



2020 Hampton Street • Room 3063A
 P.O. Box 192 • Columbia, SC 29202
 (803) 576-2080

**Minutes
 April 18, 2022
 4th Floor Conference Room**

Attendance

Commissioner	District	Present
Charles Weber	1	Yes
Tim McSwain	2	Yes
Wayman Stover	3	Yes
Glenice Pearson	4	Yes
Vacant	5	--
John Grego	6	Yes
Robert Squirewell	7	Yes
Deborah DePaoli	8	Yes
Vacant	9	--
Darrell Jackson Jr.	10	Yes
Gail Rodriguez	11	No

Staff & Visitors	Affiliation
Quinton Epps	Conservation Division
John McKenzie	Conservation Division
Aric Jensen	County Administration
Brian Crooks	Planning Department
Scott Lynch	Berkeley Outdoor Life website

Call to Order

Grego welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with a quorum at 3:30 pm. Members, staff, and guests met in-person or by telephone.

Approval of Agenda

⇒ **Weber moved to approve the agenda which was seconded by McSwain. Motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Minutes

⇒ **Weber moved to approve the minutes of the March meeting which was seconded by McSwain. Motion passed unanimously.**

Scott Lynch – Berkeley Outdoor Life website presentation

- Scott’s company, Blaze, works to develop tourism and economic development with county and state governments. In 2017 they started working with Berkeley County Soil and Water Conservation District on a website and pocket guidebook.
- The website provides information on Hiking, Paddling, Biking, Camping, Hunting and Fishing opportunities.
- 25 kayaking trails, 23 walking trails, 20 bicycling trails plus boat ramps, where to fish and hunt.
- Information is included for distance, timing, safety, and quality. A map is downloadable and keeps track of your location.
- Accessibility information was added later.

Grego stated this information was already available online from DNR and Heritage Trust and asked about information for cultural tourism. Lynch stated he works with Berkeley Tourism department but most content was created from scratch. It is advertised through social media, billboards, Berkeley Tourism and Santee Cooper Country. Pearson stated these weren't traditionally African-American activities and asked how these communities were being approached. Pearson stated there should be pictures of African-Americans so they know they are included, too. Lynch stated these were pictures of real participants and they are trying to encourage everyone. DePaoli stated DNR has specific Latino outreach programming.

Now Lynch is working on a historical version of the website for sites and tours. Grego stated Historic Columbia and other websites had history tours and asked about existing Richland County information and tours and Lynch stated he would incorporate all of this into a new project.

Pearson asked how he would include visitors to the new International African American Museum and noted the lack of African-American specific information on the yet-to-be-published draft web page. Weber and Grego reiterated this point. DePaoli stressed how valuable this could be for educators. Weber asked about expenses and Lynch stated it cost under \$100,000 and that with this template, the historic component will be much less.

Report of the Chair

- **UofSC Geography intern** – Grego stated after Quinton looked into it, there was too short of a time frame to have work for an intern in this area. Crooks stated they didn't have the time to recreate the Hollingshead watershed study countywide. Weber stated he wants to start putting the tree canopy and heat island data together for future planning resources.
- **LRTP** – Grego stated the LRTP has not yet gone to full Council and we are not sure if the drop-in will be used in place of a Council work session.
- **Bates Old River** – Grego stated this was first addressed in 2016-17. It is a rough unimproved landing on an oxbow lake, popular with local residents. We would like to get the landing back in good shape. It is on SC DOT land but they don't want to maintain it. DNR would design it and someone would have to maintain it. Most departments in Richland County are reluctant to do that. We are working with all the groups now and making some progress.

Report from Community Planning & Development

- Crooks stated the Planning Commission voted to defer any action on the map until June. We are up in the air for a new effective date but likely between September and January. It won't go before Council until June-July. There will be an early May work session for the Planning Commission to address concerns to the map, zoning, language, uses and new standards. There are misunderstandings about zoning versus actual use of properties. Weber asked for clarification on approval. The text has been approved but has not yet gone into effect. The map has been recommended, has not been adopted and has not gone into effect. New input is being incorporated back into the code. Pearson asked if longevity was a factor in land use definition. Crooks stated use is the main factor.

Treasurer's Report

- **Budget** - Squirewell reported there are no notable changes and with just one quarter left in the fiscal year, there is little being spent in many categories. Epps stated we are preparing to spend \$306,000 from the Conservation Fund for the Cabin Branch property purchase, if approved by Council tomorrow. Most of the funds for the Mill Creek bridge design have been dispersed. Epps stated Finance is still working on the coding error at the budget office, where salaries were not being taken from the proper codes.

Natural Resources Committee Report

- **Tree Canopy Study** – Weber stated this was addressed earlier.
- **Cabin Branch purchase** – Weber stated this was addressed earlier.
- **Mitigation credits potential purchase** – Weber stated there were no updates to report.
- **Lake Elizabeth donation acceptance** – Weber stated there were no updates to report.
- **Columbia Rowing Club agreement** – Weber stated there were no updates to report.

Historic Committee Report

- **Heritage Tourism Marketing - Request for Proposal:** McKenzie reported the RFP has been open for a week now from April 12 to May 12 and questions from vendors are required by May 2. The evaluation team is being assembled and includes McKenzie, Grego, Pearson, Rodriguez and DePaoli. There are no submitted proposals yet.
- **Self-assessment request** - Pearson stated she wanted to have a Historic Committee meeting before the next RCCC meeting to review the self-assessment.

Conservation Program Coordinator’s Report

- **RCCC Grants** – McKenzie reported everything was on schedule for the FY21-22 grants and there are three completed projects. On March 28, there was an event to celebrate the SC Wildlife Federation’s CollideEscape project at the Richland Library Ballentine. McKenzie showed pictures of the film that was added to the building’s large windows that were a problem for bird collisions. There will be some upcoming projects with “ribbon-cutting” type events and some with simpler press releases.

Grego reported at the budget meeting for Council, there were no questions about the FY22-23 RCCC grant package but still could be in the next meetings.

Conservation Manager’s Report

- **Staff vacancies** – Epps stated we are still working on hiring a new Land Program Planner and an Administrative Assistant. There are 5 interviews scheduled for Administrative Assistant but only two applications for Land Program Planner so we will wait for more before scheduling.
- **Budget timeline** – Epps stated we are still waiting for an official timeline. Some corrections needed to be made in the budget and it is now complete.
- **Pinewood Lake Park** – There is an ad-hoc meeting tomorrow to discuss developments from the PLP Foundation about dam repair. Jensen added that the County received a letter from the Foundation offering to give the dam and related property to the County.

New Business

- DePaoli asked if redistricting would change the RCCC. Grego stated it would not and commissioners did not have to live in the same district. The Council member can choose and change commissioners at their discretion.

⇒ At 5:04 pm, Weber moved to adjourn the meeting which is seconded by Pearson. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
John McKenzie