

**SPECIAL CALL
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

Kiawah Island Municipal Center
December 18, 2024, 4:00 pm

Minutes

I. **Call to Order: Mr. Dowdy called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.**

II. **Roll Call:**

Present: Bill Dowdy, *Chairman*
Larry Iwan, *Vice Chairman*
Dr. Ronald Curran
Joanne Hennessy

Present Via Zoom: Gene Babinec
John Connolly

Absent: Andy Capelli

Also Present: John Taylor, Jr., *Planning Manager*
Daniel Vincent, *Planner 1*
Patrea St. John, *Landscape and Tree Preservation Specialist*

III. **Public Comments: (Agenda Items Only)**

Dr. Michael Heidingsfelder – 2 Shell Creek Landing

Dr. Heidingsfelder discussed the importance of serving the community. As a barrier island, he discussed the impact of storm and flooding events on the island, emphasizing the need to address flooding and addressing impervious surfaces to avoid environmental impacts. He also expressed disappointment in the Council's rejection of the ordinance aimed at managing impervious surfaces and hoped that the Planning Commission continued its efforts to make sure to find the best solutions for the island, not the best compromise.

IV. **New Business:**

A. Proposed Text Amendment

- 1) **AZO24-000008| Request to amend Section 12-128. Access, Parking and Loading Regulations, Sec. 12-63. Description of Zoning Districts and Regulations, and Sec. 12-374. Definitions to modify driveway and parking standards for pervious paving requirements.**

Mr. Taylor provided an update on the ordinance process, including its support from the Comprehensive Marsh Management Workgroup and a recommendation for approval from the Planning Commission. The ordinance has gone through various stages, including a public hearing and first reading that the Town Council tabled at the August meeting and a September 30th Stormwater Management Workshop. At the November meeting, the Town Council reviewed the ordinance, recommended changes, and, per the advice of legal counsel, sent it back to the Planning Commission for review and recommendation.

In response to Mr. Babinec's question, Mr. Taylor clarified that, based on the ordinance language, the Planning Commission can recommend approval of the ordinance with the changes or not accept the changes requested by the Town Council.

Dr. Curran questions the outdated landscaping requirements for parking areas and suggests addressing them in total. Taylor agrees that the cleanup could occur at the final second reading, pending confirmation of changes.

Mr. Bundrick from the Kiawah Conservancy presented additional context on impervious surfaces and their environmental impacts, related to not only current conditions related to stormwater but also to potential future projections, with a focus on driveways.

Mr. Bundrick stated that he digitized all of the different types of impervious surfaces on Kiawah, including roads, parking, buildings, driveways, multi-use, and pathways. That data was further analyzed to create landfill maps, which provided a summary of the island's existing impervious surface cover. Of the approximately 3725 upland acres, approximately 669, or 18%, are completely covered by some type of impervious surface. He discussed potential environmental impacts, noting that a 10% to 20% threshold is where you start to see adverse impacts, and over 20% additional types of environmental impact could occur.

Mr. Bundrick presented maps and data showing existing and projected impervious cover, including residential lots and developable vacant lots, noting that commercial lots were not considered in his analysis. As of December 13th there are approximately 1957 existing residential lots and approximately 440 developable vacant residential lots on the island. Of those residential lots, about 25.8% are covered with some type of impervious surface, and of that, about 68% of that being buildings and about 62% being driveways.

Mr. Bundrick engaged in an in-depth discussion of his analysis and the potential increase in impervious cover with future development scenarios, answering questions posed by Commissioners.

Dr. Heidingsfelder provided data on recent permits issued by the Town behind the second gate over the past 17 months. Of those he had an opportunity to look at, he noted the prevalence of concrete driveways, with only one found not to have been remodeled into a concrete driveway.

Mr. Greg Darus, 100 Belmeade Hall, questioned some of the assumptions and calculations presented and raised concerns about the 60% cost differential between concrete and pervious pavers installation and the incremental charge being mandated on the community. Ms. Hennessy indicated that more data was needed on apples-to-apples cost comparisons of the different types of pervious materials.

The Commissioners' discussion included

- concerns about the cost and feasibility of pervious surfaces, suggesting a need for more detailed information,
- the impact of pervious surfaces on water infiltration and the need for additional information on cost and maintenance,
- clear definitions and standards for pervious surfaces, including the use of pavers and asphalt.

Ms. Hayes, a landscape board member with the Kiawah Island Architectural Review Board, provided questions, comments and consideration items as follows:

- areas that have to handle a higher volume of traffic and load be considered to have impervious paving
- Consult an engineer about whether or not pervious asphalt can handle the same load and have similar maintenance as regular asphalt; that kind of information would be helpful so that you know about the potential implications of the ordinance language,
- Whether the Planning Commission was considering a 50% threshold for replacement,

- Would it make sense for the ordinance to apply to an entire driveway replacement when that is being done so that there's not a patchwork

Mr. Taylor clarified the changes recommended by the Town Council, including the removal of requirements for replacement driveways. The 50% was referring to parking.

Ms. Hayes also questioned the staff's recommendation for the effective date to be in 30 days, suggesting a six-month time frame to allow homeowners and design teams to work out any issues that arise during the review process.

The Commissioners engaged in an in-depth discussion of the rationale for having an incentive that would allow an increase in lot coverage, the potential impact on different property types, and the need for fair and consistent requirements.

Mr. Taylor explains the changes recommended by the Town Council:

- Section 12- 128 – *“and to promote environmental stewardship and stormwater runoff best management practices.”*
- *“Replacement driveways”* was removed; now reads *“all new driveways with permitted after X date shall be constructed of a pervious material.”*
- Deferred implementation date (45 days seemed reasonable and can be considered by the Planning Commission)

Dr. Curran indicated that the implementation date discussion needs to follow some more information, specifically about costs and what types of surfaces are applicable to heavy loads and wear and tear.

Mr. Taylor continued with the review of the ordinance changes

- Exhibit B, Parking Design Standards, D – Addition of D-12 – *“All required surface parking facilities shall be constructed of a pervious surface. This includes newly constructed or additions to existing parking facilities and replacement parking facilities. Replacement parking facilities shall be defined as substantial improvements where any combination of repairs, reconstruction, alteration, or improvements exceed 50% of the total surface parking facility area as determined by the Planning Director.”*

Commissioners further discussed the replacement costs associated with driveways, parking lots, and multifamily parking facilities. They also mentioned the belief that all homeowners are treated equally, with some members in favor of reinstating replacement driveways in the ordinance but not comfortable moving ahead with more data.

Dr. Heidingsfelder stated that alternatives could be considered, and compromises may also help with the cost. However, he urged the Commission to reinstate the renovations or replacement driveways in the ordinance because it was the only way to really make a substantial impact. Dr. Curran also pointed out that water runoff management along the perimeter of the driveway could lower the cost.

Dr. Curran suggested an information session or presentation from a professional who installs pervious surfaces could address cost and maintenance concerns.

Mr. Taylor indicated that there seemed to be a consensus to gather more information and revisit the ordinance at a future meeting. He stated that he would begin reaching out to installers on the island to engage with them, noting that due to the holiday, it might not be possible until the new year.

Mr. Dowdy felt the members agreed to return to the existing driveways as well as the new ones and to engage the private sector for more detailed information.

Curran proposes having a small group meet with the installers and disseminate the information to the whole committee.

Mr. Babinec requested that an outside contractor, preferably with commercial expertise, translate technical information into language the committee could understand.

Mr. Darius raised concerns about runoff from driveways on the island, questioning whether letting water runoff into the sand is effective. Mr. Dowdy references an excellent previous presentation on the quality and volume of water runoff, which opened his eyes and likely those of other commission members. Mr. Iwan suggests showing a thumbnail of that presentation next time to avoid prolonging the current discussion.

Dowdy suggests tabling the discussion until further data is presented to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Babinec made a motion to table the discussion until such time when outside experts and commercial installers provide further education to the Commission so that it can make an informed decision. Dr. Curran seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

V. Correspondence/Staff Comments:

None

VI. Public Comments:

None

VII. Commissioner Comments:

Mr. Connelly questioned the potential reaction from the council if they decide to put driveway replacements back in.

Mr. Babinec agreed that driveway replacements are necessary and that the requirements on different sides of the street are inconsistent.

Dr. Curran emphasizes the value of involving experts, as seen in the tree preservation process, and suggests inviting more participants for a better outcome.

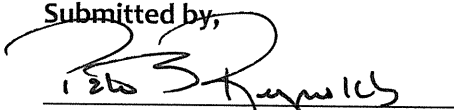
Ms. Hennessy agrees that equal treatment on the island is needed and sees this as a step in the right direction.

Mr. Iwan reiterates the existential issue of rising water and the importance of addressing it correctly.

VIII. Adjournment:

Dr. Curran made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:46 pm. Ms. Hennessy seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Submitted by,


Petra S. Reynolds, Town Clerk

1-9-2025

Date