



**2020 Hampton Street · Room 3063A Columbia, SC 29204**  
**(803) 576-2083**  
**Minutes**  
**March 20, 2023**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room**

**Attendance**

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

<b>Staff &amp; Visitors</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
John McKenzie	Conservation Division
Val Morris	Conservation Division
Jim Young	Guest

**Call to Order**

Grego welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order without a quorum at 3:40pm. Members, staff, and guests met in-person or by Zoom.

**Approval of Agenda**

No vote was taken.

**Approval of Minutes**

No vote was taken.

**Report of the Chair**

- Lower Richland Tourism Plan (LRTP) – update:** Grego reported the LRTP is still waiting on approval. He reminded the Commissioners the Planning Commission made the LRTP a recommendation to Richland County Council to adopt the LRTP as part of the County’s Comprehensive Master Plan.

- **Land Development Code (LDC) – update:** Grego reported there will be a public meeting March 22, 2023 in the Lower Richland Community.
- **Annual Work Plan – action:** Grego reported he will present the Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC) Annual Work Plan to County Council on Tuesday, March 21, 2023.
- **Advocacy – discussion:** Gallman reported she introduced herself to Councilwoman Gretchen Barron at the International Women’s Day Celebration Toast event which was held by Historic Columbia and The City Women. Gallman stated she informed Barron about the projects with the Commission. Grego reported he will be a judge for the SC Envirothon Competition which will be held on Friday, April 28, at Clemson Sandhill Research and Education Center in Columbia. Dillihay reported he has a meeting planned with his councilmember next week.
- **Climate Action Plan – discussion:** Grego reported Greenville and Charleston Counties have Climate Action Plans and there has been a discussion with the Natural Resources Committee (NRC) along with Epps to implement a Climate Action Plan with Richland County.

#### **Report from Community Planning and Development**

- **Land Development Code-Remapping Restart – update:** No update was provided.

#### **Treasurer’s Report**

- **FY22 General Budget status – update:** McKenzie reported he received a message from Squirewell stating there are no significant changes since last month’s report.

#### **Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) Report**

- **Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan – update:** Gallman stated she spoke with Robin Waites at Historic Columbia and everything is moving along. McKenzie reported Historic Columbia has completed their audits of current sites and marketing platforms. They have hired Destination Analysts, to help gather information for their databases. Once the Destination Analysts report is received and completed, Historic Columbia will update RCCC with the new information, hopefully by next month’s meeting.

#### **Natural Resources Committee (NRC) Report**

- **Mill Creek Bridge – update:** Work in progress/no action taken.
- **Columbia Rowing Club – update:** Work in progress/no action taken.
- **Bates Old River – update:** Grego reported he’s in the process of speaking with Rep. Jermaine Johnson and Rep. Heather Bauer to get kickstart the project.
- **Mitigation Bank Credits – update:** Work in progress/no action taken.
- **Forestry Stewardship Plan – update:** Grego reported NRC has charged staff to start identifying and evaluating contactors to implement the plan.

## Conservation Program Analyst's Report

- **FY 22-23 RCCC Grants – update:** McKenzie presented a spreadsheet showing the progress of the FY22-23 grants. He stated overall recipients are on task. Dutch Fork fell behind with their projects but is now on track. Zion Baptist Church has completed their roofing project and is scheduling a tour, (date to be determined) to give the history of the church. Sandy Level Baptist Church project is at a stand-still, they are waiting on permission from their review board to add vinyl siding and new windows to the church.
- **FY 23-24 RCCC Grants – discussion:** McKenzie stated he spoke with Ms. Davis at Second Nazareth Baptist Church to discuss other options than using stucco for the windows. He gave her multiple vendors that she could contact to assist her with this matter.
- **Conservation Easement – update:** McKenzie reported the Fabel easement has stalled. He believes that the property owner is really busy and there has been a lack of communication between he and the property owner. The Blythewood easement didn't materialize. They've made different arrangements with the City of Blythewood. The potential Meetze easement is still a work in progress.
- **Events – update:** Morris reported the Statewide Ag + Art Tour kickoff event will be held on April 18 at USC and Richland County kickoff event is May 30 at the Clemson Sandhill Research and Education Center in Columbia.

## Conservation Manager's Report

- **Annual budget submission – update:** McKenzie reported Epps and Jensen met with County Administration to discuss the proposed FY23-24 Budget proposal. In attendance were the Administrator, Assistant County Administrators, the Finance Director, Budget Director and others. There were questions regarding the requests for funds from the Special Reserve Fund where we plan to spend on the implementation of the Heritage Tourism Management Plan (HTMP), a Historic Preservation Plan for Richland County, protection strategies for the Randolph Cemetery and other historic projects, and potential conservation land purchases. Most of the questions were about spending down the Special Reserve Fund and not having a large balance for use in the future. Epps explained the amounts listed for the potential projects were hopefully conservative estimates and we would not know the correct amounts until the Scope of Services was developed, procurement initiated and bids received for the proposed projects.
- **Staff vacancies – update:** McKenzie reported there were interviews and a candidate was selected for the Land Program Planner position. Because the candidate is not at an entry level, Epps sent a request to the Budget Director on 10 March 23 for more than the entry level salary and is waiting on a response before moving forward with an offer as part of the County hiring process and has not heard back.
- **Mitigation Bank – update:** McKenzie reported the Mill Creek Mitigation Bank has sold or used 249.79 wetland and 27,712.84 stream credits for a little over \$6 million dollars of revenue generated for the Transportation Penny.

**New Business:** None

**Public Input:** None

⇒ **At 4:21 pm, Grego adjourned the meeting.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Val Morris