

Charleston County  
Resilience and Sustainability Advisory Committee (RSAC)  
Meeting Minutes  
September 09, 2025

**RSAC ATTENDEES**

Rev. Dr. Kylon Jerome Middleton (Charleston County Council Chairman) (Virtual), Stewart Weinberg, Scott Harris (College of Charleston), Diamond Curry (Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce), Scott Curtis (Citadel), Sally Brooks (Zoning and Planning), Nina Miller (BCDCOG).

**COUNTY STAFF**

Molly Caggiano, Alexandra Petruch, Walter Smalls

**ABSENT**

Adrian Cain (Homebuilders Association)

**CALL TO ORDER**

Stewart Weinberg called the Charleston County RSAC meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. FOIA compliance and media acknowledgement announced.

**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS' REMARKS**

- Approved meeting minutes at 9:30 a.m. from June 10, 2025.
  - Motion to approve introduced by Stewart Weinberg. Motion was approved unanimously.

**TOPICS DISCUSSED**

*Sustainability Updates*

*Alexandra Petruch*

- Plastic Bag Ordinance: A draft of the plastic bag ordinance has been shared with RSAC members, and Resilience and Sustainability are currently having a dialogue with Environmental Management. The intent is to attend their committee meeting as well before further action is taken.
  - This draft has been reviewed by Legal and will eventually be reviewed by Environmental Management and brought before Council.
- The Climate Action Plan: the Climate Action Plan has been renamed to the Sustainability Plan.
- Energy Savings Performance Contract: Sustainability and Resilience are partnering closely with the Facilities Department as well a contractor, Train, and are currently in the data collection phase.
  - Train has been given access to the County's Energy Star account as well as utility bills.
  - This will ideally lead to energy and cost savings.
    - Question: When will Train be returning?
    - Response: They will return in a month or two, and biweekly meetings are held with them virtually for updates.

- EECBG Block Grant: the grant was applied for and awarded under Arielle Gerstein, and after a short pause, has now been reinstated. This allows homes eligible under the grant stipulations to be energy audited and potentially weatherized/retrofitted.
  - o Not all of the 20 selected homes will be retrofitted but will receive an energy conservation kit.
    - Comment: It would be beneficial to do a comparison study as well by sharing the before and after statistics for some of these homes. (Stewart Weinberg).
    - Question: How are the homes selected for the energy audits?
    - Response: The specifics are explained in detail in the grant documentation, but in general, homes have to verify participation in a Community Development program as well be located within a disadvantaged community. This qualifies them to apply. Upon disclosure of structural information to the contractor, it is determined whether an energy audit can be conducted. (Alexandra Petruch).
    - Question: Have you shared the Dominion Energy Home Energy Checkup?
    - Response: There are links to various resources from Dominion Energy and other community partners who may be able to provide services to interested citizens if they don't qualify for the County's assistance. The links are shared on the website as well as through Instagram posts. (Alexandra Petruch).
- Green Liaisons: The group is being reinstated amongst County employees to raise awareness of how we can incorporate sustainable practices in our daily work.
- Internship: An internship role has been developed for the division and has received numerous applicants.

Presentation:

**Alexandra Petruch**

Charleston County Sustainability Plan: Story Map

- Provides explanations of the 'Big Moves' along with an interactive map.
  - o Question: Does the map expand? (DCA Smalls)
  - o Response: The map does expand, and the points can be selected for review of additional details. (Alexandra Petruch)
  - o Question: What are the green buildings?
  - o Response: The green building indicate a green accreditation, which could be Lead or Green Globe Certified.
  - o Question: How were you able to obtain information regarding the permitted solar panels on residential and nonresidential buildings? (Stewart Weinberg)
  - o Response: The information was accessed through the Planning and Zoning Department. (Alexandra Petruch).
- The Story Map also provides measures of progress and completion for strategic plan projects.
  - o Question: When is our next quarterly update to Council regarding Sustainability? (Chairman Middleton)
  - o Response: We have not scheduled an update, but it would be ideal when there is a presentation from General Services. (DCA Smalls)

*Resilience Updates*

***Molly Caggiano***

- Fernleaf received funding from the Climate Smart Communities Initiative (CSCI) grant with Charleston County as the client.
  - o This funding has allowed Fernleaf to implement 2 of the 11 strategies from the Vulnerability Assessment: (1) Framework for Flood Mitigation Prioritization; (2) Brownfields Strategic Plan.
  - o Comment: There is a great appreciation for the collaboration that is being sought by Resilience and Sustainability. The partnerships between departments and municipalities are demonstrating that these efforts aren't separate but working in concert. (Chairman Middleton).
  - o Question: Are there any actions for the Brownfields Strategic Plan? (Stewart Weinberg)
  - o Response: There aren't actions for this strategic plan, but in implementing 2 of the 11 strategies from the vulnerability assessment/strategic plan, substantial progress has been made in laying the foundation for more long-term initiatives that will have greater outcomes. (Molly Caggiano).
- Disaster Recovery Planning entailing the development of VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster).
  - o This assembles non-profit, faith-based, and other service-related organizations into a coalition that can respond in disaster situations. It is a community led organization with government liaisons.
  - o There have been two workshops with one more planned, all of which address the gaps that will facilitate members' abilities to respond to emergencies before, during, and after their occurrence.
  - o There are VOAD installations active at the federal and state levels, and this effort is re-instituting its activity in the County.
  - o Trident United Way has agreed to function as the fiscal sponsor for VOAD, but a committee will have to be established with a chair, vice chair, secretary, and coordinator identified.
  - o Trident United Way is currently fundraising and will fund the coordinator position, which will be the direct liaison for contact with the County. As of now, 70-75 organizations have reached out in interest, and 45 people have confirmed their participation in the next workshop.

*Resilience and Sustainability Symposium****Molly Caggiano***

- o This will be a one-day event that takes place at Trident Technical College on November 19, 2025, from 8:00am to 4:00pm.
- o This will allow the identification of government and nongovernment agencies to establish a collaboration on common issues and align their strategic goals.
- o The event is not open to the public but to those who serve the public.
- o Are there any sponsors for the event? (Chairman Middleton)
- o Response: Sponsors were considered but have not been pursued at this time. Current funding has been allocated from the contingency fund granted to the Resilience and Sustainability budget. (Molly Caggiano/DCA Walter Smalls).

- Will elected officials be present at the symposium? (DCA Walter Smalls).
- Elected officials from the state, county, and inherent municipalities have been invited, and the hope is to have representation for each area in attendance. (Molly Caggiano).

#### *Community Engagement Updates*

##### **Alexandra Petruch**

- Resilience and Sustainability has participated in eight different community engagement events since June 10, 2025.
- Upcoming events include the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Beach Litter Sweep hosted by Sea Grant, the SeaRise Stroll, and Charleston Compost (Pumpkin Smash Event and Christmas Tree/Wreath Pickup).

### **GENERAL COMMENT**

#### Open Discussion for Resilience and Sustainability Symposium

- There are some efforts that are being introduced in the State House next year regarding sustainability, resilience, conservation and development. It may be too early to broach the topic during the symposium, but will be worth discussing as legislative conversations commence in the next year or so.
- Invitation suggestions: Dominion, CARTA, elected officials, Homebuilders Association, among others. (Collective Committee Responses)
  - This may be a good opportunity to acknowledge the elected leaders that will be in charge.

#### Open Discussion for Resilience and Sustainability Community Engagement

- In the coming years, it may be beneficial to include the City of North Charleston in the composting events. (Diamond Curry)
- The US Chamber of Commerce will be holding a half-day disaster resilience round table on December 10, 2025 (tentative), and RSAC Committee members are welcome to attend. (Diamond Curry)

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Call for Public Comment by Chair at 10:50am

##### **Brooke Blosser**

#### Coastal Conservation League (131 Spring Street)

- There is great appreciation for Chairman Middleton and the Resilience and Sustainability team in closing the loophole in the plastic bag ordinance. It is an effort that has been in place since 2023 to decrease plastic litter, which had increased despite the initial ordinance passed in 2016 due to the prevalence of thicker plastic bags used by larger businesses. Since the loophole has been addressed, a decrease has started to trend in the amount of plastic litter.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS MADE/ACTION ITEMS**

- The energy audits are a great opportunity to educate the public and raise awareness. There should be an effort to publicize the process that 20 homes are undergoing so that others, who don't qualify by grant standards, can participate independently. Homeowners can then be

requested to serve as spokespeople based on success to encourage further participation and funding (Chairman Middleton).

- It may be optimal to provide a Sustainability update to Council prior to the conference so that council members can be invited to attend. (Chairman Middleton)
- If updates are provided to Council and/or an invitation extended for the conference, please, let the RSAC members know so that they can provide support. (Stewart Weinberg)
- It's worth considering having a member from RSAC serving on the VOAD committee to continue in the shared responsibility of resilience. (Stewart Weinberg)
- As a reference or source of committee members, Charleston service providers who serve on the State VOAD Committee may be willing to serve locally as well.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday, December 09, 2025

#### **CHAIR REMARKS**

None

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Chair, Stewart Weinberg, adjourned the meeting at 10:53am with unanimous approval.

Ratified by the Charleston County  
Resilience and Sustainability Advisory Committee this  
09<sup>th</sup> day of December 2025.



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Chair

Attest:



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Molly Caggiano

Administrative Officer - Resilience

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Administrative Officer - Sustainability