



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

Minutes August 22, 2011

Attendance:

Members present: Carol Kososki, John Grego, Becky Bailey, Jim Lawracy, Gary Atkinson, Frank Houston, Mildred Myers, and Sam Holland

Absent: Virginia Sanders, Glenice Pearson, Margaret DuBard

Others Present:

James B. Atkins (Buddy), Environmental Planning Division (by telephone)
Nancy Stone-Collum, Environmental Planning Division
Charlie Fisher, Environmental Planning Division
Ken Driggers, Legal
Anna Fonseca, Planning Director
Stephany Snowden, Public Information Director
Val Hutchinson, County Council
John V. Green, Chair - Richland Soil and Water Conservation District
Mark Huguley, Vice Chair – Richland Soil and Water Conservation District
Natalie Cappuccio Britt, Palmetto Conservation Foundation
Kari Hanna, Palmetto Conservation Foundation
Ryan Nevius, Sustainable Midlands
Weston Adams III, Counsel for Republic Services
Jeff Thordahl, Lobbyist for Republic Services

Chair Carol Kososki called the meeting to order at 4:00pm. She explained that Virginia Sanders was absent due to the recent tragic death of her grandson and Buddy Atkins would be joining the meeting by telephone. Conservation Commission members introduced themselves for the benefit of the public attendees.

Minutes: A motion was made by Jim Lawracy and seconded by Becky Bailey to approve the minutes of July 25, 2011 as written. Motion carried.

Agenda: Carol Kososki asked to move the SCE&G discussion in front of the Cook's Mountain item. Becky Bailey moved and Sam Holland seconded the motion to amend the agenda, which was approved.

Presentation: Palmetto Joyride - Natalie Cappuccio Britt, Executive Director of Palmetto Conservation Foundation (PCF), thanked Commission members for their sponsorship of the Columbia segment of the

Palmetto Joyride. Author Mia Birk details her 20-year crusade to integrate bicycling into daily life and turn Portland, Oregon into America's #1 cycling city in her new book *Joyride*. Mia Birk will spend September 8, the second day of a three day tour of South Carolina, in Columbia. A meeting at USC to discuss campus opportunities will be followed by a luncheon meeting with DOT, business leaders, and city and county staff and officials. The Commission is invited to the afternoon session at 701Whaley where she will talk about the how tos of creating biking and walking communities. Lastly, a social event will be held at the Publick House with a book signing. Natalie brought signed copies of the book for Commission members.

Committee Reports

Conservation Committee:

SCE&G Easement – In response to the Commission's vote in July requesting an informational briefing for County Council, Buddy Atkins prepared a technical memorandum from himself and Anna Fonseca to Milton Pope, County Administrator, explaining the need to intervene before the Public Service Commission (PSC) in the SCE&G 230kV transmission line filing due to concerns with siting analysis and lack of conformity with Richland County's laws and regulations. Buddy also wrote a second memorandum from Milton to County Council relaying staff's recommendation to intervene. (Memos attached to file minutes.) SCE&G notified Richland County of its application to construct the new 230kV transmission line on August 9, having not made any of the corrections or addressed concerns identified at a July 20, 2011 meeting with staff. Use of the correct zoning data and sensitivity weighting would likely change the route of the transmission line and the need for an additional 115kV line. In order for the PSC to consider the county's arguments, Council must intervene within a 30 day period, hence the need for Council to take up the recommendation at its September 6 meeting.

John Grego made a motion that RCCC recommends Richland County Council intervene in the SCE&G application to the Public Service Commission to construct a new 230kV transmission line from the V. C. Summer Nuclear Station in Fairfield County to the existing Killian transmission substation. Frank Houston seconded the motion which was approved unanimously. Mildred Myers asked about public input on the routes and Buddy indicated SCE&G held stakeholder meetings two years ago to receive public opinion. The public can still comment on this matter in writing to the PSC or during the public input session later this fall.

Cook's Mountain – Carol Kososki explained that upon learning Cook's Mountain was for sale, a tour was arranged for Commission Members, Members of County Council, and Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners on April 11, 2011. Attendees were duly impressed with the property and its diverse ecosystems. Since the last Commission meeting, staff has learned that Republic Services, owner of Northeast Landfill, intends to purchase nearby Cook's Mountain. Republic notified County Attorney Larry Smith that they wish to amend the settlement agreement that closes the landfill in 2019 and, in return, will increase the host fees paid to the County. (Letter and newspaper articles attached to file minutes.) In August, Councilman Jim Manning requested RCCC develop an official recommendation to Council on the change of ownership and potential future acquisition of Cook's Mountain. A memorandum from Carol to Council was presented to Commission members for their approval. (Memo attached to file minutes.) Legal advisor to the Commission, Ken Driggers reviewed the memo and its recommendation: RCCC strongly recommends County Council acquire fee-simple ownership of Cook's Mountain to ensure continued public access to and public benefits from this unique natural resource. RCCC offers the following arguments for its recommendation:

1. Public access to and protection of Cook's Mountain is both essential and timely.

2. The public ownership of Cook's Mountain as a passive recreation and educational resource center is its highest and best use.
3. RCCC suggests a non-profit management structure be established to fund, operate and manage Cook's Mountain.
4. Environmental and waste management issues must be addressed by County Council in relation to the future acquisition of Cook's Mountain.

Jim Lawracy asked about the historical values of Cook's, which staff has not explored. John Grego reported that he had filed Freedom of Information requests to the Department of Health and Environmental Control for annual reports, groundwater monitoring reports, and the permit for Northeast Landfill. It is known that volatile organic compounds have contaminated the groundwater. Buddy Atkins stressed the holistic approach the Commission suggests in item #4 above that includes independent analysis of water quality impacts, the need for future landfill capacity, and an evaluation of waste-to-energy methodologies at Richland County landfills. Mildred Myers expressed her opinion that many of the community members distrust the landfill.

John Grego moved to approve the memorandum regarding the future acquisition of Cook's Mountain and the proposed studies and due diligence required by County Council regarding this matter. Both Frank Houston and Gary Atkinson seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Development Round Table Update – John Grego reported there were a total of 21 recommendations being discussed. Density based zoning has been removed. Staff split the recommendations into smaller parts in order not to overwhelm the Planning Commission and County Council. Final ordinance language on some of the recommendations will be ready soon. Another meeting is scheduled for September.

Historic Committee:

Frank Houston reported a tour is planned for five of the current historic preservation grantees on September 15th from 3:00-6:00pm. A reception will follow at 1329 Blanding hosted by Historic Columbia Foundation. County Council will be invited and Nancy Stone-Collum will arrange for a bus. Pine Grove School, long time project of the Commission is having a grand opening on October 13th. An application for landmark designation for the Langford House property has been received and will be evaluated. Lastly, the annual Jubilee Festival is being held August 27th from 11:00am-5:00pm at the Mann-Simms House.

Finance Committee: No report as Virginia Sanders could not be present.

Time Extension: At 5:25 pm, Jim Lawracy moved and Sam Holland seconded the motion to extend the meeting until 5:45pm. Motion carried

Outreach Committee: Sam Holland said the Committee met to discuss website changes and options. The goal is to have a more user-friendly and interactive web site. **Educational Needs** – Chanda Cooper reported she has spent the summer in transition from her job at the Conservation Station to Education Program Coordinator for Environmental Planning. She has presented 14 programs to 400 people including 294 children. A new educator, Timothy Nafziger, has been hired to coordinate programs at the Conservation Station with funding from an RCCC grant. Chanda's immediate goals are to provide the

Commission with a table display that can be used at information fairs and events, assist with essential updates to the web site, develop presentations about the Commission, and update the RCCC brochure.

New Business:

Green is Good for Business Conference– Carol Kososki recommends this conference on September 13 at the Convention Center for its useful information and networking opportunities. Glenice Pearson and Becky Bailey are registered to attend.

Sustainable Design Conference – The Science of Storm Water Design is the program for the October 12-13 conference at the Northeast campus of Midlands Technical College. This conference is an outgrowth of the Commission's involvement with green development practices and the Development Roundtable. Buddy requested RCCC become a sponsor at the \$500 level sponsorship. Questions about other sponsors resulted in an agreement to delay the decision until more information is provided. An e-mail to poll members will be sent since a decision is necessary before the next meeting.

Public Input: Mark Huguley, Vice-Chair of the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District, introduced himself to the RCCC members and thanked them for their support.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 5:50pm.

Next meeting: Monday, September 26, 2011 at 4:00pm at the Richland County Administration Building

Submitted by
Charlie Fisher
Administrative Assistant