



2020 Hampton Street • Room 3063A  
P.O. Box 192 • Columbia, SC 29202  
(803) 576-2083

## Minutes January 23, 2012

### **Attendance:**

Members present: Carol Kososki, John Grego, Sam Holland, Glenice Pearson, Jim Lawracy, Becky Bailey, Virginia Sanders, and Mildred Myers

Absent: Gary Atkinson, Margaret DuBard, Frank Houston

### Others Present:

James B. Atkins (Buddy), Environmental Planning Division  
Nancy Stone-Collum, Environmental Planning Division  
Chanda Cooper, Environmental Planning Division  
Charlie Fisher, Environmental Planning Division  
Ken Driggers, Legal

Chair Carol Kososki called the meeting to order at 4:10 pm.

**Minutes:** A motion was made by John Grego and seconded by Sam Holland to approve the minutes of November 28, 2011 as written. The vote in favor was unanimous.

**Agenda:** Nancy Stone-Collum requested the Greenway Plan be removed as an action item. Buddy Atkins added he would provide an update on the Caughman Pond in his report. Glenice Pearson made a motion to amend the agenda with the requested changes. The motion was seconded by Sam Holland and approved.

### **FY 13 Budget**

Carol Kososki read the purposes and objectives outlined in the ordinance creating the RCCC to help clarify the Commission's responsibilities. The current organizational structure (creating an Environmental Planning Division (EPD) responsible for staffing the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD) and the Commission) when Jim Wilson retired has not worked as well as planned. A letter from the RCCC to Milton Pope, County Administrator was distributed for review. The letter requests a meeting with Mr. Pope to discuss the need for an additional staff member and the current organizational structure within the Planning Department (letter attached to file minutes).

Buddy reviewed the FY13 budget he will be submitting to Finance by the end of the week. He explained the RSWCD's budget funds the salaries of Buddy, Chanda Cooper, and Charlie Fisher and use of a vehicle from general funds. The one-half mill for the Commission funds Nancy Stone-Collum's salary, office expenses, and easement and grant programs.

The original restructuring plan included a fifth person for the office; however Administration determined additional staffing could be provided from the Planning Department. To date, little additional staff assistance has been provided, nor has the EPD been fully integrated into the Planning Department. Staffing the Appearance Commission has now been assigned to EPD and the Sustainability Coordinator will be moved under EPD as well starting in FY13. With the addition of mitigation banking, sustainability, natural resource plan review, staffing the Appearance Commission, and various special projects, an additional staff person is needed. The Commission discussed various alternative organizational structures and concluded the best option would be an independent Office of Conservation and Sustainability.

The chairs of RCCC and RSWCD have requested a meeting with Milton Pope to discuss our organizational structure and budget needs. Before adopting the budget Nancy explained the Executive Committee had voted to allocate \$80,000 for Community Conservation Grants and \$170,000 for Historic Preservation Grants. Jim Lawracy moved to approve the FY13 budget as presented and the letter to Milton Pope. Virginia Sanders seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.

### **Environmental Division Manager's Report**

SCE&G Transmission Line – County Council agreed to a settlement with South Carolina Electric and Gas (SCE&G) for the County's withdrawal from the case before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina. SCE&G will pay the county \$300,000 for easements, including Commission property at Longtown, will relocate the existing transmission line at the Regional Sports Complex to the edge of the property at a cost of approximately \$700,000, and will pay an additional \$1 million to the County.

Northeast Landfill – On January 10, 2012 Council approved an extension for the life of the Northeast Landfill to total 30 years. Republic Services increased the amount of the host fees which equals approximately \$5.6 million over the next 30 years. Unfortunately a motion for first right of refusal for the purchase of Cook's Mountain by the County was not made. Therefore, the County was unable to acquire Cook's Mountain and there will be no public access.

Mitigation Banking – County Council Chair, Kelvin Washington, asked staff to prepare a presentation for the Council Retreat in January on mitigation banking. Mitigation banking requires an investment of money from Council but provides revenue from the sale of mitigation credits and allows the county to manage its schedule of work projects. Negotiations continue with Alan Kahn and Hugh Palmer on the Jackson Creek Mitigation Bank at Decker.

Green Development – Two years ago the Commission issued the first Green Development grant to the Wall Development Group for an infill development off Two Notch Road utilizing low impact development techniques. The design work has been completed and the Wall Group reimbursed. However, the project has not proceeded due to the flat housing market and the Wall Group has not submitted any reports as required. The Project Manager recently left the Wall Group and the developer and the project will most probably not proceed. Buddy will write Mr. Craig Wall and inform him the grant will be cancelled unless substantial progress is made. If the project is cancelled, the remaining grant balance of \$15,343 will revert to the capital fund.

Caughman Pond – In December 2011, County Council voted to purchase the 44-acre property but to exclude the dam as a result of the engineering feasibility study indicating \$1.8 million in repairs were needed to the dam to meet the requirements of the SC Dam Safety Act. Upon reviewing the contract, Buddy contacted Milton Pope and Larry Smith, County attorney about the absence of water rights language in the contract. By not owning the dam, the County has no control over the water elevations on the pond and has no requirement for the owner to repair or rebuild the dam when it fails. Buddy reported the County attorney has included water rights in the contract which is under internal review. Staff has been asked for further input on this matter.

## **Committee Reports**

### Conservation Committee

John Grego indicated dates need to be set for committee members to hear grant presentations. The deadline for submitting grants is February 21 so presentations will be held in March.

Nancy mentioned there are requests to look at two more easement properties in the Northwest part of the county.

### Historic Committee

Nancy reported a partnership group has approached the county about the possibility of purchasing the Curtiss-Wright Hangar to renovate it for a restaurant and aviation-themed event locale. The proposed sale will be discussed at Council Retreat and a motion will be made for County staff to review the legal aspects of the possible sale. Ken Driggers suggested a reversionary clause would be useful if the hangar is sold. Nancy has been contacted by an interested citizen and by Dawn Hinshaw, a reporter for *The State* about a former textile workers' union hall in Olympia. It has been cited by the County as uninhabitable; the owners have six months to take action and make repairs by J.O. Horton and L. Horton. It is hoped the newspaper article will put pressure on the owner to make repairs. Glenice Pearson recommended the book *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American History*. She explained that since the public presentation of the history of enslavement of African people and their descendants in the public domain is not a settled matter, and, since this body is a public body whose work is supported by public funds, a better understanding of these varying points of view might be useful as an additional decision-making tool.

### Finance Committee

No report was given

Since it was 5:25pm, Jim Lawracy made a motion to extend the meeting for an additional ten minutes; the motion was seconded by John Grego and approved.

Outreach Committee – Sam intends to contact the county’s Public Information Office to see about getting our grant notices out. Chanda is working with the IT department on the design of the new web site.

### **Conservation Coordinator’s Report**

Grants - Nancy referred everyone to the grant spreadsheet (attached to file minutes) with the status of the current year’s grants. The most recently completed grant is for the Cowasee Basin photographic book which recognizes the Commission on the title page and should be available in March. Revised guidelines and applications for FY13 grants have been distributed and publicized in *The State* and on the county website. Carol encouraged everyone to make their contacts aware of the grant opportunities.

Greenways - Val Hutchinson asked for a Greenways update at County Council’s Retreat but Administration requested a brief written update instead which was distributed to Commission members (attached to file minutes).

Events - Awakening to Eco Spirituality, sponsored by the Commission is a public lecture and discussion starting tonight at 701 Whaley with an all-day session tomorrow. Gills Creek Watershed Association and Rocky Branch Watershed Alliance will hold a joint meeting on February 9 at the Capitol Seniors’ Center on Little Sugar Creek in Charlotte.

The meeting adjourned at 5:40pm.

**Next meeting:** Monday, February 27, 2012 at 4:00 pm at the Richland County Administration Building

Submitted by  
Charlie Fisher  
Administrative Assistant