



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

Minutes May 20, 2013

Attendance:

Members present: Carol Kososki, Ann Furr, Sam Holland, Mildred Myers, John Grego, Glenice Pearson, Gary Atkinson, Jim Lawracy

Absent: Virginia Sanders, Becky Bailey, Margaret DuBard

Others present:

James B. Atkins (Buddy), Conservation Department
Nancy Stone-Collum, Conservation Department
Charlie Fisher, Conservation Department
Ken Driggers, Contract Legal Counsel

Chair Carol Kososki called the meeting to order at 4:00pm with a quorum present.

Agenda: Jim Lawracy requested the Historic Committee's report be given prior to the Conservation Committee report since he needs to leave early for another appointment. Jim made a motion to approve the agenda with the requested change. Gary seconded the motion and all approved.

Minutes: A motion was made by John Grego and seconded by Glenice Pearson to approve the minutes of April 22, 2013 as written. Motion carried.

Report of the Chair

Carol explained she and Virginia Sanders were appointed to the Transportation Penny Advisory Committee (TPAC) and recently attended the Committee's second meeting where Virginia was elected to the position of Secretary. The Committee established a time and place for meetings (3rd Monday of the month at 5pm in the 4th floor conference room), received a briefing on State Ethics Law, and an update on the candidates for Transportation Director.

Treasurer's Report

Buddy referred everyone to the copy of Administration's FY-14 recommended budget of \$750,000. An additional \$25,000 is due to an increase in taxes generated by the millage. Of the three Soil and Water positions funded out of the General Fund, a portion of Buddy's and Charlie's salaries, \$55,982, will now be funded by the Conservation Commission. Carol and Jim

were able to persuade Administration not to fund all of the positions through the RCCC as was originally proposed by the Finance Department. Buddy reported Administration is looking carefully at all unexpended fund accounts. Carol expressed her concerns regarding the necessity of drafting a statement for County Council and Administration to help them understand the importance of establishing a capital reserve fund for the acquisition of important conservation parcels. County Council meets May 30 at 6pm to vote on FY 14 budget motions.

Committee Reports

Historic Committee

The Historic Committee met just prior to the Commission meeting. Sam Holland reported USC could not effectively spend the \$10,000 grant they were awarded to restore operability to windows in the Whaley House since that amount would only restore three windows. They requested a change in scope to use the funds for shutters, which was approved by the Committee. Eastover-Lower Richland Business Association has declined the \$20,000 grant they were awarded for the Farmers and Merchants Bank Building because it is not enough funding to start their project. The unused funds need to be allocated to other projects. Jim Lawracy moved to increase funding by \$10,000 each for the Curtiss Wright Hanger project and Wesley United Methodist Church. Glenice seconded the motion and all approved. Members discussed a possible tour in June of several grantee sites. Nancy said the contract for the sale of Curtiss Wright Hanger should be approved by Council on Tuesday, May 21. Preparations are under way for the Lower Richland History Initiative meeting to take place. The Committee also discussed hosting a grant writing/funding workshop to help people find other sources of funding and submit better grant proposals.

Conservation Committee

John explained the Memorandum of Understanding with USC for the opinion survey has gone to the County's Legal Department for review. Congaree National Park informed the Friends of Congaree Swamp Board they are unable to use the FY13 grant due to the way federal agencies allocate funding. The Park Service has outlined an alternate \$23,000 proposal to establish a one-mile trail on the Riverstone portion of the park from Highway 601 to the river along the existing historic McCords' Ferry Road corridor. John made a motion to change the scope of work for the Friends of the Congaree Swamp grant, contingent upon the Friends Board's ability to allocate money in advance of RCCC's ability to reimburse the grant. All work must be completed within a year. Gary Atkinson seconded the motion and all agreed.

Outreach Committee

Nancy announced the new Richland County Website will be unveiled on May 28.

Conservation Director's Report

Buddy reported the Jackson Creek appraisal funded by RCCC has been sent to landowner Hugh Palmer. Richland School District 2 has an option to purchase the largest Palmer parcel for an elementary school, excluding the hundred-year floodplain. They have indicated their willingness

to work with the County to use the wetlands for a recreational and educational amenity should the County be successful in purchasing the required buffers and floodplain from Mr. Palmer. The Open Space Design Standards and repeal of the Green Code is on Council's agenda tomorrow night for third reading. Buddy reviewed the handout outlining major components of the conservation subdivision ordinance that incentivizes developers to protect significant natural areas. He emphasized the importance of developing an Open Space Management Manual. Carol requested permission from the Commission to speak in support of the ordinance. Ann Furr moved to authorize Carol to speak on behalf of RCCC if public comment is allowed and it seems beneficial. Sam seconded the motion and all approved. Second reading of the ordinance to dissolve the Appearance Commission and to include their duties into RCCC's scope of work will be on May 30. When this ordinance passes, RCCC will receive Temporary Alcohol funds of approximately \$8,000 to carry out its new appearance duties.

Conservation Coordinator's Report

Nancy explained County Council has approved amendments to the Bailey Bill to enhance incentives for restoring historic buildings in unincorporated Richland County. The Bailey Bill allows local governments to freeze property taxes on historic structures for a period of time up to 20 years. Staff and the Commission will have a role to play in administering the ordinance. Nancy went before Council's work session this past Thursday regarding grants. Councilman Manning questioned why some grants are funded at low levels, particularly historic preservation. Given the two grants that were declined this cycle because they were too small, and the change in scope of a third grant due to reduced funding, the Commission may need to reconsider their allocation philosophy next year. The consultant Woods + Partners is developing the Middle Watershed Plan for Gills Creek Watershed Association which included a stakeholder meeting on April 30. Council approved the reallocation of \$41,000 from Professional Services to Chicora Foundation for the second phase of a county-wide cemetery survey.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:30pm.

Submitted by Charlie Fisher, Administrative Assistant