



2020 Hampton Street · Room 3063A
 Columbia, SC 29204
 (803) 576-2083

Minutes
September 19, 2022
4th Floor Conference Room

Attendance

Commissioner	District	Present
Charles Weber	1	Yes
Tim McSwain	2	No
Wayman Stover	3	Yes
Glenice Pearson	4	Yes
Kip Dillihay	5	Yes
John Grego	6	Yes
Robert Squirewell	7	Yes
Deborah DePaoli	8	Yes
Khali Gallman	9	Yes
Darrell Jackson Jr.	10	Yes
Gail Rodriguez	11	Yes

Staff & Visitors	Affiliation
Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
John McKenzie	Conservation Division
Aric Jensen	County Administration

Call to Order

Grego welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:34pm. Members, staff, and guests met in-person or by telephone.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

- ⇒ **Dillihay moved to approve the minutes of the August meeting which was seconded by Weber. Motion passed unanimously.**

Report of the Chair

- **Lower Richland Tourism Plan (LRTP) – update:** Grego reported he presented the LRTP to the Planning Commission on September 8. It was their first time seeing the plan and they had questions. They chose to defer for one month before they make a recommendation to Council to add the LRTP as an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan.

- o **Congaree Biosphere Region – update:** Grego reported he attended a meeting and there was interest in the LRTP. Cliff McReedy, who oversees the program, offered to help with a logo and funding opportunities. Grego will arrange a meeting to discuss with McReedy.
- **Land Development Code (LDC)-Remapping Restart – update:** Grego reported the Planning Commission was discussing many more amendments to the LDC and many of those went along with the RCCC recommendations. There was discussion of rural zoning and density and Jensen explained the consultant’s recommendation of preserving large, working lands to continue farming and to designate smaller, homestead farming separately. There are also transition designations proposed as a buffer from urban zoning.

Grego expressed concerns over a “patchwork” of designations and Jensen explained it was due to people separating their home from their farm for tax purposes. Jensen also stated the Planning Commission recommended a “cool down” period of 12 months after adoption on the LDC for land owners in the agricultural zones to be able to come in and petition, at no charge, to change to a different designation, based on land use. Grego also had concerns over antipathy for cluster development, used in an effort to create more open space.

- **Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan – update:** Epps reported the plan should be presented to the Development and Services committee on September 27, 2022 but there is not yet an agenda out to confirm.
- **5-Year Strategic Plan – update:** Pearson stated she would like to have it on the record she has brought to the attention of the RCCC she has a real concern about the Development process in Richland County that is destroying the historic African American sites without those sites having been subjected to any documentation and furthermore to suggest the RCCC and the Development division take this under consideration and somehow address the issue. Pearson stated, after reviewing the ordinance and the codes that control the RCCC, this is an impact on the work of this commission. Weber suggested these concerns should be vetted in the Historic Preservation Committee’s meeting. Pearson stated the committee has no control over anything having to do with development.

Report from Community Planning and Development

- **Update:** Jensen stated there was nothing to add.

Treasurer’s Report

- **FY22 General Budget status – update:** Epps explained there was an erroneous PO he is working on getting corrected. Stover asked about maintenance and the costs and funds for Pinewood Lake Park (PLP). Epps explained there is an unfilled position that oversees maintenance and offered to bring Stover up to date in another conversation.

Historic Preservation Committee Report

- **Historic Tourism Marketing Plan (HTMP) - update:** Pearson stated she had concern about the HTMP being on the agenda for the D&S Committee because of the previous delays. She reminded everyone this project is connected to the opening of the International African American Museum on January 21, 2023 in Charleston. She hoped to get the chosen vendor started on their work and to be able to notify public entities so they can better prepare for marketing local resources and businesses. Councilmember Barron stated the item is indeed on the agenda for the meeting. Grego asked if Barron had any questions and she replied she had all of her questions already answered and she plans to make the motion to move it to full Council. Councilmember Barron explained when a committee recommendation is approved it moves up to the Council agenda and then Council will vote on that recommendation. She stated that agenda items are decided by the Chair. Jensen added there is a period time after recommendations come out of committee where the Chair and the Clerk of Council decide to add them to the agenda, usually one week before the Council meeting.
- **African-American Tourism Conference – update:** Pearson stated she, DePaoli and Epps are preparing to attend the October 7-8, 2022 conference in downtown Charleston. She hopes to have a Historic Preservation Committee meeting soon after to talk about the information and ideas they gather.

Natural Resource Committee Report

- **Lake Elizabeth donation acceptance – work in progress/no action needed**
- **Columbia Rowing Club --- work in progress/no action needed**
- **Bates Old River – work in progress/no action needed**
- **Hopkins Tract Purchase – work in progress/no action needed**

Weber reported all agenda items were works in progress with no action needed.

Conservation Program Analyst's Report

- **FY2022-2023 RCCC Grants –** McKenzie reported Sandy Level Baptist Church is still working to determine what they can complete with \$31,000 award as opposed to the \$50,000 requested and they have not signed a grant agreement. McKenzie explained the original proposal was to remove vinyl siding, repair and wash the original siding and paint. They would start the process of restoring the windows with any remaining funds. There was discussion of deadlines for grantees and the possible need to redistribute the funds.
- ⇒ **Rodriguez moved to give Sandy Level Baptist Church a 30-day deadline for delivery of a signed agreement, starting September 20, 2022, which was seconded by Weber. Motion passed unanimously.**

There was discussion of the upcoming FY23-24 grant cycle and McKenzie stated application are submitted from December 1, 2022 through February 1, 2023. There was discussion of advertising and promoting the grant program to ensure it reaches diverse audiences.

- **Fabel Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported preparation of the potential easement was on track.
- **Events/Celebrations – update:** McKenzie stated he, Jensen, Weber, and McSwain attended the Friends of Harbison State Forest Annual Meeting where the group showed appreciation for grant awards and talked about upcoming projects. McKenzie shared an invitation to the Blythewood Historical Society and Museum’s Open House event, on Sunday, October 3, 2022, to celebrate the renovation of the building with the help of grant funds.

Conservation Manager’s Report

- **Staff vacancies – update:** Epps stated two offers have been declined for the Administrative Assistant position and there have not been any well-qualified applicants to date for the Land Program Planner position.
- **Reserve Fund – discussion:** Epps suggested the committees develop recommendations for the Special Reserve Funds to give to the RCCC for approval. Because actions will involve Procurement or Council, we need to get started soon to complete in a timely manner. Grego stated we have a \$1.4 million liability for the loan of the Mill Creek upper tract and we have, in the RCCC’s Annual Plan, plans to improve the Mill Creek roads, replace the bridge there, and start the Forestry Stewardship initiatives.

Pearson asked about the process of working with other organizations or hiring outside support for projects she considers too large for the RCCC or beyond the staff’s ability. DePaoli asked if using a portion of the Special Reserve Funds to expand the grant program would be acceptable. Epps answered, in his opinion, the funds should not be used for programs we do every year. Expanding the annual grant program would become an annual expense and funds we have available are one-time funds from our Special Reserve Fund. If the RCCC wants to expand our grant program, we should take those funds from our annual operating budget which is not one-time funds or request additional funds from Council. Epps recommended expenditures from the Special Reserve fund need to occur as quickly as possible to be initiated this fiscal year because most of the recommended projects will involve Procurement and Council.

- **Mill Creek Bridge design – update:** There are no project changes and no update was needed.

New Business

There was no new business presented.

- ⇒ **At 4:56pm, Weber moved to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Pearson. Motion passed unanimously.**