



2020 Hampton St. • Room 3063A
P.O. Box 192 • Columbia, SC 29202
(803) 576-2082

Minutes

January 25, 2010

4:00 P.M.

Attendance:

Members present:

Gary Atkinson, John Grego, Sam Holland, Frank Houston, Carol Kososki, Jim Lawracy, Glenice Pearson, Becky Bailey

Members absent: Virginia Sanders, Mildred Myers, Marcia Lucius

Others Present:

Mary Jane Henderson, Richland SWCD
Ken Driggers, Legal
Nancy Stone-Collum, Palmetto Conservation Foundation
Sparty Hammett, Assistant County Administrator

Chair Carol Kososki called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM with a quorum present.

Minutes: The minutes of November 23, 2009 were approved.

Agenda: The agenda was approved with a staff proposal moved to front for discussion.

Staffing Proposal:

Carol asked Jim to discuss the staff proposal for conservation office re-alignment. Since Hugh Caldwell has retired, a vacancy exists with Richland Conservation District which also supports the RCCC. Jim acknowledged that he will retire in early 2011 creating another staff vacancy. County administration has asked both RCD and RCCC to make suggestions of staff realignment to best serve our citizens, maintain quality level of service, and honor our goals and objectives of each organization in partnership, if feasible. Our involvement with the county planning office revealed a need to provide some official services to the planning department. Jim revealed a staffing chart that suggests a team approach, combining staff functions to support all efforts to improve efficiency, reduce duplications, and coordinate one conservation program to move all programs forward. This staff proposal would have one overall Manager, four staff positions such as administration, technical, education, and grants/easements. Sparty Hammett indicated a need to evaluate this proposal as a part of planning audit to improve the county's services. He also added that a new flood plain coordinator has been hired to provide additional support. County Administration is supportive of the proposal, but we must evaluate the legal restrictions and Human Resource functions as related to any combination.

The intent is to suggest changes in the current budget cycle in order to seek approval to make changes for next year, beginning July 1, 2010. Gary Atkinson made the motion, Jim Lawracy seconded, and it was passed to support the proposal, with a seat at the table for upcoming decisions and hiring of individuals. Jim Lawracy also suggested looking at the functions of each commission to evaluate common objectives and the possibility of combining organizations, such as Appearance and historic elements of RCCC.

Chairman Comments:

Carol provided updates on several recent activities.

The Development Round Table has completed the recommendations for the stormwater ordinance revisions which were presented to County Council. Most provisions were adopted such as 50 feet of buffer on streams and wetlands based on site conditions. The Entitlement definition was modified to exclude properties which have already been permitted. The Roundtable proposed definition of Entitled Properties that would be exempt from the ordinance was broadened by Council. Many large commercial and real estate development projects would meet the revised definition of Entitled Property and are exempt for the next 7 years from the new water quality buffer requirements. The effective date of the new ordinance is January 19, 2010.

The Commission presented Greenways and Mitigation Plans to County Council at their annual retreat on Friday, January 22, 2010. The plans were generally accepted for information with a request from council to meet in March to outline a phase for initial funding. Jim and Ken will advise the Commission at the Feb. meeting.

The Commission accepted and approved the nomination of the existing slate of officers to serve again in the upcoming year.

The Commission's Newsletter was distributed to all members. They are encouraged to email to other groups of interest. Commissioner Jim Lawracy was featured as a member. The newsletter is also posted on the website.

Conservation Committee: Gary Atkinson, Chair:

Gary suggested a tour of Gills Creek Watershed to show comparisons of development that impact streams along Decker. Jim will coordinate in the spring.

Gary outlined a plan for some community signs in the Pebble Creek Watershed to promote conservation easements and a public meeting in March.

Gary reported on a request from the Richland Conservation District to fund education outreach at the Conservation Station at Sandhill this spring, due to a shortfall of financial resources. The Conservation Station is a formal outdoor science classroom which hosts hundreds of students each year for teaching natural resources and science standards. Jim suggested we could transfer \$5000 from the current grants program which was returned from the Palaski reclamation project. The motion was made by Jim Lawracy, seconded by Becky Bailey, and approved by Commission.

Historic Committee: Frank Houston, Chair

Frank discussed several on going projects such as the Lindler House restoration, Fox Theater proposal, Bethel AME restoration, and Laurelwood Plantation proposal. The Palmetto Trust for Historic Preservation, proposed a partnership agreement with RCCC to purchase the Laurelwood Plantation Home and 20 acres in Lower Richland for preservation. PTHP would provide \$60,000 and restoration costs and the RCCC would add \$20,000 for the purchase agreement. PTHP would not request additional restoration funds from RCCC. A motion was made to support this effort and fund \$20,000 if the family agreed to the proposal and a policy be developed for RCCC

to require some pay back on future historic acquisitions when structures are sold. The motion was made, seconded, and passed by the Commission.

The Historic Committee approved landmark designation for the Fox Theatre at 1670 Main Street. Frank also discussed the upcoming historic conference in Columbia and Georgetown that he, Nancy and Glenice would be attending, paid by the Commission Historic budget. The Historic Marker unveiling for Monteith School will be on March 24, 2010.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to extend the meeting by fifteen minutes.

Publicity Committee: Sam Holland, Chair

Sam indicated that the Commission video is almost complete and he would show the draft at the next meeting. The historic web site will be released in March to Council as part of National Historic Month. Jim will contact administration for a date. Nancy will prepare the release.

Finance Committee: Virginia Sanders, Chair

The monthly financial report was reviewed. (A copy is attached to file minutes)
Jim commented that our projected budget level for next year is \$667,000.

Program Manager's Report: Jim Wilson:

Jim updated the Commission on conservation easements and acknowledged the remaining easement funds are designated to the Haynes property in Lower Richland (\$70,000) which had been previously approved. Motion for this to go before council was made by Jim Lawracy, seconded by Frank Houston and approved.

Other Business:

None

Public Input:

None

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 PM

Next Meeting

February 22, 2010 – 4:00 PM – Richland County Administration Building.

Submitted by:

Mary Jane Henderson, RCD

Staff Support