

TOWN COUNCIL
Municipal Center Council Chambers
March 3, 2026, 2025, 1:00 pm

Minutes

I. **Call to Order:** *Mayor Belt called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.*

II. **Pledge of Allegiance**

III. **Roll Call:**

Present at the Meeting: Bradley Belt, *Mayor*
Luke Farrell, *Council Member*
Madeleine Kaye, *Council Member*
Lance Spencer, *Council Member*

Present via Zoom: Russell Berner, *Mayor Pro Tem*

Also Present: Stephanie Monroe Tillerson, *Town Administrator*
Mac McQuillin, *Town Attorney*
John Taylor, Jr., *Planning Director*
Jim Jordan, *Wildlife Biologist*

IV. **Approval of Minutes:**

A. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting of February 3, 2026

Mayor Belt requested that approval of the minutes from the last Council meeting be deferred, as neither he nor the Town Administrator had sufficient time to review them. Council Members had no objection.

V. **Citizens' Comments (Agenda Items Only):**

Carol Mendendorp – Parkside

Ms. Mendendorp addressed the Council regarding beach operations, expressing hope that the Council would consider wildlife impacts when deciding what items may remain on the beach. She noted that while trucks currently arrive empty to set up beach equipment, many items could be transported daily rather than stored on the beach overnight throughout the summer.

VI. **Updates:**

A. Mayor

Mayor Belt provided updates on several key matters. He briefly mentioned the Sams Spit litigation settlement that Council had approved the previous week, noting that yesterday's packed meeting demonstrated significant community interest. He explained that although the settlement agreement is final among all parties, it remains subject to conditions, including approval by the State Fiscal Accountability Authority, scheduled for March 31.

Mayor Belt also reported on the Council's approval of the new four-year contract with Barrier Island Ocean Rescue for beach patrol and code enforcement services. He indicated that the contract took considerable time to finalize due to distinct legal issues surrounding the roles and responsibilities of providing lifeguard services versus code enforcement services. Though it took longer than anticipated because the contract had been in place for a long time without being updated, he commended both attorneys for working out the issues. The Mayor also noted that the Town is

currently undergoing a systematic process to modernize all its contractual agreements with outside service providers.

Mayor Belt expressed disappointment over persistent violations by property owners who are conducting unpermitted work in dune fields, stating that the Town will pursue every legal recourse to stop such destructive behavior. He also addressed ongoing speeding problems on Kiawah Island Parkway, citing data showing drivers exceed speed limits by 20+ mph, as well as recent pedestrian-bicycle accidents. He announced increased enforcement coordination with the Charleston County Sheriff's Office and consideration of further speed limit reductions if necessary.

Mayor Belt commended the Kiawah Arts Council for its continued good work. He noted the recent packed-house performance by magician Mike Super, who he was told was quite entertaining, as well as upcoming performances, including Andrew Armstrong's sextet and Quentin Baxter's event.

B. Council Members

Mayor Pro Tem Berner

Mayor Pro Tem Berner emphasized the critical need for proper stops at the Cassique/Kiawah Island Parkway intersection following a recent accident and requested increased enforcement by deputies at this dangerous location. He announced that his Public Safety Committee would discuss additional measures next week.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner also reported progress in shortlisting construction management firms, reducing the list from 12 to 6 candidates for the Civic and Cultural Center project, and expressed excitement about approaching the groundbreaking.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner briefly mentioned ongoing work with Council Member Kaye on resiliency issues, noting that they would meet with resiliency officers from other jurisdictions to discuss their efforts.

Council Member Kaye

Council Member Kaye provided extensive updates on multiple initiatives.

- Meetings with resiliency officers from Hilton Head, City of Charleston, Sullivan's Island, and upcoming meetings with Folly Beach to develop a Kiawah-specific resiliency officer job description. She noted the significant differences between Charleston's water-focused billion-dollar projects with the Army Corps of Engineers and the issues on Sullivan's Island, which are more similar to Kiawah's challenges. She also noted that, looking at municipalities farther up the East Coast, there is tremendous diversity in approaches to resiliency.
- The collaboration with Council Member Spencer on expanding the Weston and Sampson stormwater project to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of stormwater threats across the island.
- The successful launch of the Kiawah Conversations program, with maximum attendance for the first two programs on turtles and birds, and the upcoming field trip to the North Charleston recycling center, which filled to capacity within 24-48 hours.
- The crucial meeting with pest control companies regarding second-generation anticoagulant pesticides (SGAs) that have severely impacted the bobcat population. Despite the recent births of two healthy pups, several adults have died from SGA poisoning. The meeting with 16 of 31 licensed companies resulted in agreements for continuing education and pesticide testing in black boxes. She urgently requested more community volunteers because testing 27 properties yielded only 8 samples, with many boxes missing or empty.

Council Member Farrell

Council Member Farrell reported that work had begun on a long-term capital project list for strategic planning over the next 5-10 years, including where to allocate and prioritize capital. The purpose is to understand the impacts on the balance sheet, cash flow, and restricted and unrestricted funds. This planning supports the Civic and Cultural Center project and helps determine the best financing approach while accounting for future capital needs.

Council Member Farrell indicated that the preparation of the annual budget for the next fiscal year was in progress, with the first draft presented at the earlier Ways and Means Committee meeting. He noted that this year's budgeting would likely be very different due to capital expenditures associated with the Civic and Cultural Center facility and other projects.

Council Member Spencer

Council Member Spencer thanked Mayor Belt for his leadership over the last several years on the Captain Sams resolution and acknowledged the work and time many people contributed to resolving it.

Agreeing with Mayor Pro Tem Berner's earlier comment, he also recommended that the Charleston County Sheriff's Office focus its enforcement efforts on rolling stops and intersection violations.

Council Member Spencer reported on the Infrastructure and Public Works Committee meetings:

- Representatives from the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) regarding transit connectivity improvements for the Kiawah-Seabrook area. The solution is unknown, but there are a variety of solutions that CARTA (Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority) and BDCCOG can provide and assist with. He would continue working with them to engage with the community, major stakeholders, and employers.
- Berkeley Electric's presentation on recent outages and reinvestment efforts, appreciating their engagement with Town leadership and the Kiawah Island Community Association. The utility company provided information on billing spikes and equipment-damage concerns, with follow-up communications distributed through community channels.

C. Administrator

Ms. Tillerson reported on the following:

- Mr. Jordan's Department continues their trapping efforts, having captured four bobcats and one coyote against goals of six and two, respectively
- Tomorrow's Planning Commission meeting will cover beach overlay and modifications to parking standards
- The annual disaster awareness event is scheduled for May 20th at Town Hall

Regarding the civic and cultural center, Ms. Tillerson reported on the following:

- The Ad Hoc Civic and Cultural Center Committee's kickoff meeting was held with the Caplea Coe architectural team. They are currently progressing toward schematic designs, with completion expected within days.
- The Construction Management at Risk Services (CMaR) selection process narrowed the 11 proposals to 6 finalists, with the distribution of an RFP (Request for Proposals) planned for Thursday and the final CMaR recommendation targeted for the end of the month.

Ms. Tillerson congratulated employees on their service anniversaries: Kent Bold (13 years), Meredith Blair (1 year), and Tia Brown (1 year).

Environmental/Wildlife Director Update

Mr. Jordan provided updates on the beach nourishment permit application submitted in March 2025 for potential east end erosion work. Action on the permit is close to being taken, but it is probably still a couple of months away.

The primary delay involved the Fish and Wildlife Service's development of a programmatic biological opinion covering all beach projects rather than project-specific reviews. The programmatic biological opinion was finalized last month, and Kiawah received a tier 2 designation as a high loggerhead-nesting beach, which entails certain mitigation requirements.

Mr. Jordan submitted the Tier 2 form last week, expecting state permit approval within two months, followed by Army Corps review. The permit would be valid for five years, though current conditions don't require immediate implementation. He confirmed that the problematic flushing channel has largely dried up and that the inlet has naturally relocated eastward, effectively resolving the major erosion concerns through natural processes.

VII. Old Business:

A. To Consider Approval of Ordinance 2026-06 - An Ordinance to Repeal and Replace Article 15 – General Offenses, Chapter 5. – Fish and Wildlife Regulations – Second and Final Reading

Mayor Belt stated that the first reading of Ordinance 2026-06 was approved at the last Town Council meeting, and no additional comments had been received from Council Members or the public.

Council Member Kaye moved to approve Ordinance 2026-06 to Repeal and Replace Article 15 – General Offenses, Chapter 5. – Fish and Wildlife Regulations on second and final reading. Council Member Farrell seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

VIII. New Business:

A. To Consider Approval of Ordinance 2026-01 - An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 12 – Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance Article II. Zoning, Division 2. Zoning Map/Districts. Sec. 12-62. Zoning Map to Amend the Key Locations Map to modify the Fixed Dock Designation to allow a Floating Dock at the Subject Property, 245 Eagle Point Road, Kiawah Island, SC (TMS# 265-02-00-167) – Public Hearing and First Reading

B. To Consider Approval of Ordinance 2026-02 - An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 12 – Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance Article II. Zoning, Division 2. Zoning Map/Districts. Section 12-78. Dock Key Locations to modify the Fixed Dock Designation to allow a Floating Dock at the Subject Property, 245 Eagle Point Rd, Kiawah Island, SC (TMS# 265-02-00-167) – Public Hearing and First Reading

Mr. Taylor explained that both ordinances involve the same property at 245 Eagle Point Road, where applicant John Weiss seeks to change the designation from fixed dock to floating dock. After the initial Planning Commission review, the matter was remanded to the Planning Commission for additional engineering information to address potential impacts. The Planning Commission subsequently voted unanimously for approval after the applicant provided detailed engineering data, and neighboring objections were withdrawn following clarification.

The change would create a floating designation number 37 while reducing the existing fixed dock shoreline authorization from 600 to 200 linear feet. Planning Commission members conducted site visits and noted consistency with the nearby floating dock, designated as number 36.

Council Member Kaye made a motion to go into a Public Hearing. Council Member Farrell seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

No public comments were received during the public hearing.

Council Member Kaye made a motion to return to Regular Session. Council Member Farrell seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Council Member Farrell made a motion to approve both Ordinance 2026-01 and 2026-02 amending Chapter 12 – Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance Article II. Zoning on first reading. Council Member Kaye seconded the motion.

Council Member Farrell noted his site visit and conversations with neighbors, observing that the dock-building permit requirements and railing-height specifications resolved the primary concerns. The change creates consistency with other floating designations on the west side of the island.

Following further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

C. To Consider Approval of Ordinance 2026-07 - An Ordinance of the Town Council of the Town of Kiawah Island, South Carolina, Annexing a Portion of Road S-20 (Betsy Kerrison Parkway) Right-Of-Way into the Corporate Limits of the Town of Kiawah Island Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. Section 5-3-110, and Providing for Related Matters – First Reading

Mayor Belt explained that this ordinance would formally annex, into the Town, the road and right-of-way conveyed by the state for 0.36 miles of the inbound lane of Betsy Kerrison Parkway, from Resurrection Road to the roundabout. While the Town already owns and maintains this section, annexation would bring it within municipal borders rather than unincorporated Charleston County, allowing enforcement of municipal ordinances and zoning codes.

The Mayor emphasized that this follows separate statutory provisions from the complex annexation procedures developed for private property annexation requests, noting the Town has already absorbed all associated costs regardless of annexation status.

Council Member Farrell made a motion to approve Ordinance 2026-07, annexing a portion of road S-20 (Betsy Kerrison Parkway) Right-of-Way into the Corporate Limits of the Town of Kiawah Island, on first reading. Council Member Kaye seconded the motion.

Following further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Belt noted ongoing discussions with Charleston County regarding the acquisition of the outbound lane, with meetings scheduled between Town and county leadership next week.

D. To Consider Approval of the Town of Kiawah Island’s Recommended Appointee to Fill an Open Seat on the St. Johns Fire District Commission, Subject to Charleston County Council Approval

Ms. Tillerson explained the appointment process for the two Town representatives on the St. Johns Fire Department Commission, noting the vacancy created by Bill Thomae's relocation. Following the County's opening of the application portal and the Town's communications soliciting applications from residents, Mr. Stuart Wallman submitted the only timely application that met the qualifications.

Ms. Tillerson reported that the Public Safety Committee would like the Town Council to consider approval of the recommendation to the Charleston County Council for Mr. Wallman.

Council Member Kaye made a motion to approve the Public Safety Committee's recommendation of Stuart Wallman's appointment to the St. Johns Fire District Commission. Council Member Farrell seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

E. To Consider Approval of the Beach Operation Agreements

Mayor Belt provided context on the expired beach operation agreements, and they are now set to expire simultaneously for coordinated consideration. He noted the working group involving the Resort, Kiawah Island Club, KICA, and ARB (Architectural Review Board) that addressed aesthetic considerations and storage standardization, and reached agreement on limited overnight storage with consistent storage design, rather than daily transport.

Council Member Farrell outlined the Ways and Means (W&M) Committee's analysis using three groupings: Coastal Expeditions, Barrier Island Beach Services, and the Resort/Club entities. The committee evaluated contracts based on standardization, vehicle access definitions, cost structures, and service levels.

1. Coastal Expeditions, Inc

Council Member Farrell described Coastal Expeditions as an environmental education boat service operating from Kiawah River to the eastern island, running sunrise to sunset with a maximum of 25 groups and approximately 5 daily trips. The fee structure is 3% of the previous year's receipts.

Council Member Farrell moved to approve the Coastal Expeditions beach operations agreement. Mayor Pro Tem Berner seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

2. Kiawah Island Inn Company
3. Kiawah Island Club Holdings, LLC
 - (a) Beach Club
 - (b) Cape Club

Council Member Farrell explained the W&M Committee's analysis, which used a per-chair-per-day calculation based on a 90-day peak-season window, finding that Barrier Island Beach Services pays \$1.83 per chair per day. The W&M Committee found significant disparities in existing private entity fees: Beach Club at \$0.17 per chair, Resort at \$0.42 per chair, and Cape Club at \$0.74 per chair.

Council Member Farrell stated that the W&M Committee recommended standardizing calculations based on per-chair usage rather than on area or boardwalk access, and setting private-entity rates at \$1.75 per chair per day for the 90-day window. This provides slight savings versus the for-profit rate while addressing administrative costs and fairness concerns.

Council Member Farrell stated that the W&M Committee also recommended reviewing and more clearly defining the access requirements. He noted that an amendment will be coming forward that will include not just the type of vehicle but also how they would access the area, so there wouldn't be unnecessary traffic going up and down the beach.

Mr. Roger Warren, President of the Resort, questioned the dramatic increase in the annual fee from \$7,500 to approximately double that amount under the new calculation method. He requested time to analyze the impact and suggested tracking actual usage data for the first year to establish realistic baselines.

Council Member Spencer identified discrepancies in operating areas and entity names that require correction, and agreed with the need for more specific vehicle-access language to limit unnecessary beach traffic between locations.

Given the unresolved operational details, financial calculations, and mapping issues that require further refinement, Mayor Belt recommended deferring consideration to allow for the proper resolution of these complex matters.

Council Member Farrel made a motion to defer consideration of the Kiawah Island Inn Company and Kiawah Island Club Holdings Beach and Cape Club beach operations agreements until the next council meeting. Council Member Kaye seconded the motion.

Council Member Farrell asked for clarification on the two different entities putting chairs on the beach around the Sanctuary. Mr. Warren explained that Sanctuary services only sanctuary guests, and that the large oceanfront parcel next to the Sanctuary serves people in the Villa program.

Following the discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

4. Barrier Island Beach Service, LLC

Council Member Farrell detailed this long-term for-profit contract allowing up to 2,000 chairs (typically paired with umbrellas) to operate across the beach, except in designated areas, with annual fees of \$330,000 or 30% of gross receipts, whichever is greater. The operator maintains appropriate insurance and observes property buffers.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner made a motion to approve the Barrier Island Beach Services beach operations agreement. Council Member Kaye seconded the motion.

Council Member Kaye questioned the 2000 chair number. Ms. Tillerson clarified that the 2000-chair maximum applies only during peak periods, such as July 4th, with regular operations using approximately 1300-1600 chairs. Trevor Cyrulik of Barrier Island Beach Services explained that they operate on a demand-based deployment model and make seasonal adjustments.

Council Member Kaye questioned the number of chairs left overnight on the beach. Mr. Cyrulik explained their operations: three trucks, each carrying 55-60 chairs, and 30 umbrella boxes over seven miles, with additional equipment and chairs stored via cables and posts. He emphasized their 41-year island experience and immediate response to Turtle Patrol Coordinator Lynn Segar's requests.

Following the discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

F. 2026 Committee and Board Appointments

a. Environmental Committee

Council Member Kaye recommended Mr. Steen Peterson for appointment to the Environmental Committee, describing his two-year commitment to environmental activities, including shorebird steward and bluebird programs. She praised his comprehensive knowledge of the Town's environmental issues and his characterization as an action-oriented contributor rather than just an idea generator.

Council Member Spencer endorsed Mr. Peterson's community involvement and thorough preparation for various activities and meetings.

Council Member Kaye made a motion to appoint Mr. Peterson to the Environmental Committee. Council Member Spencer seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

b. Public Safety Committee

On behalf of Mayor Pro Tem Berner, Ms. Tillerson reviewed the recommendation of Mr. Michael Lamb and Ms. Laura Gibbs for appointment to the Public Safety Committee. She explained Mr. Lamb's role as the new Director of Public Safety for the Kiawah Island Community Association, previously serving as Chief of Police in Asheville, North Carolina. Ms. Gibbs brings extensive experience as a shorebird steward and demonstrates community engagement.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner made a motion to appoint Mr. Lamb and Ms. Gibbs to the Public Safety Committee. The motion was unanimously approved.

c. Resiliency Committee

Council Member Kaye recommended Ms. Jennifer Garr and Ms. Stacy Coyle for Resiliency Committee appointments. She described Ms. Garr's unique background in global marketing and branding with major agencies like J. Walter Thompson, as well as environmental leadership roles, including Friends of the Lowline Charleston, the Charleston Horticultural Society, the Parks Conservancy, and the Coastal Conservation Service.

Ms. Coyle brings legal education and teaching experience at the University of Michigan School of Environment and Sustainability, including popular courses such as Introduction to Water Law. Council Member Kaye emphasized her expertise in resilience issues, particularly groundwater-surface water relationships, pesticides, invasive species, flooding, and sea-level rise, providing knowledge currently lacking on the committee.

Council Member Kaye made a motion to appoint Ms. Garr and Ms. Coyle to the Resiliency Committee. Council Member Farrell seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

IX. Citizens' Comments:

No citizen comments were provided.

X. Council Member Comments:

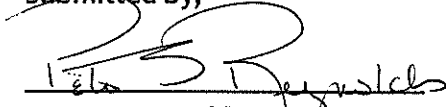
Council Member Farrell expressed appreciation for everyone's work on the Captain Sams Spit settlement negotiation, noting the long process is not complete pending state appropriation approval, but achieving the goal of perpetual preservation represents a significant accomplishment.

Council Member Kaye specifically thanked Mayor Belt for his leadership and extensive investment in research for the Captain Sams project, calling it a potential legacy achievement. Mayor Belt acknowledged the collaborative team effort involving numerous lawyers and emphasized that, despite differing interests, all parties approached the negotiations with open minds and good intentions. He noted that continued work remains before final resolution. Still, he recognized the remarkable achievement of reaching this settlement stage and thanked all parties, including the Kiawah Island Community Association and Conservancy representatives.

XI. Adjournment:

Council Member Farrell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:31 pm. Council Member Kaye seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Submitted by,


Petra S. Reynolds, Town Clerk

4.8.2024

Date