



2020 Hampton Street • Room 3063A  
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## Minutes November 20, 2017

### **Attendance:**

Members present: Charles Weber, Margaret DuBard, Carol Kososki, Glenice Pearson, John Grego, Virginia Sanders, Lee Rambo, Sam Holland, and Becky Bailey

Absent: Jennifer Carter, Jim Thomas

### Others present:

Quinton Epps, Conservation Division  
Nancy Stone-Collum, Conservation Division  
Ken Driggers, Legal Counsel  
Chip Jackson, County Council District 9  
Tracy Hegler, Community Planning & Development (CP&D) Department  
Meghan Sullivan, Community Planning & Development Department  
Heather Brown, Floodplain Coordinator  
Ward Marotti, WK Dickson  
Marc Horstman, WK Dickson

Chairwoman Carol Kososki called the meeting to order at 3:35 pm. Carol expressed her thanks to Councilman Chip Jackson for his help during the council budget debates. Introductions of all present were made.

### **Approval of Agenda and Minutes**

John Grego made a motion to approve the agenda and the minutes which were seconded by Virginia Sanders and approved. Carol noted that Glenice Pearson was participating via speaker phone and she encouraged all members who could not attend to take advantage of this option.

### **Report of the Chair**

Carol reported that Council had given second reading on November 14 to bond up to \$250 million for Transportation Penny projects. This still needs third reading approval.

### **Walden Pond Presentation**

Quinton Epps explained that the Walden Pond dam on Spears Creek Road breached in the Oct. 2015 flood. The Walden Pond Property Owners Association (WPPOA) has decided it does not want to repair the dam due to the cost. The dam provided flood protection for downstream areas and not replacing it would increase downstream flooding in future events. Therefore, WPPOA has

requested RCCC fund a feasibility study to determine if the dam could be removed, wetlands and streams restored, and the downstream increase in flooding avoided. If the study showed this could be done, and funding and approvals were obtained, WPPOA would donate 30 acres for a public park. Opportunities for mitigation exist which could help pay for the project.

WK Dickson has an on-call engineering team contract with Public Works so they were asked by Quinton to develop a scope of work and cost proposal for a feasibility study on flood attenuation and mitigation credits. Ward Marotti and Marc Horstman gave a presentation about how a study would be conducted. Because the dam provided some upstream flood storage, the study would have to determine how much water it held back and how to match the attenuation to prevent downstream flooding. Using EPA's Storm Water Management Model (SWMM), they will model the floodplain configurations, calculate the duration of flooding, and analyze the options. Councilman Jackson asked about county liability if the dam were removed and was told the liability is greatly reduced since the high hazard dam would no longer exist. Charles Weber asked if county ordinances would be reviewed because stormwater from upstream development could detrimentally impact the project. Quinton mentioned that the Stormwater Division is going through a revision of its ordinances to meet the new county National Pollution Discharge & Elimination System (NPDES) permit. RCCC can review and comment on proposed changes during 2018.

President George HW Bush's declaration of no net loss of wetlands in 1989 was the impetus for mitigation. WK Dickson did the mitigation work at Spring Valley. A preliminary review of the site indicates a stream meander of 1800 ft. could be built and 18 - 19 acres of wetlands restored. Sale of stream and wetland credits could generate \$2.5 million in gross revenues. Additional benefits from this project are net water quality and habitat improvement, improvements to downstream water, low long-term maintenance, and recreational use. A downtown mitigation project in Spartanburg resulted in a new linear park with stream and walking trails. The Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) provides two years for repair of dams before stream and wetland areas are naturalized and become jurisdictional. These areas cannot then be utilized for ACE 404 mitigation credits. WK Dickson began talking with the county in March 2017 and hopes that the ACE will take that into consideration for the 2-year timeframe.

The cost of the feasibility study is \$33,200 to be paid by RCCC. Carol asked about sources of funding for implementation to which Ward replied that permittee responsible mitigation, 319 grants, and Stormwater Utility Funds had been used in their other projects. Ward reminded members that mitigation credits would likely bring a 100% return that could be used to pay for implementation. Quinton said the likelihood of getting funds from anywhere but the county was low.

Glenice asked how this project relates to other privately-owned dams that were breached by the flood and would it set a precedent for home owner associations (HOAs) to come to the RCCC for funding projects. Quinton replied that most of the other HOAs want to rebuild and are not interested in donating their land to the county; however, it is possible other HOAs could request the same action. Mr. Jackson said he didn't want to create a path for contentious HOAs to get out of their obligations. Ken agreed it could create demand but John pointed out RCCC and the county

have a specific interest in flood control and water quality that are addressed by this project. Mr. Jackson warned that public perception is important since it was seen that the county had used mitigation to fix a problem affecting upscale homes in Spring Valley. Ken said the project should be explained as restoring the hydrology and finding ecologically sustainable solutions.

Tracy Hegler was asked about the stormwater design standards that are undergoing revision by Public Works and Planning. She said there were proposals being considered to give greater downstream analysis for development and to be compliant with the NPDES permit. WK Dickson will make projections for high density impact and look at zoning and current and future land use above the dam/pond. Mr. Jackson mentioned a rezoning issue he dealt with recently on Rimer Pond and Hardscrabble Roads where an additional 90-100 homes would cause pressure on the downstream dam. He wants the process for how stormwater flows will be managed to happen on the front end rather than after the rezoning.

Charles moved to approve funding the feasibility study at a cost of \$33,200 which was seconded by John and approved unanimously.

### **Report of the CP&D Director**

#### County Initiatives

Funds from FEMA are now available for the buy-out of flooded homes from the 2015 flood. There are 72 parcels in the county where the buildings will be razed and returned to green space. Staff is developing a land use plan to determine the best use for the open space – park, natural area, or lease to adjoining neighbor. The plan should be available in January. Buildings must be demolished within 90 days of closing. Many of the properties are on Glenhaven Drive and Timberlane Road adjacent to the proposed Gills Creek Greenway; 15 are scattered throughout the county. Staff is responsible for procuring all the vendors which includes appraisers, closing attorneys, and demolition contractors.

#### Lower Richland Tourism Plan

Tracy suggested she would like to have Councilwoman Myers meet with the steering committee to determine what their top project for implementation is. This is a technique she used with the Mill District Master Plan. John asked that it be expanded to include stakeholders and Nancy said RCCC members should be included. Tracy thought a meeting could be scheduled for the week of Dec. 4.

#### Conservation Easement Strategic Plan

The plan was presented to the Council priority setting session October 26 and favorably received. RCCC is free to move forward with implementing the plan. Tracy will send the plan with a cover memo to Council for information.

#### Pinewood Lake Park

A legal agreement has been sent to Mr. Seals concerning the Hospitality Tax funding that takes RCCC out of managing the \$75,000 directed to Pinewood Lake Park Foundation. Virginia asked if funding would be available to the Foundation in time for their Christmas activities. Tracy thought that was a good goal to shoot for.

*Charles moved and Virginia seconded a motion to extend the meeting 15 minutes which was approved.*

#### Council Priority Setting Session

Tracy reviewed the Conservation Easement Strategic Plan with Council and mentioned the strategic plan RCCC is embarking on and that Council members would be contacted for feedback. Chairwoman Dickerson expressed interest in developing more emphasis on tourism for historic properties in the county, such as the Pine Grove Rosenwald School in District 2. Mr. Chip Jackson conveyed the need to grow businesses to meet the needs of eco-tourism.

#### **Conservation Committee Report**

John reported the committee had received a request from the Friends of the Children's Garden to approve a revision of their grant. Clemson Sandhills Research & Education Center has changed its focus to agri-business and agriculture research. The Friends are having difficulty carrying out their programs at the Children's Garden and have therefore decided to take the Garden of Eatin' to K-5 schools in the vicinity. The budget has been revised to cover more supplies for school classes as well as onsite instruction time. The committee approved the request. Mr. Jackson said he'd had a candid discussion with Kathy Coleman, the director of Sandhills, and told her the county and RCCC wanted to be involved partners in a tangible way, not just in name.

Staff met with Congaree Land Trust staff to discuss collaboration for a Landscape Scale Conservation Plan and presented the idea to the Conservation Committee. Richland County would provide GIS parcel data and information related to Green Infrastructure and future land use to Dr. Robert Baldwin of Clemson University. In return, RCCC will be provided full access to the results of each parcel's natural resource value. Due to lack of time for discussion, Charles moved and John seconded a motion to defer discussion of the project until the January meeting. The motion was approved.

#### **Conservation Coordinator's Report**

Nancy reported on the process for the strategic plan. Colleen Bozard and Anne Sinclair will have phone interviews with Tracy Hegler and Jamelle Ellis, Ken Driggers, Buddy Atkins, and Dr. Donaldson, as well as all Council members. Two focus groups for conservation and historic will be held Dec 7. A six-hour Commission retreat will be held toward the end of January. A poll will be sent for members to indicate their availability.

Nancy reminded members of the holiday drop-in on Dec 12 and encouraged them to invite their Council member. The notice for the FY19 grant cycle is being sent out and ads are scheduled to run in several papers. The deadline for submission is February 5.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Stone-Collum, Conservation Coordinator