



2020 Hampton Street • Room 3063A  
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(803) 576-2083

## Minutes October 16, 2017

### **Attendance:**

Members present: Charles Weber, Jim Thomas, Carol Kososki, John Grego, Virginia Sanders, Lee Rambo, and Becky Bailey

Absent: Glenice Pearson, Jennifer Carter, Margaret DuBard, Sam Holland

### Others present:

Quinton Epps, Conservation Division  
Nancy Stone-Collum, Conservation Division  
Tracy Hegler, Community Planning & Development (CP&D) Department  
Meghan Sullivan, Community Planning & Development Department  
David Beaty, Transportation Penny Project Development Team

Chairwoman Carol Kososki called the meeting to order at 3:35 pm.

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

Charles Weber made a motion to approve the agenda which was seconded by Lee Rambo and approved. John Grego moved and Charles seconded a motion to approve the minutes from July 17, 2017 which was approved. Notes from the September 18 meeting were reviewed and accepted.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Virginia Sanders reviewed the budget and Nancy Stone-Collum pointed out that the \$77,000 under Advertising includes \$75,000 for Hospitality Tax funds for Pinewood Lake Park Foundation (PLPF).

### **Report of the Chair**

Carol passed two newspaper articles around concerning the Transportation Penny and the future of Title Max. Introductions were made for the sake of David Beaty and Meghan Sullivan, the recently hired Sustainability Planner for Community Planning & Development Department.

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

Pinewood Lake Park

Tracy Hegler, Director of Community Planning & Development, reported that neither of the contracts between the county and PLPF are in place. This summer there was an effort to merge the hospitality tax agreement with the management agreement but it was determined they should be kept separate. Tracy has been working to keep RCCC from having to administer the Hospitality Tax funds of \$75,000 to PLPF; Councilwoman Myers' motion has been interpreted differently by Administration, the Budget Director, and Legal. RCCC approved a motion in June asking the Administration to charge the Grants Manager with administering the Hospitality Tax funds. If the impasse can't be resolved, Plan B is to go back to Council for clarification.

The management agreement with PLPF has also been difficult since there is no precedent for the county owning and managing a property but partnering with a private organization. PLPF has been doing a good job with day-to-day activities at the park and is essential for the transition to county management. Nancy suggested an addition to the agreement that RCCC have a liaison to the PLPF Board, since the Commission asked Virginia Sanders to serve in that role. The agreement is still in the Legal Dept. Tracy will try to get both documents to the Administrator to finalize matters.

A third issue regarding the park is PLPF ownership of the dam which will require council action to take ownership. Those discussions have not taken place. There has been no feedback from the memo sent recommending fencing at the dam to prevent access to the trail on the west side.

Phase 2 of the capital improvements is in the design stage for the community center, boardwalk and parking lot paving. Funds for the dam repair (once ownership is transferred) could be diverted from other items in phase 2. Charles urged action on transferring ownership of the dam due to the increased costs for repair and maintenance. Tracy said staff needs a more proactive role in dealing with the capital improvements. Chao and Associates has been informed that Quinton and Tracy must be involved in addition to the Capital Projects Manager. John expressed concern about paving the parking lot uphill from the lake and a lack of best management practices. Tracy pointed out we are bound by a contract signed before RCCC was involved and vendors have been approved for a specific scope of work. Tracy is not comfortable taking the agreements to the county Administrator without Legal's approval. Carol asked for a resolution of the agreements by the November meeting.

Quinton submitted the job description for the Park Land Manager to Human Resources in August and has supplied subsequent information and answers to HR. Carol requested follow-up on the progress of getting a position posted.

Hopkins' Magistrate Letter can be sent to Council.

#### Lower Richland Tourism Plan

Tracy explained there are several Administrative initiatives underway that will marry and support the recommendations of the Tourism Plan. When Ms. Myers read the plan, she recognized the possible synergy with the other plans. Tracy said it was her job to ensure that

the Tourism Plan is in harmony with the other initiatives and can capitalize on the momentum of each plan.

### Strategic Plans

Council is having a priority setting session October 26-27 which will include a session on conservation. New council members and questions about conservation mean that the session is a good opportunity for a broad discussion and for our plans to be part of the bigger vision council is developing. Carol expressed a need for RCCC to be present at the conservation session. This is a unique opportunity to explain to Council and receive guidance from Council on issues of easements, acquisition, and eco-tourism. Charles requested more briefing for Tracy before she presents at the priority setting session.

Gunrod Gut easement was mentioned and could be brought up during the session but Carol thought it would be better to focus on the conservation easement strategic plan.

Ken Driggers' contract is moving through the Legal Dept. It was amended to remove much of the consultant language to focus on legal expertise and advice. It should go to the Administrator shortly.

### **Transportation Penny Greenways Report**

David Beaty, Program Manager for the Transportation Penny Project Development Team (PDT), was invited to report on the progress of the Greenways section of the Penny projects. Carol, Quinton, and Nancy are active members of the Greenways Advisory Committee that has been meeting since 2014.

David summarized the process: \$21 million was approved in the 2012 referendum for 15 greenway projects. All are being treated as cost constrained – project costs cannot exceed the amount that was approved for each one. In 2014, the greenways were ranked from 1 to 15. A five-year plan was developed for 2016 that the PDT is still working under. Council will decide soon whether to allow bonding for penny projects or whether it will be pay as you go; then a new five-year plan can be developed.

Status of projects: The Three Rivers Greenway was ranked # 1 and construction has recently begun on pouring concrete for the 3-mile trail which should be complete in 2018. The Lincoln Tunnel or Vista Greenway has been completed and open for a year. Gills Creek Section A was ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in priority. A public meeting in 2016 resulted in the trail being moved from the east side of the creek to the west side. After a second public meeting in 2017, the northern terminus was moved from Lake Katherine down to Fort Jackson Blvd. at Crowson Road. It will run along the creek as far as the money allows, hopefully to Bright Ave, 1500 ft. below Rosewood Drive. Council directed that no more design work could be done until the maintenance agreement between the county and city of Columbia has been signed. It was submitted to county staff last June and only last week was it sent to the city attorney's office.

Smith/Rocky Branch C has not had any work done on it since the city has 3-4 studies underway in the area – old baseball field redevelopment, EPA grant, Mill District Plan, and the Rocky

Branch Watershed Alliance Greenway Plan. Until the results of the plans are available, the PDT can't determine where to design the greenway – the options being somewhere between the Congaree River and Maxcy Gregg Park.

Gills Creek Section B which runs behind Kings Grant and through Fort Jackson has been vigorously opposed by residents of Kings Grant. As a result, the PDT recommended to the Transportation Ad Hoc Committee that \$2.7 million from Section B be moved to Section A to extend the greenway to close to Lantana Drive. The Committee determined this was a policy decision as to whether funds from a rejected project should flow up the chain to complete others, move down to kick start a project, or be moved to a different category. Ultimately this is a legal question.

The remaining greenways are not programmed for any design work until after 2020 or 2021, and that will be reconfigured in a new five-year plan to be developed in 2018. Council has to decide whether bonds will be issued or pay as you go which impacts scheduling. The PDT thinks \$250 million in bonds is the most that could reasonably be spent over 3-5 years. Council must balance bond interest rates, construction inflation, and the ability to get the work done. With the recently passed gas tax increase, DOT will be issuing contracts for \$3 billion/yr. and the commitment to rebuild Malfunction Junction over a ten-year period will drive up construction inflation and take up all the capacity.

A factor in the length of the Gills Creek Greenway is the city standards which require a 14ft-wide trail for urban and 12ft with a 14ft base for rural trails. The wider the trail, the shorter the length that can be built with the \$2.3 million for Section A.

David emphasized that projects are not over running; the cost estimates for the road widenings are greater than the ones from 2012. Construction inflation and the level of detail for original estimates are the problem. Future value was not taken into consideration so that from day one there was not enough money to build all of the projects. Carol pointed out that projects at the bottom of the list are in great jeopardy.

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

Nancy reminded members of the Waverly DVD viewing on Saturday, October 28 which was grant funded. A historic marker for Dentsville School has been received and a marker unveiling will be scheduled later this year. A request from the Walden Pond Homeowners Association will be sent to the Conservation Committee for a recommendation. Members agreed RCCC should host a holiday drop-in with the Soil & Water Conservation District on the first or second Tuesday in December.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Stone-Collum, Conservation Coordinator