

# PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Kiawah Island Municipal Center

July 2, 2025, 1:00 pm

## Minutes

I. **Call to Order:** *Ms. Hennessy called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.*

II. **Roll Call:**

**Present:** Joanne Hennessy, *Chair*  
Larry Iwan, *Vice Chair*  
Gene Babinec  
John Connolly  
Sandy Devine  
Maribeth Schmersal  
Rob Ryan

**Also Present:** John Taylor, Jr., *Planning Director*  
Stephanie Tillerson, *Town Administrator*  
Daniel Vincent, *Planner 1*  
Patrea St. John, *Landscape and Tree Preservation Specialist*  
Mac McQuillin, *Town Attorney*

*Ms. Hennessy called for a motion to move Old Business item A. Kiawah Next to be heard with New Business Item A. Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Mr. Connelly made the motion and Mr. Ryan seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.*

III. **Approval of Minutes:**

A. Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of June 4th, 2025

*Ms. Devine made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 4, 2025, Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Connolly seconded the motion, and it was approved by 6 ayes and 1 abstention.*

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

Mr. Mark Permar, 81 Dungannon Hall, representing the Kiawah Partners, Kiawah Island Golf Resort and as a homeowner, asked to make comments when the Kiawah Next Comprehensive Plan is discussed.

Mr. Lance Spencer, Chairman of the Infrastructure and Public Works Committee and member of Town Council spoke in favor the zoning text amendment regarding communication towers.

Mr. Brad McIlvain, 146 Blue Heron Rd, member of the Infrastructure and Public Works Committee spoke in favor of the zoning text amendment regarding communication towers.

## V. Old Business

### B. Zoning Text Amendment Application(s):

#### 1) #AZO25-000005 | Communication Towers

**Request to amend Sec. 12-103. – Conditions of Use to modify standards regarding communication tower infrastructure to enhance public safety and quality of life issues regarding cellular coverage.**

Ms. Hennessy requested the four attendees at previous cell tower meetings introduce themselves for benefit of the full commission.

Maribel Parks – T-Mobile

Raju Budharaju – T-Mobile

Kimberly Adams – Crown Castle

Jonathan Yates – Hellman Yates

***Ms. Devine made a motion to approve zoning text amendment AZO25-000005 communication towers, Mr. Ryan seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.***

Mr. Taylor recapped that the Planning Commission deferred action on this amendment from the June meeting, sharing an appointed subcommittee of Mr. Babinec, Mr. Connolly and Mr. Ryan to revise the ordinance for the Commission's consideration.

Mr. Babinec highlighted the major changes in the proposed text, including the tower height provisions and public notice requirements.

Commissioners discussed the proposed ordinance amendment.

Mr. Iwan discussed the importance of public safety and the need for taller towers to improve the coverage on the island, highlighting the broader usage of communication towers in the future.

Ms. Adams with Crown Castle spoke to the need for the ability to accommodate a 150' tower and going to a monopole with full arrays allows the carriers to have 4G and 5G on one RAD center and to improve the coverage for Kiawah Island.

Mr. Raju Budharaju, a radio frequency engineer for T-Mobile addressed coverage with the existing tower locations, sharing currently the T-Mobile equipment is 4G on a stealth tower which limits the ability to add 5G technology. The proposed 150' height would allow for greater penetration and coverage. 5G is required not just for cellular but other technologies such as Waymo.

Mr. Spencer emphasized the long-term benefits of these companies investing in modern cellular infrastructure.

Ms. Devine expressed concern about individual tower locations and possible impact on property values as well as the need to solicit community input about this issue.

Mr. Babinec inquired about the current capabilities and upgrade plans for the current communication tower located at Kestral Court. Mr. Spencer indicated that the Kestral Court communication tower currently has 5G antennas and there are no immediate plans to make further upgrades to the tower.

Mr. Yates emphasized the importance of public safety and the need for clear, uncomplicated

language in the ordinance. He offered historical context for several provisions included in the ordinance.

**Mr. Babinec made a motion to amend Section 12-103 (m) 3b Tower Height provision to state**

*“If the height of the proposed communication tower exceeds 120 feet in height, its application must be accompanied by a report from a professional engineer, radio frequency engineer or other licensed professional that justifies the need for additional height.”*

**Mr. Ryan seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

**Ms. Schmersal made a motion to amend (m)(10)b. and (m)(10) c. by eliminating:**

1. *The location and height of the proposed tower will not substantially impact the character of property listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, other significant environmental, cultural or historical site officially designated scenic roads or rivers and that the tower is designed to blend into the environment and minimize visual impact.*

1. *The proposed use will be detrimental to adjacent land uses including historical sites; and;*

2. *The proposed use will have a negative aesthetic visual impact.*

**Ms. Devine seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.**

**Ms. Schmersal made a motion to amend (m) (10) a. to read**

*“A complete zoning permit application for a communication tower that meets all requirements of this article may be approved or approved with conditions.” Mr. Babinec seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.*

**The Planning Commission unanimously approved the ordinance as amended.**

## **VI. New Business**

### **A. Comprehensive Plan Amendment(s)**

#### **Kiawah Next: Town of Kiawah Island 2025 Comprehensive Plan**

A resolution recommending approval of the Town of Kiawah Island Comprehensive Plan 2025.

Ms. Hennessy thanked all of the commissioners for their work on this document and Stephanie Tillerson and John Taylor.

Ms. Tillerson explained that the document will require a 30-day advertisement period before being able to move to the Town Council first reading and public hearing part of the approval process.

Mr. Mark Permar commends the commission’s effort in developing this plan. He highlighted the proposal for a collaborative approach to discussing and resolving issues and would only suggest to include the Kiawah Island Utility company in those efforts.

Mr. Permar suggests considering a range in outlining the numbers included in the Kiawah by the numbers section. He also suggests that Freshfield is not overdeveloped but a blend of one- and two-

story structures with a FAR of .27 and the .25 FAR is a more realistic number for Kiawah.

Mr. Permar suggested reviewing the communities cited as examples for land use densities to ensure accurate data.

**Mr. Iwan made a motion to adopt the resolution as amended recommending the adoption of the 2025 Town of Kiawah Island Comprehensive Plan – Kiawah Next. Ms. Devine seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.**

## **B. Zoning Text Amendment Application**

### **Introduction of Establishing Town of Kiawah Island Architectural Review Controls**

Mr. Taylor stated that the intent is for the Town to initiate the process for the establishment of its own Architectural Review Board. In 2023 a joint task force (Town of Kiawah Island and Kiawah Island Community Association) was formed to outline the process to transition the current Kiawah Partners ARB to the property owners. There is current uncertainty as to the timeline for this transition which has led to this effort. The process would be similar to that which was used to establish the Tree and Preservation Board with the Planning Commission to outline the framework and implementation timeline for this effort.

Ms. Devine and Mr. Ryan volunteered to work with Mr. Taylor to develop this framework and timeline and report back to the Planning Commission.

## **VII. Correspondence/Staff Comments**

Mr. Taylor provided the Planning Commission with updates from the Town Council meeting as they considered the first reading and public hearing for Ordinance 2025-12 and 2025-13 - the rezoning and Future Land Use modifications for the Ocean Park parcels. They also approved the first reading of Ordinance 2025-10 Use Regulations, and Ordinance 2025-11 removing the 2013 Amended and Restated Development Agreement from the Zoning code as an appendix and clarifying the setback standards.

## **VIII. Public Comments: none**

## **IX. Commissioner Comments:**

Mr. Babinec shared that he and Ms. Schmursal, Mr. Ryan and Ms. St John had a call with Weston Sampson to discuss an alternative to the pervious paving ordinance by developing supplemental stormwater standards specific to Kiawah Island. Mr. Hernandez of Weston Sampson will develop a scope of services to provide the engineering expertise to assist the town with this effort.

## **X. Adjournment**

**Mr. Iwan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Schmursal seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously at 3:30 pm.**

Submitted by,



Patrea St John, Planner

9/3/25  
Date