

Town of Kiawah Island
INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
Council Chambers Meeting Room
July 10, 2025; 9:00 am

Minutes

I. Call to Order: Chairman Spencer called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

Chairman Spencer called the meeting to order and noted that the roll call had been completed. Warren Stannard provided maps showing the locations of the cell towers to the Committee Members. Phillip Mancusi-Ungaro mentioned that he had previously sent an FCC map of the island electronically. There was a brief discussion about various towers and repeaters on the island, with some uncertainty about their ownership and purpose.

II. Roll Call:

Present at the Meeting: Lance Spencer, Chairman
Philip Mancusi-Ungaro
Brad McIlvain
John Shippee
Warren Stannard
Brian Gottshalk

Absent: David DeStefano

Also Present: Brad Belt, Mayor
Tom Nevin, Kiawah Partners

III. Citizens' Comments (Agenda Items Only):

None. No citizens were present for comments.

IV. Approval of Minutes:

A. Minutes of the Infrastructure and Public Works meeting of June 5, 2025

Chairman Spencer announced that approval of the minutes would be deferred because Ms. Reynolds was out this week due to a family death. He noted there had been some comments via email, and Committee Members should send any additional comments directly to Ms. Reynolds for her to address when she returns. The committee agreed to review and finalize the minutes at the next meeting.

V. Service Provider Presentation:

A. None

Chairman Spencer reported that Comcast had been scheduled to meet with the committee but requested more time. He explained that Comcast also wanted to speak with KICA regarding their agreement. Comcast representatives confirmed they would attend the August meeting instead.

Phillip Mancusi-Ungaro raised the outstanding question about the Town's agreement with Comcast, noting that their agreement expired in 2012, the same year KICA started. He questioned whether an agreement exists and if KICA's agreement superseded the Town's agreement. Mayor

Belt stated he believed the Town needs to have its own agreement, regardless of KICA's arrangement.

VI. Old Business:

A. Cellular and Fiber to the Home Improvements Update

Chairman Spencer reported that the Planning Commission voted unanimously on the updated cell tower ordinance, which would go to the Town Council in August. In parallel, Planning staff is working with Crown Castle and providers on the Ocean Course Tower as the first priority, followed by surveys of other towers.

Chairman Spencer confirmed that private investment capital had been waiting for Planning Commission approval before securing funding. He expected that Crown Castle would now be able to get money since meaningful progress was being made on the ordinance. Phillip Mancusi-Ungaro noted that Crown Castle representatives, including their radio frequency engineer, were present at the Planning Commission meeting and provided helpful technical answers. Mr. Gottshalk stated that Crown Castle, along with other providers, have attended every meeting and appear motivated to make infrastructure improvements once the new tower heights are approved.

Regarding fiber to the home, Chairman Spencer reported meeting with AT&T about a month ago. AT&T is working on a program that could potentially bring fiber to residences. They requested 30 days to develop a proposal and needed about two weeks to receive the requested information. He planned to follow up with them upon his return to the island.

Chairman Spencer expressed frustration with Comcast's service, sharing a personal anecdote about repeated internet outages at his home. He discovered from a Comcast technician that the main feed to his neighborhood had been damaged by construction and was failing, explaining his ongoing connectivity issues. Brad McIlvain also indicated that he had experienced an issue with equipment that was damaged by construction and took time and the right technician to resolve. Phillip Mancusi-Ungaro confirmed experiencing similar slowdowns during busy summer periods due to bandwidth limitations on the island.

B. Update on Mayor's List of Initiatives

Mr. Gottshalk provided an update on the Cultural and Civic Wing project. The Town received 11 responses to the RFQ sent to architects. A review selection committee narrowed these down to six firms for interviews. The selection committee appointed by Mayor Belt would begin interviews the next day, continuing through the following week. Up to three architects would be selected to participate in a conceptual design competition, with the winner ultimately being awarded the project.

Mayor Belt added that the firms included extraordinarily well-qualified regional and national companies with relevant experience. He outlined the timeline: interviews would be completed the following Tuesday, the committee would select three firms for the design competition, firms would have six weeks to submit conceptual designs, and at least one public workshop would be held for presentations. The selection committee's recommendation would go to the Council to decide whether to proceed, as they would have a better understanding of the project scope and costs at that point.

Mayor Belt also discussed related considerations, including establishing a finance working group for debt issuance (to be recaptured through state tax funds), pursuing sewer connectivity ideally with Seabrook Island utility, making necessary changes to the Plan Development for the parcel, and addressing associated roadwork, landscaping, and hardscaping. He expressed his desire to pursue the extension of the Town's leisure trail and build a pedestrian/bicycle bridge across Haulover Creek from Freshfields.

Brad McIlvain asked about national firms partnering with local architects. Mayor Belt responded that only one firm (David O. Schwartz from D.C.) lacked a local office presence, though they had done local work, including at the Gilliard. He acknowledged this would be addressed during interviews to ensure sufficient real-time presence.

Mr. Gottshalk then discussed plans for connectivity from the Municipal Center campus to the Kiawah Island Parkway via a bridge over Haulover Marsh. He confirmed the Town owns all the marsh property between the campus and Kiawah Island Parkway. The committee discussed engaging one of the Town's on-call engineering firms to help with design and permitting. Phillip Mancusi-Ungaro offered to assist with the permitting process, noting his experience with Corps districts and current staffing challenges at regulatory agencies.

The committee discussed the challenge of crossing the Parkway to reach Freshfields after the bridge is built. Mayor Belt indicated that a crossing similar to the one installed on KIP behind the gate around Oyster Lake would be appropriate, rather than a vertical crossing. Brad McIlvain suggested that if the Andell West intersection proceeds, it could serve as a crossing point.

Mayor Belt then provided a detailed update on the Andel West development. He had just received an email indicating Riverstone is moving forward with county construction permitting. Harris Teeter is requiring a roundabout at the Andel West property access as a condition of opening their store. This would encroach on the town's right-of-way and require town permission. Mayor Belt expressed skepticism about the necessity of a roundabout for Phase 1 (new Harris Teeter, relocated fuel center, and three pads), suggesting it might be more appropriate for Phase 2. Harris Teeter is pushing back, linking the roundabout to their participation. The anticipated opening is 2029.

Warren Stannard raised safety concerns about the proposed roundabout location. Discussion ensued about who approves the location (the Town, as it encroaches on the Town right-of-way), previous design work by Kimley-Horn (now working for the developer), and alternative locations. The committee discussed challenges of pedestrian crossings at roundabouts versus traffic signals, with Mayor Belt expressing his opposition to a stoplight while acknowledging traffic engineers' recommendations for full build-out.

C. Update on Kiawah Island Parkway Bridge Repairs and Assessment

Mr. Gottshalk reported that with engineering contracts now finalized, he would reach out for a supplemental inspection of the bridge based on McSweeney's report. He would engage a different engineer for an independent assessment. Based on McSweeney's report, the bridge is in good shape with no imminent danger of collapse. Minor guardrail and pedestrian rail fixes could be addressed quickly. The next step is to have another engineer assess the bridge's structural integrity, with an update expected at the next meeting.

Phillip Mancusi-Ungaro asked three key questions: the lifespan of the existing bridge with minor repairs, whether major repairs could extend its life, and how to plan for eventual replacement. These questions would be part of the engineering assessment.

Brad McIlvain raised concerns about the bridge's ability to withstand storm surge and lateral forces versus normal traffic loads. Warren Stannard explained that the bridge was designed to interstate specifications and should be structurally sound. However, he expressed greater concern about the approaches to the bridge, noting the bridge sits at 12 feet while the adjacent roadway is at 7 feet, making the approaches vulnerable to storm surge damage.

D. Update on Mingo Curve Storm Surge Modeling

Mr. Gottshalk discussed the need to reevaluate road height relative to current water levels and projected sea level rise. It had been five years since the road was repaved. The previous approach focused on mitigating nuisance flooding rather than major hurricane events, acknowledging that

no one would be on the road during a Category 4 or 5 hurricane. The goal is to keep the road passable during king tides and minor storm surge events, such as if that day's storm had coincided with high tide.

Warren Stannard emphasized that the Mingo Point curve should be the starting point for any discussion. He recommended issuing an RFP for the redesign of Mingo Point, similar to the previous Kiawah Island Parkway RFP. The consultant would evaluate the curve and determine the best solution, which would then determine the height of the roadway for the remaining distance.

Chairman Spencer suggested having the selected consultant present to the committee before beginning work and again when presenting results, allowing the committee to provide input and recommendations to the Council.

E. Review the Franchise Agreement Subcommittee Recommendations to be Provided to the Mayor

Chairman Spencer introduced the topic of franchise agreement recommendations. Mayor Belt reported having preliminary discussions with municipal franchise legal experts at the town attorney's firm, originally sparked by the KIU consolidation proposal. He aims to draft a municipal franchise ordinance to provide a legal framework for contract negotiations with service providers. Progress has been slow despite multiple emails requesting focus on this issue.

Phillip Mancusi-Ungaro described his work analyzing all existing agreements, creating a chart of main issues, and extracting important provisions while noting the self-serving boilerplate. He plans to reorganize the information into sections by agreement type, financial aspects, and other categories, then share it with the Mayor and the committee. His particular interest is in the Comcast situation, questioning whether the Town has been receiving payments since the agreement expired.

Brad McIlvain raised Eric Scheidel's concern about the town granting rights over land it doesn't own, questioning whether KICA needs to be included to make agreements more enforceable. Mayor Belt noted these are separate issues, explaining that state enabling statutes allow municipalities to execute franchise agreements independent of road and right-of-way access. The question remains about what authority such agreements actually grant when roads are privately owned.

The committee discussed whether joint agreements with KICA make sense, acknowledging potential revenue-sharing implications. Chairman Spencer argued for treating it as a binary issue between the municipality and private property owners. Phillip Mancusi-Ungaro noted that some existing agreements are implemented through ordinances, requiring research into existing town ordinances on franchise agreements.

Mr. Mancusi-Ungaro also reported that Berkeley Electric had provided three proposed franchise agreements at a recent meeting: one with Berkeley, one with Dominion, and a third addressing relationships between franchise organizations and large power companies. The committee expressed confusion about Dominion's involvement since they have no assets on Kiawah Island. Brad McIlvain speculated this might be defensive positioning, noting Eric's comment that cooperatives were designed for rural areas and Kiawah no longer qualifies as rural.

VII. New Business:

A. Discuss KIU Consolidation and Water Quality Report

Chairman Spencer noted that committee members likely received the KIU consolidation letter signed by Sorenson and the water quality report with QR code access. The report was attached to the meeting package. Spencer recalled that the town made a conscious decision not to comment

on the consolidation package with the Public Utilities Commission. He observed that some items in the water quality report appeared outside normal ranges, but wasn't sure of their significance.

Phillip Mancusi-Ungaro stated he would be shocked if any island homes had copper or lead plumbing, given the construction timing. He identified the real issues as PFOA and PFOS levels and what Charleston Water Systems is doing about them. Chairman Spencer suggested the committee could revisit the report with Becky from KIU if needed, noting she had been helpful in their April or May meeting and seemed open to answering questions.

B. Discuss Leisure Trail Extension Next Steps

This item was discussed earlier in conjunction with the Mayor's initiatives update regarding the pedestrian bridge over Haulover Creek.

C. Review Speed Sign Data

Mr. Gottshalk reported on the two speed projection signs installed on the exterior parkway - one approaching Mingo Point and another outbound near the island exit. These signs, similar in style to KICA's installations, collect volume and speed data.

The data confirmed there are speeders on Kiawah, which wasn't surprising. More importantly, the signs allow compilation of historical tracking data. Observationally, vehicles tend to slow down when they see their speed projected, perhaps not braking but releasing the accelerator, which is considered a win. The data can track speeds from when vehicles first enter range through their approach and departure.

Gottshalk planned to pull additional data from the Fourth of July week, though acknowledged that standstill traffic conditions would skew it. Outside congested periods, the data would show true driving patterns during nighttime and early morning hours.

Chairman Spencer highlighted that the Beachwalker sign recorded nearly 52,000 vehicles in roughly three weeks. Mr. Gottshalk explained this wasn't surprising given Beachwalker Park's full capacity and multiple parking lot turnovers daily - potentially 3-4 complete cycles representing about 1,000 cars per day. For context, there were 201,000 inbound vehicles on KIP during the same period, with 158,000 outbound (outbound data was incomplete due to system downtime).

The committee discussed whether to publicize the data. Mayor Belt suggested reporting only vehicles exceeding the speed limit by 10 mph or more, avoiding meaningless average speed statistics skewed by congestion. Phillip Mancusi-Ungaro supported this approach, recalling how KICA used to report speeds in increments above the limit. He also advocated for more small lighted signs rather than large trailers, citing their effectiveness at locations like Governors Drive.

John Shippee noted the signs' effectiveness except for "midnight speeders who try to bust the record." Brad McIlvain confirmed similar positive results at Cassique over two years of data collection. The committee briefly discussed Fourth of July traffic, with Brad McIlvain noting KICA reported slightly lower traffic than the previous year. Mayor Belt specified that traffic was very high Wednesday through Friday, but down significantly on Saturday.

The discussion evolved into broader observations about changing rental patterns and island growth. Chairman Spencer observed more long-weekend rentals (Wednesday to Sunday) rather than traditional Saturday-to-Saturday patterns, as evidenced by the number of new dogs in his neighborhood. This phenomenon affects golf course availability, with Saturday afternoons historically being easier for tee times due to turnover.

Mayor Belt then provided an extensive analysis of island growth patterns. He emphasized that the increased pressure on traffic and amenities over the past five years isn't due to tourism, as short-term rental licenses and hotel occupancy rates have remained flat. Instead, growth is attributable

to two factors: approximately 400 new dwelling units (15% growth) and part-time property owners spending more time on the island.

Tom Nevin reported that full-time residents now comprise 26% of the population (defined as 120+ days annually), up from 20% in 2022. Club membership shows a slightly higher percentage of full-time residents than the overall population. Mayor Belt estimated about 300 new full-time residents over five years, with club members disproportionately becoming full-time compared to non-members.

The Mayor detailed current housing statistics: 4,100 dwelling units (excluding Cassique), with roughly 1,000 full-time, 1,300 in short-term rental programs, and 2,000 part-time owners who don't rent. If part-time usage increased from 15% to 25% of the year, the marginal impact would be substantial.

Future growth projections include: Ocean Pines (80 units in 18 months), potential West End development (60 units under mediation settlement), approximately 150 undeveloped lots (50 with current building permits), unknown resort development under the 2010 agreement (bedroom count for either villas or hotels), limited remaining Cassique growth, Seafields (100 units), and Orange Hill (120 total units including 68 cottages, with likely mandatory club membership).

Tom Nevin shared that in monthly meetings with randomly selected couples, about half plan to move to Kiawah full-time within 3-4 years. Committee members confirmed this trend in their neighborhoods, with Brad McIlvain noting that buyers in their 50s are planning for retirement in 5-7 years, suggesting the age of full-time residents is lowering.

Mayor Belt concluded by mentioning that the Comprehensive Plan recommendations would come to the Council in August, which would need to address growth impacts and stakeholder responsibilities. He noted most Town Hall questions concerned gate access, which is controlled by the homeowners' association, not the Town. The KICA board is examining technology solutions and policy changes for gate access issues.

VIII. Chairman's Updates:

Chairman Spencer had no additional updates beyond suggesting that the town might help KICA with their gate problems, to be discussed with Jody at the next meeting.

IX. Committee Members' Comments:

No committee members offered additional comments.

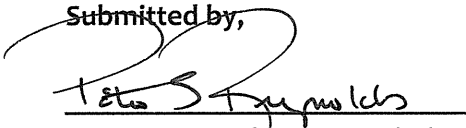
X. Citizens' Comments:

None. No citizens were present for comments.

XI. Adjournment:

Chairman Spencer adjourned the meeting at 11:28 am, thanking everyone for their flexibility with the morning meeting time.

Submitted by,


Petra S. Reynolds, Town Clerk

9.2.2025
Date