



**HEALTH, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2025**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The Columbia Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee conducted a meeting on Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at City Hall (Mayor’s Conference Room), 1737 Main Street, Second Floor, Columbia, SC 29201. The Honorable Aditi Bussells, Chair called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. and the following members were present:

<b>Attendee Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Status</b>
Aditi Bussells	Chair	Present
Edward H. McDowell	Member	Present
Tyler D. Bailey	Member	Absent

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. December 17, 2024 Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes - *Approved*

Upon a motion made by Dr. Bussells and seconded by Mr. McDowell, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the December 17, 2024 Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes.

**PRESENTATIONS**

2. Environmental Priorities and Strategies for 2025 - Mr. Clint Shealy, P.E., Assistant City Manager of Columbia Water and Ms. Mary Pat Baldauf, Sustainability Facilitator – *Received as information.*

Mr. Clint Shealy, P.E., Assistant City Manager of Columbia Water emphasized the continued importance of maintaining compliance with drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater regulations. This includes addressing sanitary sewer overflows, improving water quality, and investing in infrastructure upgrades. He shared about the efforts to extend project timelines with the EPA due to challenges like the 2015 flood and COVID-related delays. The team is working on more consistent notifications to customers, especially during water main breaks. Infrastructure upgrades are ongoing, with a focus on replacing old pipes to reduce service disruptions.



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TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2025**

---

There was discussion about time extensions; metal plates on the streets and backlogged work orders; line replacing; internal staff communications; and proactive approaches.

Dr. Bussells suggested the additional option of an “Active Alerts” button to the MyColaSC mobile application with the same functionality of reporting concerns or paying utility bills. If a water concern has information that has changed rapidly, it can be seen on the app in real time.

Mr. Clint Shealy, P.E., Assistant City Manager of Columbia Water said that ongoing litigation regarding the regulation of perfluorinated substances in drinking water, with the team continuing to study the potential impacts and costs. Recently, a proposal for regulating wastewater effluent and bio solids was frozen under the new administration, but the team remains committed to pursuing litigation to ensure that polluters are held accountable for removing these substances. The team is also exploring value engineering to mitigate costs while maintaining progress on essential projects.

There was discussion about process of biogas recovery; embankment repair and head gate replacement at the Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant; and anticipated timeline.

Ms. Mary Pat Baldauf, Sustainability Facilitator shared the most recent grant opportunities received by the city:

- Community Development Block Grant- \$105,165 for decorative street lights in the Edisto Court community through June 30, 2025.
- Urban and Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act - \$290,015, funding covers tree costs, tree diapers, and catering for free tree planting lunch and learn events through June 30, 2029.
- Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) - \$198,460 will retrofit city streetlights to LED bulbs through March 28, 2027.
- Climate Pollution Reduction Grant - \$9 million to develop a climate action plan for the region, with implementation funds potentially supporting a solar farm.



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---

- Bloomberg Youth Climate Action Grant – \$100,000 through October 31, 2025.

Ms. Tina-Marie Sandoval, University of South Carolina student and Youth Climate Action Fund recipient organized a service day with fellow students in North Columbia's Meadow Lake neighborhood. They weatherized six homes to improve energy efficiency and reduce CO2 emissions by air-sealing, caulking windows, and installing door weatherization strips. Thirty students volunteered, gaining hands-on experience and connecting with the community. If selected for the next round of funding, the project will return to these homes to update attic insulation with a third-party contractor.

There was discussion about servicing different locations.

Ms. Beata Dewitt, SC Carolina Public Health Association and Youth Climate Action Fund recipient shared about the launch of College Climate Action Resilience Week. Events included a Climate Café discussing urbanization, a Tree Planting Initiative at MLK Jr. Park on Election Day, a "Don't Waste Food SC" cooking demo, a Sustainable Art exhibit on issues like fast fashion, and a Green Networking Breakfast focused on youth and sustainability. A total of 45 students participated.

There was discussion about collaborative efforts in organizing the events throughout the week.

Ms. Mary Pat Baldauf, Sustainability Facilitator highlighted ongoing initiatives with CPAC, including bi-weekly core group and monthly full committee meetings. The team is focused on implementing the Ready for 100 Project Resolution 2.0, developing a tracking dashboard for upcoming launch, and prioritizing energy audits and efficiency improvements. The city's 45-year Tree City designation is also a key focus, with the application for the 46th designation being processed, and 500 trees planted annually to maintain the status.

There was discussion funding for additional tree planting.

3. Greenway and Trails Update - Ms. Dana Higgins, P.E., LEED AP, Director of Engineering for Columbia Water – *This item was discussed. No action was taken.*



**HEALTH, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
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---

Ms. Dana Higgins, P.E., LEED AP, Director of Engineering for Columbia Water shared an update on the city's trail and greenway connections, including key projects and future opportunities. Phase 3 of the Vista Greenway is progressing from Elmwood to North Main, with Phase 4 planned to extend to Page Ellington Park. Richland County's Penny projects, including the Gill Creek, Crane Creek, and Rocky Branch Greenways, are ongoing, with Crane Creek expected to finish by next spring. The River Alliance is working on a project connecting Boyd Island to Riverfront Park, set for completion by 2027. The team is also exploring grant funding to enhance connectivity.

Dr. Bussells requested staff for a walkthrough of Finlay Park.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC  
City Clerk