



**Community Engagement Council**  
**February 5, 2026**  
**Meeting 4**  
**86 Wentworth Street**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees**

<b>Facilitators</b>	Clay Middleton, LaSheia Oubre, Joanna Gilmore
<b>CEC Members</b>	Jerome Harris, Sharon Ramirez, Julie Bowling, Harlan Greene, Jim Newhard, Millicent Brown, Lisa Jones, Norm Dickerson, Walter Brown, Madison Lee, Zoe Barber, Jalen Evans, Luqman Rasheed, James Njonjo, Joshua Shumak
<b>Advisors</b>	Omar Muhammad, Demetria Clemons
<b>Consultants</b>	--
<b>Liaison</b>	Courtney Howard
<b>Staff</b>	Mark Berry, Paul Patrick
<b>Invited Guests</b>	Dr. Sarah Platt (CofC, Assistant Professor of Archaeology & Anthropology) Dr. Grant Gilmore (CofC, Director of Historic Preservation & Community Planning)
<b>Guests</b>	George Johnson (CofC), Christine Mahoney (CofC), Laura Lee Worrell (CofC), Allison Sterret-Krause (CofC), Tiffany Harris (CofC), Paul Gabarini (student), Marionette Bennett (Everyday People), Antionette Bennett-Bluford (Everyday People), Herb Frazier (City Paper), Courtney Hill (CofC), Marybeth Orth (Protect and Respect the Bodies (PRB), Tom Orth (PRB), Victoria Hansen (SC Public Radio), Karen Oliver (Will do...), Graham Glass? (student), Quint Wingate (student), Hampton Logan (City of Charleston), Tamara Butler (CofC), Scott Harris (CofC), Live 5 News representative.

- I. Welcome (LaSheia)
  - a. Request that all guests sign in on the sign-in sheet (LaSheia)
  - b. Overview of meeting protocols (handout/poster display) - LaSheia
  - c. Overview of agenda (Joanna)
  - d. Acknowledgment that this conversation is heavy and difficult, and we are open and ready for disagreement. Our goal is to come to some sense of what is ethically and morally appropriate for this property
  
- II. Presentation: Archaeology 101
  - a. Grant Gilmore (professional archaeologist since 1995) & Sarah Platt (professional archaeologist since 2013)
  - b. Scientific archaeology vs. treasure hunting (Platt)

- i. Archaeological context – the artifact and everything found with it
- ii. Provenience – precise 3D location on the site
- iii. Context and provenience are the bridge between the findings that are found and the people and stories we are trying to tell
- iv. Archaeology is considered a destructive science, so we have one shot to record it well and effectively
- v. Unprovenienced and out of context artifacts do not have the same scientific power for storytelling
- vi. Metal detecting (Gilmore)
  - 1. A large metal detecting community in SC
  - 2. Largely unregulated, is legal here
  - 3. Metal detectors say they are “saving history” but their practices are in conflict with archaeologists
  - 4. Metal detecting is a form of looting
- c. Looters are interested in removing artifacts
- d. Archaeologists are interested in artifacts, features, and ecofacts
  - i. Artifacts – portable artifact that is evidence of human activity and with cultural or historical significance
  - ii. Features – non-portable artifact that is evidence of human activity (hearths, firepits, trenches, privies, etc)
  - iii. Ecofacts – organic or natural materials found at a site (animal bones, seeds, ) that holds cultural significance
- e. How do we track provenience and context
  - i. Horizontally – space
  - ii. Vertically – time
- f. Recording – careful documentation of what’s found and where (notes, forms, photos, drawings, measurements) so the site can be interpreted long after excavation ends, such as soil (not dirt) colors and layers
- g. Mapping – measuring and drawing where features and finds are located across a site, creating a clear record of spatial relationships
- h. Horizontal Provenience (Planview)
  - i. Tracked using grids mapped onto the site; carefully mapped to scale
  - ii. Planview maps are birds eye views of the site
  - iii. Example – post and hole architecture image (see presentation slide)
- i. Vertical Provenience (Profile)
  - i. Use of soil layer (stratigraphy) – profile maps
  - ii. Deeper layers are usually older
  - iii. Intrusions are younger than the layers they intrude upon

- iv. We use stratigraphy to tell time on site
- v. Excavation vs natural stratigraphy – excavate layers out in the way they went in
- vi. Excavation vs arbitrary layers – excavate layers out at regular intervals (remove soil 5cm at a time)
- j. Bisecting features – have their own internal stratigraphy
  - i. Safe excavation practices
- k. Urban sites are stratigraphically complex
  - i. Very complex because cities are constantly demolished and rebuilt, creating dense layers from many different time periods
- l. Stages in the archaeological process
  - i. Excavation (10% of time)
  - ii. Field lab processing
  - iii. Conservation & analysis
  - iv. Research and documentation – “artifacts do not lie”
  - v. Museum exhibition – “showing what you found”

Research archaeology is the push
- m. Finer points of these processes are determined by project needs and research questions (what do you want to know?)
- n. Sifting artifacts
  - i. Sifting or screening is the process of shaking excavated soil through mesh to catch small artifacts and ecofacts that might be missed during digging
- o. Artifact recovery
  - i. Careful process of locating, excavating, and collecting objects and samples from a site while documenting their exact context
- p. Cataloguing
  - i. Careful process of recording each artifact and sample that comes from a site so it can be identified, tracked, and studied. Every item is assigned a unique number and documented with key details.
- q. Public archaeology and policy
  - i. Ethical responsibility to inform the public and inform decisions
  - ii. Where do we go with what we know? Why is it important to future society?
- r. Joanna – refers to “Reflection & Notes” sheet for CEC members to use to document their thoughts and notes

### III. Q&A with presenters

- a. **Question:** How complex of site is 106 Coming, given that urban sites are complex? Has any higher education institution purchased a burial site with the intention to build on it? **Answer:** 106 Coming is very complex—burial site, centuries of development, asphalt. The most complex piece of it is likely to be the number of burials. We don't know what would be below the burial ground (likely marshy ground). Yes, other universities have purchased burial sites with the intention to build. That is part of humans living in close proximity (London high speed rail project – 12000 burials moved). 19<sup>th</sup> century neighborhood is likely going to be interacting with the burial ground.
- b. **Question:** What other universities built on burial grounds? **Answer:** Mississippi – Asylum Hill. This is a current project. Expected to find 4000 burials; UVa, UPenn, Milwaukee hospital)
- c. **Question:** What about excavating human remains? **Answer:** Much higher duty of care is required. Finer tools. Outline the burial shaft (define the feature), if overlapping shafts are found, try to identify the oldest one and excavate that one first. Soil artifacts on top of the burial are important in establishing a date range. Identify the type of burial. Expose the entire skeleton (if intact), draw it, photograph it, bag/box to keep together, label, store
- d. **Question:** What is the best language to use when referring to human remains? **Answer:** Human remains refers to skeleton only. Artifacts may be associated with the skeleton. The burial is skeleton + artifacts + ecofacts + features.
- e. **Question:** Do we look for artifacts to help date the human remains? **Answer:** Yes. And to help understand culture
- f. **Question:** Are there examples of prominent communities that are being moved, or are they all marginalized communities? **Answer:** Asylum Hill (marginalized), London (mass graves and marked graves).
- g. **Question:** Is the Mississippi medical cemetery associated with slavery? **Answer:** Fully associated with the asylum
- h. **Question:** Given the moral and ethical responsibility of archaeology, how long does it usually take to handle a site with 10K burials? **Answer:** It depends on the soil and the conditions.
- i. **Question:** How long does it take to excavate one burial with duty of care? **Answer:** 6-12 hours

- j. **Question:** How long of an operation do we anticipate at 106 Coming?  
**Answer:** Depends on how many people are working on each burial
- k. **Question:** How long has the Asylum Hill project been going on? **Answer:** 10 years. 700 burials found so far.
- l. **Question:** How much have they spent? **Answer:** State of MS allocated \$3.6M for this project
- m. **Question:** What contingency is in place if flooding occurs while excavating?  
**Answer:** The plan should include flood mitigation, that could include covering the site with a temporary structure and using sump pumps
- n. **Question:** When the remains are removed, what happens? **Answer:** That is generally a consensus between the property owner and the community
- o. **Question:** Have you looked at the work plans? Based on what you saw, does it use best practices and ethical principles? **Answer:** I recommend you focus on what the SHPO says.
  - i. CRM archaeologist – cultural resource archaeologist. Contract work that is one in response to federal and local laws
- p. **Question:** How long will it take to do this work? **Answer:** It's hard to say until the ground is opened up
- q. **Question:** Does the CofC have a timeline for the building project? **Answer:** Not a set timeline. Feb 19 meeting will discuss the workplans
- r. **Question:** On any occasion have you run into situations where decisions have to be made with descendent communities where exhuming bodies is not the appropriate course of action? **Answer:** Not directly. In the St Eustatius (Caribbean island, airport project situation, the decision was made to reinter the bodies on the site with no post analysis because the community was not engaged. No experience with challenges due to religious reasons, except for Indigenous sites. Look to indigenous archaeology for best practices.

#### IV. Updates from Project Manager Laura Lee Worrell

- a. 3D GPR prior to land disturbance
  - i. Dr. Harris to conduct by end of March. Has requested that dates not be published due to safety, but any CEC member can speak with him regarding being onsite to observe.
  - ii. Scott Harris: Would like a couple CEC members to be there to observe and be able to explain to the rest of the CEC. Too many people on the site will be problematic.

- iii. LaSheia: If you want to be in attendance, please send an email to the CEC email address
  - b. Archaeological Monitoring Plan
    - i. Submitted in June 2025, Approved in July 2025
    - ii. 3 single-day boring tests were conducted by Terracon to identify water table. Nothing of significance was found in the bores. Different soil colors were found. No artifacts were pulled up.
    - iii. Comments from SHPO expected by the end of next week.
  
- V. February 19 meeting to discuss work plans and address questions. SHPO comments should be back by then.
  
- VI. Update from CofC Board of Trustees January meeting
  - i. Courtney Howard: overview of report to Property Committee
    - 1. Overview of the CEC (purpose, draft mission, membership composition, organizations represented, actions taken)
  - ii. Joanna: overview of resolution passed by the BOT
    - 1. BOT directed the administration to proceed with the project
    - 2. Process-based, not outcome based
    - 3. Archaeology, engagement, and memorialization are integrated, not optional
    - 4. CEC is explicitly affirmed as advisory, not determinative
    - 5. Efficiency and timeliness are explicitly named priorities
  
- VII. Organizational hierarchy (Joanna) - handout
  - i. CEC scope focused on shaping the ethical conduct of the project, particularly with respect for:
    - 1. Archaeology and research, reinterment, memorialization and interpretation
  
- VIII. **Question (Jerry):** If this CEC needs to hold additional community meetings or bring in experts, are there resources available to support that? **Answer (Facilitators):** If the CEC needs to conduct additional meetings and have other experts answer questions, the CEC should continue to make such recommendations. Previous recommendations made to the College on both topics and use of 3D imaging for the GPR survey are examples of recommendations being made and the College being in agreement.

- IX. Mission, Objectives, Goals, Values (Clay)
- a. Break up into small groups to review the document and discuss items that need to be adjusted so we can come to consensus
    - i. 3 groups of 5 CEC members
  - b. Report back out
    - i. Important to remember that this document is not an agreement with CEC and college/BOT, and that this can be revisited and adjusted at any time (Joanna)
    - ii. Group 1 (speaker: Jalen)
      - 1. Re: four lines underlined in green (College wants housing and the CEC's goal is to support that), suggestion to omit because not all CEC members support the College's goal of student housing
      - 2. Feedback from Facilitator: Reminder that we discussed these roles in November; The meeting protocol is a guide as to how we will conduct ourselves
    - iii. Group 2 (speaker: Millicent)
      - 1. Re: last paragraph under mission statement, suggestion to add "we seek to model the process that leads ensuring that known cemeteries in the City of Charleston and Charleston County shall not be disturbed without descendent approval."
      - 2. Feedback from Facilitator: consider whether the statement should say College of Charleston property, City of Charleston, or Charleston County
    - iv. Group 3 (speaker: James)
      - 1. Re: section underlined in green, suggestion to eliminate
      - 2. Suggestion to edit: the mission of the CEC is to advise (replace ensure) so that the project respects, honors, and...
      - 3. Suggestion to add 5<sup>th</sup> objective – CEC should discuss if the best way of preservation is whether we should disturb at all (to disturb or not to disturb?)
      - 4. Suggestion to have a broad goal of mitigation
    - v. Sharon: suggestion to add language from NAGPRA with reference to treating human remains with dignity (Sharon will provide exact language to be added)
  - c. The Facilitators will incorporate these changes into the document

- X. Next meeting (off-cycle)

- a. February 19 at 6pm (86 Wentworth) dedicated to reviewing the SHPO work plans

XI. Adjourn 8:19pm (Clay)