budget change which was seconded by Weber. Motion passed unanimously.**

- **Fabel Easement – update:** McKenzie reported the easement agreement is being reviewed and he is continuing to try to get surveying quotes.
- **Lake Elizabeth Conservation Easement – update:** No updates were reported.

- **FY23-24 RCCC Grants – update:** McKenzie reported the grantees were recently reminded of the upcoming June 14th deadline for final paperwork and all projects seemed to be wrapping up on time.
- **Events – update:** McKenzie stated there will be grant project events to be scheduled and promoted as the grant cycle ends

Conservation Manager’s Report

- **New Penny/Penny II recommendations – discussion:** Epps explained the process of how County Council will move the Penny II forward and shared a list of potential recommendations to be reviewed by the NRC. He also presented some rough estimates of construction costs.
- **Ag + Art Tour – update and volunteer invite:** Epps shared the dates of the tour and encouraged signing up to volunteer.
- **Staff Vacancy - update:** Epps reported the hiring process is underway for the newly selected candidate for the Land Program Planner position and he will be posting for the vacant Administrative Assistant position.
- **New Business:** None reported
- **Public Input:** None reported
- **Adjournment:**

⇒ **At 5:09 pm, Young moved to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Squirewell. Motioned passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted, John McKenzie