

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Kiawah Island Municipal Center

December 4, 2024, 2:00 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*
Gene Babinec
Andy Capelli
Dr. Ronald Curran
Joanne Hennessy

Also Present: Boone Aiken, *Town Attorney*
John Taylor, Jr., *Planning Manager*
Daniel Vincent, *Planner 1*
Patera St. John, *Landscape and Tree Preservation Specialist*

III. **Approval of Minutes:**

A. Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of November 6, 2024

Mr. Capelli made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2024, Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Babinec seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

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

None

V. **Old Business**

A. **KiawahNext Update**

The Kiawah Next comprehensive plan update was discussed. Mr. Taylor stated that new photos had been taken to fill in the placeholders. The community drop-in, tentatively scheduled for December 17th, was discussed at the last meeting. It was for the community to understand and review the goals and objectives, ask staff questions, and provide comments. The Commissioners will be provided prior to the drop-in, and the document that includes the public comments will be formally reviewed in January.

VI. **New Business:**

A. **Proposed Text Amendment**

- 1) **AZO24-000010| Introduction of Phase II Tree Preservation and Landscaping Standards** (Section 12-129 Tree Preservation and Landscaping Standards to include Landscape Standards; Sec. Sec. 12-128 Access, Parking and Loading Regulations and Section 12-374 Definitions.)

Ms. St. John provided background on the development of phase two of the tree preservation ordinance. In June, the Landscape Standards Workgroup, which included members of the Planning Commission, KICA (Kiawah Island Community Association), the ARB (Architectural Review Board), the Resort, and a landscape architect, began working and met monthly to

Mr. Taylor stated that the second reading of the Non-Conforming Uses Ordinance was approved at the Town Council meeting. As stated in the earlier discussion, the changes made to the previous paving requirements will be brought back before the Commission for review and recommendation. Staff, along with the Town's legal counsel, will provide some additional language for the ordinance, and a potential Planning Commission Special Call meeting is being considered to review the language changes.

Development Projects

- *Beachwalker, Ocean Pines, and West End* - The mediation team of Council Members Berner and Farrell, with the developer, have been working on finalizing through the attorneys the final documents and exhibits that would now be processed through the courts. It is anticipated that those documents will be agreed upon and finalized through the formal process in the very near future.
- *Seafields project* – the construction is moving forward at a rapid pace.
- *MUSC Medical Facility* - already moving ground.
- *The Resort* - will be undertaking the Mingo Point Dock project
- Mr. Taylor stated there had also been pre-application meetings:
 - The Resort- consideration of the Roy Barth Tennis Facility
 - Interest in a new restaurant building at Freshfields, but there's been no further traction on that particular facility.
- The medical village being proposed on Betsy Kerrison Parkway is scheduled to go before Charleston County Council for a Public Hearing on December 10th and on December 19th, considered by the Planning and Public Works consideration for County Council.

B. Comprehensive Marsh Management Plan

After working on pervious paving, the Marsh Management Workgroup will begin discussing buffers, pond edges, setbacks, bulkheads, and erosion control devices. Though not expected for some time, the Planning Commission will receive a recommendation from the Workgroup.

C. Pervious Surfaces 101 – Community Awareness Efforts

Mr. Taylor stated that although the second reading of the Pervious Surfaces Ordinance was not yesterday, the Town has continued its efforts to educate and make the community aware of the benefits of pervious surfaces. Communications have been pushed out directly to all contractors on the island, encouraging them to talk to their clients about choosing permeable surface options.

The Town, Community Association, ARB, and the Conservancy have worked jointly to prepare an exhibit that highlights many of the benefits and considerations of pervious surfaces. The Town's website has been updated with additional language and educational components that allow property owners to be aware of these benefits, along with a video produced by Mr. Kinard and the Communications Team.

D. Communication Towers and Cellular Coverage on Kiawah

Mr. Vincent stated that the staff was tasked with obtaining more information about the cell towers on the island, potential issues regarding cell coverage and dropped calls, and how to get upgraded infrastructure on the island.

At the Town Council meeting, staff and American Tower, which owns the tower on Kestrel Court, presented. The presentations included the locations of the towers currently on the island and pinpointed areas that had good coverage and spots that needed better coverage. The issues with upgrading their current towers were also discussed, but no formal recommendations were made

on increasing tower height, noting the need for potential code changes.

Mr. Vincent indicated that he, Mr. Nardelli, and Council Member Spencer would continue discussions with tower owner and carrier representatives on how to address these issues and what the Town can do to improve coverage on the island.

There was an in-depth discussion of Mr. Capelli's comment that, in addition to the issues listed in the presentation, he pointed out that the KICA Board identified a contract between Comcast and KICA as a barrier to improving coverage, requiring provider involvement to resolve technical and contractual challenges.

VIII. Public Comments:

Jennifer Hayes, a Landscape Board member for the Architectural Review Board (ARB) and former staff member since 2005, criticized the text amendment for duplicating ARB guidelines for Kiawah properties, complicating reviews and creating agency conflicts. She urged reconsideration to exclude duplications and address gaps, like the Eugenia properties amendment. Ms. Hayes proposed ordinances for landscape maintenance and native plant requirements, highlighting the 70% and 40% language as beneficial. She stressed avoiding negative costs for owners caught in duplicate reviews, emphasizing the need for amendments that are additive, not duplicative.

Discussion included maintenance expectations, focusing on ARB guidelines and the need for detailed guidance on natural pruning techniques to support Kiawah's landscape. It highlighted older properties with inadequate maintenance and the Conservancy's role in native plant maintenance. The applicability of ARB standards to multifamily and commercial properties, like the Sanctuary and Cougar Point Clubhouse, was noted, alongside concerns about duplication of efforts in the current text.

The discussion also mentioned KICA's rules and regulations, which include maintenance compliance and the lack of a clear explanation for the duplication of processes assigned by the Council two years ago.

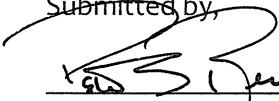
IX. Commissioner Comments:

None

X. Adjournment:

Mr. Iwan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:10 pm. Dr. Curran seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Submitted by,



Petra S. Reynolds, Town Clerk

1/9/2025
Date