

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Kiawah Island Municipal Center

October 8th, 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
Rob Ryan

Also Present: John Taylor, Jr., *Planning Director*
Daniel Vincent, *Planner 1*
Patrea St. John, *Planner 1*
Mac McQuillin, *Town Attorney*

III. **Approval of Minutes:**

A. Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of September 9th, 2025

Mr. Iwan made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 6, 2025, Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Ryan seconded the motion, and it was approved with 3 affirmative vote, Mr. Babinec abstained.

IV. **Public Comments:** *(Agenda Items Only) None*

V. **Old Business:** none

VI. **New Business**

A. **Zoning Text Amendment Application(s)**

1) **#AZO25-000014 | Landscape and Tree Preservation Standards**

Request to amend Chapter 12- Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance Article 1- To modify beachfront and maritime forest standards for the Beachfront Overlay Zoning District.

The key changes included:

- Modify the standards to include the buffer zones as defined by the Beachfront Overy Zone
- Allow for identification and preservation of trees more than 3" in caliper DBH as many maritime forest species are slow growing and smaller by nature of their habitat.
- Only allows for coastal native species to be planted in buffer zones and requires removal of invasive species
- Keep pruning to a minimum with requests for limited removal or pruning for view corridor subject to review by the Planning Director.

Mr. Ryan asked for clarification on the pruning approval process. Ms. St John indicated it would be implemented as a zoning permit process.

Mr. Iwan made a motion to approve and Mr. Babinec seconded the motion to approve the text amendment, #AZO25-0000114 Landscape and Tree Preservation Standards, motion was approved unanimously.

2) #AZO 25-000015| Town of Kiawah Island's Comprehensive Plan

Request to amend Chapter 12- Land Use Planning and zoning Ordinance Article 12- In general, Sec.12-1 Town of Kiawah Island's Comprehensive Plan to formally reference KiawahNext – Town of Kiawah Island Comprehensive Plan 2025 Update.

Mr. Taylor explained this is a technical requirement to update the current code to reference the new KiawahNext document. He indicated that the code section had been redlined for the 2025 KiawahNext document to be the comprehensive plan pursuant to state law. He noted that they hope the formal document would be completed and approved by November.

Mr. Babinec made a motion to approve the text amendment AZO 25-000015 Town of Kiawah Island's Comprehensive Plan, motion was seconded by Mr. Ryan and was approved unanimously.

B. Stormwater Management – Phase II Update

Mr. Taylor provided an update on the stormwater initiatives for the Town. Currently, Town Council approved an ordinance requiring applicants submit a stormwater management form and plan following the Charleston County stormwater standards and design manual.

The next phase will be to develop supplemental stormwater standards that are specific to Kiawah Island and will be applicable for all development types.

The Town has engaged Weston- Sampson, an engineering firm very familiar with Kiawah and its current stormwater system and conditions to assist with this effort. Recommendations from this effort will be made at a future joint planning commission and town council workshop.

Mr. Babinec has been identified as the point person from the Planning Commission and will work with staff and the consultant on this initiative.

Staff will provide a timeline for this effort by next month's meeting.

C. Continuation of Enhanced Protections for Beachfront and Environmentally Sensitive Area -Phase II

Mr. Taylor explained that Phase II would focus on marsh front properties, following the completion of Phase I which addressed oceanfront properties. He proposed following a similar process to the Phase I beach overlay, with a small team of commissioners working with staff to review the nuances of the marsh areas before bringing recommendations to the full commission.

Staff noted that while they already have considerable information about what's possible, the challenge would be determining the mechanisms for implementing standards or restrictions to support marsh integrity. They would outline a scope of work including consideration of how many properties are affected, current setbacks, and how the regulations interface with state regulations.

Staff estimated that this process might take until mid-next year to advance, this is similar to the timeline for the phase I -beach overlay which was initially presented in March and received a recommendation in September.

VII. Correspondence/Staff Comments

Mr. Taylor provided updates on pending ordinances that had been recommended for approval by the Planning Commission:

1. Use regulations and base zoning districts will have second reading at next week's Town Council meeting
2. The Beach Overlay Zoning District will have its first reading next week with the public hearing scheduled for November 4th at 1:00 PM (which is also election day)
3. Minimum parking standards will also be considered by Town Council

When asked about any major issues with the Commission's recommendations, staff indicated that there were some concerns regarding:

- Minimum parking standards, particularly how single-family residential guest parking is factored
- Beach overlay zoning district nonconformity issues and how they apply to properties, particularly regarding voluntary versus involuntary rebuilding
- Use regulations, with sports courts being considered a special exception rather than just requiring increased buffers or landscaping

Mayor Belt added that while there were some tweaks to the Planning Commission's recommendations, he wouldn't characterize them as major changes, with the possible exception of how nonconforming structures are handled.

Staff also mentioned ongoing discussions with Charleston County and the Town of Seabrook regarding a potential overlay for the entire Betsy Kerrison corridor, with an intergovernmental agreement as the starting point.

Staff also noted that the Town now requires as-built surveys for development projects prior to issuing certificates of occupancy to ensure compliance with what was permitted.

Development Project Updates

- MUSC and Seafields are still slated for completion by the end of this year
- Ocean Pines is well under construction and will be going vertical soon if not already.
- The service vehicle access drive for the Cape is near completion.
- Night Heron activities building anticipates completion in late November, with a slight delay due to lighting changes.

Resiliency Committee Updates

The next Resiliency Committee meeting will be on October 23rd. Committee member Lee Bundrick will present a mapping tool focuses on the status of individual parcels on the marsh, which will be helpful for the Planning Commission's marsh regulation efforts.

The Go Green Subcommittee is focusing on individual actions to make environmental differences, including:

- Working with the Kiawah Island Golf Resort on the December marathon to provide composting facilities and education
- Planning community education outreach events, including:
 - November 13th - A presentation on composting by Smart Recycling
 - December 4th - A field trip to the recycling center in North Charleston

Additional educational opportunities are being planned for after the first of the year.

VIII. Public Comments:

Mr. Permar commended the commission on their work with the KiawahNext document and encouraged them to revisit building standards in a comprehensive way rather than piecemeal. He expressed concern about the aging housing stock on Kiawah (both single family and multifamily) and suggested addressing standards proactively to avoid future conflicts for individual property owners during redevelopment. He recommended reviewing setbacks, lot coverage, building height and potentially creating new zoning classifications.

Ms. Hennessy responded that they would be addressing the entire zoning code as a long-term project but noted that they may not necessarily increase allowable standards because some existing structures were built larger than current regulations might permit.

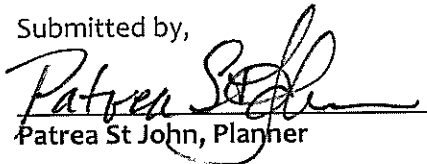
IX. Commissioner Comments:

None

X. Adjournment

Mr. Babinec made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Ryan seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously at 1:45 pm.

Submitted by,



Patrea St John, Planner

11/20/2025

Date