

**South Carolina Mitigation Association
Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 8, 2022
Video Conference**

I. Opening

The regular meeting of the Executive Committee of the South Carolina Mitigation Association was called to order at 9:03 AM via Zoom by Ross Nelson, the SCMA President.

Attending:

Ross Nelson, President	Allen Conger
Daniel Johnson, Vice President	Tommy Cousins
Sydni Redmond, Treasurer	Chris Ryan
Kristin Knight-Meng, Secretary	Ryan Smith
Tara Alden	
Adrienne Graham	

II. Approval of Previous Minutes

Tommy Cousins made a motion to approve the minutes of February 8, 2022. Allen Conger seconded the motion, which carried.

III. Financial Report

Sydni Redmond reported the financials were in order. She reminded the Board that there are sponsorships available for the Quarterly Meetings.

Mr. Nelson requested that Adrienne Graham send the outstanding membership invoices to the Membership Committee to follow up.

IV. Quarterly Meeting

Mr. Nelson reported that Matt Gehman, TranSystem Corporation, will update the SCMA on the stimulus money and how it may affect infrastructure development in SC.

Daniel Johnson will update the membership on the recent USACE and SCDOT meetings. He will remind members to send any specific topics of concern for the USACE or SCDOT to the Executive Committee or Committee chairs to be addressed. The goal is to have complete transparency with all members. Time will be allocated for Committee updates.

V. Member Care

Mr. Conger reported the Membership Committee discussed:

- Allowing traditional land trust involved in SC or nationally to submit non-voting applications to the Executive Committee. If requested by the applicant the Executive Committee may consider waiving the membership fee of \$400, reducing the fee, or allowing a member company to sponsor the membership.
- Allowing land trusts, even if non-profits, involved in the credit delivery process to become a non-voting or voting member.

Cross memberships, i.e., exchanging memberships or sponsorships and memberships, should be encouraged when available. Mr. Conger emphasized the value of engaging land trusts in the SCMA.

There is flexibility in the bylaws to allow the Executive Committee (EC) to accept membership from non-profits and others. The EC may seek sponsorship of the land trusts at some level. It has already been established that land trusts may be members; however, there are land trusts that are small and many are not able to even afford the non-voting fee. The Membership Committee agreed that the involvement of the land trust would be beneficial and add strength to the Association and the best way to engage these small organizations may be to discount or waive the fee. It is also very important for the land trust to understand what is happening in the mitigation industry.

The Membership Committee will meet again to nail down specifics to present to the EC at the next meeting. Mr. Conger will also present a clear motion at the next meeting.

VI. Old Business

Mr. Johnson informed the EC that there is a potential to host a virtual Stream Quantification Tool (SQT) introduction at the June Quarterly Meeting led by Stream Mechanics and EPR. Mr. Johnson also mentioned this to the USACE, but they are more in favor of a multi-day class/field workshop. Mr. Nelson pointed out that the SQT is just an assessment at this time and they have not put together a specific policy to change to calculating credits with the SQT. While the USACE supports DNR's decision to move forward with building this tool, it has not created a policy to implement it for credit calculations for impact or mitigation yet. The USACE encourages companies to run the SQT on their projects and tie it back to a net improvement factor, but there is no guidance on what that factor should be. Mr. Johnson will send out a general summary before the next call so that the EC can come to a decision on what the Association will do as far as a SQT workshop.

Mr. Nelson reported that he, Tory Grayson, Mr. Johnson and Bob Perry met with Amanda Heath and David Wilson of the USACE on February 24. The focus was on the tasks from the meeting in July and the action items that came out of that meeting. The USACE is interested in them receiving any support possible from the SCMA. This includes revising the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) to allow for liaison positions. The USACE is recruiting a person to assist Mr. Wilson in processing mitigation projects. There are others at the USACE who provide part-time support. The goal is to process applications in a timely manner.

The USACE is working on changes in the stream and wetland crediting policies. The SCMA will have an opportunity to review and comment on these revised policies prior to them going out on public notice and becoming official. They discussed at length the SQT and the fact that it is not policy now. Ryan Smith brought up the question of "grandfathered" and the lack of its definition by the USACE. Mr. Nelson will bring this up in the June meeting if it is not defined prior to this. The issue is that mitigation companies can only propose what exists in the draft guidelines under which it currently operates and there is no way to provide adequate financial projections to clients without a final instrument. The Technical Committee is working on conversions now. The SQT will eventually be implemented in SC.

The SCMA stressed the timeline issues that many of our members have experienced in getting the approval of the conservation easement. Ms. Heath noted that the Office of Counsel has hired an additional attorney, which should help this problem. Mr. Conger noted that DHEC reviews it after the USACE and there is not a standard template. The SCMA may be able to assist with this template.

The SCMA agreed to assist with checklist where they may be missing items or could facilitate the process. The Membership Committee will begin looking at this possibly in conjunction with land trusts. An attorney's services may be necessary later. Members of the EC may be able to share specifics.

The SCMA and SCDOT Committee met February 8. These minutes have been posted. The highlights were that the dashboard has technical issues and that solicitations are pending for Four Hole Swamp, Tyger and Lower Pee Dee. There is a hold-up on flexibility of the lots. Discussions included the change in the Conservation Bank with the SCDOT, likely Sean Connelly, and the Department of Commerce becoming Board members. The SCDOT is also concerned with the changes coming from the SQT.

VII. Committee Reports

Partnership: Ms. Redmond will share the simplified draft of the scholarship application with the EC for approval at the next meeting. She thanked Emory at American Mitigation for getting the Instagram and LinkedIn pages up and posting.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:13 AM.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 12, 2022, 9:00 AM

Minutes submitted by: Kristin Knight-Meng

Approved by: