



PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Kiawah Island Municipal Center
July 2, 2025; 1:00PM

AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order:**
- II. **Roll Call:**
- III. **Approval of Minutes:**
 - A. Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of April 2, 2025 [Tab 1]
- IV. **Public Comments**
(Agenda Items Only)
- V. **Old Business:**
 - A. **KiawahNext Update** [Tab 2]
 - 1) Comprehensive Plan Review and Discussion
 - B. **Zoning Text Amendment Application(s):** [Tab 3]
 - 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.
- VI. **New Business:**
 - A. **Comprehensive Plan Amendment(s):** [Tab 4]
 - 1) **KiawahNext: Town of Kiawah Island 2025 Comprehensive Plan**
A resolution recommending approval of the Town of Kiawah Island Comprehensive Plan 2025 update.
 - B. **Zoning Text Amendment Application(s):** [Tab 5]
 - 1) **Introduction of Establishing Town of Kiawah Island Architectural Review Controls** (*No action taken*)
- VII. **Correspondence/Staff Comments:**
 - A. Development Project Updates
 - B. Resiliency Committee Updates
- VIII. **Public Comments:**
- IX. **Commissioner Comments:**
- X. **Adjournment:**

FOIA: Notice of this meeting has been published and posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Kiawah Island. Meeting materials available for public view online at:

<https://www.kiawahisland.org/meetings-minutes/planning-commission/>

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Kiawah Island Municipal Center

June 4, 2025, 1:00 pm

Minutes

I. **Call to Order:** *Ms. Hennessy called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.*

II. **Roll Call:**

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

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

III. **Approval of Minutes:**

A. Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of April 2, 2025

Mr. Ryan made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 4th, 2025, Planning Commission meeting. Ms. Schmersal seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

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

Mr. Permar, 81 Dungannon Hall, representing the Ocean Park Homeowners Association, expressed appreciation for proceeding with their request to rezone the residential platted lots from R-2 to R-1; and requested to participate in the discussion of this when the item is addressed.

V. **Old Business**

A. **KiawahNext Update**

1) **Comprehensive Plan Update:**

Ms. Hennessy noted that a planning workshop was held last month and the Commission have made a lot of progress but did not quite finish the work on the document. A workshop has been scheduled on June 20th to allow the Commission to finish up the revisions and be prepared to vote on the plan at the next Planning Commission meeting, July 2nd.

VI. **Executive Session**

A. **Executive Session** – To receive legal advice protected by attorney client privilege concerning pending litigation regarding Case No 2025-CP-10-018444

Mr. Connolly made a motion for the Planning Commission to go into Executive Session, Mr. Babinec seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Mr. Babinec made a motion for the Planning Commission to come out of executive session. Mr. Ryan seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Hennessy stated that during executive session the only item covered was listed above and no decisions or actions were taken.

VII. New Business

A. Zoning Text Amendment Application(s):

1 #AZO25-000004 | Comprehensive Review of Use Regulations

Request to amend Division 3. – Use Regulations and Sec. 12-374. Definitions. to refine and regulate uses which are compatible with the purpose of that district, with or without conditions or to restrict uses.

Mr. Taylor noted the key factors of the proposed amendment included:

- Eliminating several commercial retail uses as a by-right or conditional use from several zoning districts
- Removing residential uses from the CS-2 Community Support zoning district.
- Modifying the PR-OC Zoning District to incorporate conditional use reference based on current conditions of the zoning district pertaining to dwelling units and the integration of residential and non-residential buildings.
- Qualifying parking areas which are not specifically associated with a proposed development. These include parking facilities as the principal use. Establishes conditions consistent with those of landscaping and parking standards for visual and aesthetic value for such facilities.
- Modifying accessory structure standards pertaining to fences and pools.

Gene Babinec made a motion to amend page 17 (v) Parking Facilities by deleting the Parking facilities shall be of a pervious material as approved by the Planning Director. Mr. Ryan seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Ms. Schmersal made a motion to amend page 17 (U) Transportation; bus passenger stands and rideshare zones, by adding ride share zones to read as “The design and location of bus passenger stands & ride share zones”. Mr. Babinec seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Ms. Schmersal made a motion to amend page 19 to add minimum as modifier to four feet. Mr. Babinec seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Mr. Babinec made a motion to approve the text amendment as amended. Mr. Connelly seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

2. #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.

Mr. Vincent provided a timeline and brief presentation of efforts in working with providers, tower owners, and stakeholders, to develop this recommendation to modify the current standards for communication towers. The Town of Kiawah Island Infrastructure and Public Works Committee provided a letter of recommendation to the Planning Commission and Town Council on the proposed Cellular Communications Coverage Improvements.

The Planning Commission entered discussion of the proposed standards and raised some concerns in regard to the height limits and aesthetics of the towers. Town Council member and chair of the

Infrastructure and Public Works committee, Lance Spencer addressed some of the concerns and proposed modifications and emphasized the importance of improving not only the cell coverage but the availability of new bands of service the improved technology would offer. Roger Warren, of the Kiawah Island Resort spoke in favor of adopting the standards and Jonathan Yates, outside counsel for T-Mobile also spoke in favor of approving the recommendations.

It was shared that the costs for improving this infrastructure would be on the carriers and tower companies and they would optimize the solutions based on nationwide data.

The Planning Commission would like some additional time to review the proposed ordinance and established a subcommittee (Mr. Ryan, Mr. Connolly and Mr. Babinec) to further review and return with a recommendation by July 2, 2025, the next planning commission meeting.

Mr. Babinec withdraws his motion to approve the text amendment which was seconded by Ms. Devine. The matter is tabled until the next Planning Commission meeting.

3. #AZO25-00007 Amendment of Ordinance 2023-23

Request to amend the existing Ordinance 2023-23 to remove the 2013 Amended and Restated Development Agreement as an appendix to the zoning code to refine intent and setback standards.

Mr. Taylor explained that the amendment is to clarify the zoning standards for lands that were subject to the 2013 Amended and Restated Development Agreement. This development agreement has expired, and the lands would now be governed by the Town of Kiawah Island zoning ordinance. Mr. Taylor shared that the proposed amendment do not change any zoning district standards but aims to provide clarity of how setbacks are applied.

Ms. Devine made a motion to approve the amendment, Mr. Babinec seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

B. Comprehensive Map Amendment #ACP25-00001 Future Land Use Map Amendment and Zoning Map Amendment #REZ25-00001.

Request to amend the Future Land Use Designation and rezone several parcels within or near the Ocean Park neighborhood.

Mr. Vincent introduced these amendments and listed the TMS numbers affected by the amendments. Mr. Permar requested to speak as the parcels were reviewed by the Planning Commission. Mr. Permar stated he was representing multiple stakeholders including the Ocean Park Homeowners Association, the Kiawah Partners and the Kiawah Island Golf Resort. Mr. Permar stated the origin of this request was from the Ocean Park property owners of the residential lots, noting that when the development agreement expired in December 2023 approximately 65-70 site were adversely affected as the side setback changed from 10' to 15' per the current Town of Kiawah zoning ordinance. Ms. Hennessey shared that in addition to these requests, the Planning Commission had discussed changing the Future Land use from medium residential land use to the low-density residential land use to better represent the pattern of development for Ocean Park.

Following discussion, Ms. Schmersal made a motion to amend staff recommendations and approve Willet Island TMS # 2651600086 Future Land Use Designation be changed from Medium Density Residential to Active Recreation Residential & Open Space and rezone from Residential District R 2 to Parks & Recreation District – PR – Ocean Course. Mr. Babinec seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Ms. Devine made a motion to amend staff recommendations and approve Ocean Course Maintenance

parcel TMS# 2651600185 to not change the Low Density Residential Future Land Use and rezone from Residential District R 2 to Residential District R 1. Mr. Babinec seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Mr. Babinec made a motion to amend staff recommendations and approve Ocean Park Home Owners Association parcel TMS# 2651600165 Future Land Use Designation be changed from Medium Density Residential to Conservation and rezone from Residential District R 2 to Conservation. Mr. Ryan seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Ms. Schmersal made a motion to defer action on Ocean Park Parklands parcel TMS # 207000015. Mr. Babinec seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Ms. Schmersal made a motion to accept and approve staff recommendations to change the Future Land Use designations and Zoning designations for Ocean Park parcels, excluding the 4 amended parcels above. Mr. Babinec seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

VIII. Correspondence/Staff Comments

Mr. Taylor provided the Planning Commission with updates from the Town Council meeting as they considered the final reading for the pervious paving requirements. Town Council has deferred back to the planning commission and staff will prepare a workshop and invite members of the private sector and community to participate. Mr. Taylor provided additional updates on development projects, including Ocean Pines and MUSC.

IX. Public Comments: none

X. Commissioner Comments: none

XI. Adjournment

Mr. Babinec made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Schmersal seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously at 3:42 pm.

Submitted by,

Patrea St John, Planner

Date

Town of Kiawah Island Zoning Ordinance Amendment Request
Case AZO25-000005 Case History

Planning Commission Meeting: June 4, 2025
Planning Commission Meeting: July 2, 2025
Public Hearing and First Reading:
Second Reading:

CASE INFORMATION

Applicant: Town of Kiawah Island

Application: The Town of Kiawah is requesting to amend the *Town of Kiawah Island Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance* to amend Sec. 12-103. – Conditions of Use to modify standards regarding communication tower infrastructure in order to enhance public safety and quality of life issues regarding cellular coverage.

Key Factors of the Proposed Ordinance:

The proposed amendment introduces a tower height provision of up to 150' along with clarifying procedurally tower request greater than 150' in height. The proposed amendment clarifies the submittal requirements and simplifies the retention of expert assistance provisions. New towers would be required to consider future collocation opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Pursuant to §12-158(3) of the *Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance* "The Planning Commission shall review the proposed text amendment and/or zoning map amendment and take action, recommending that the Town Council approve or deny the proposed amendment. The Planning Commission may hold a public hearing in accordance with the procedures in section 12-156. The Planning Commission's recommendation shall be based on the approval criteria of subsection (6) of this section. The Planning Commission shall submit its recommendation to the Town Council within 30 working days of the Planning Commission meeting at which the amendment was introduced. A simple majority vote of Planning Commission members present, and voting shall be required to approve the amendment."

DECISION ON AMENDMENT BY THE TOWN COUNCIL

Pursuant to §12-158(5) of the *Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance* "After receiving the recommendation of the Planning Commission, the Town Council shall hold one or more public hearings, and any time after the close of the public hearing, take action to approve, approve with modifications, or deny the proposed amendment based on the approval criteria of subsection (6) of this section. A simple majority vote of Town Council members present, and voting shall be required to approve the amendment. Zoning map amendments shall not be approved with conditions. Prior to action on a proposed code text amendment, the Town Council may, in the exercise of its legislative discretion, invoke the "pending ordinance doctrine" by ordinance so that no building permits shall be issued for structures which would be affected by the proposed amendment until the Town Council has rendered its decision on the proposed amendment.

APPROVAL CRITERIA

Pursuant to §12-158(6) of the *Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance*, (6) Approval criteria. Text and zoning map amendments to the ordinance may be approved if the following approval criteria have been met:

- a. The proposed amendment is consistent with the purposes and intent of the adopted Town of Kiawah Island Comprehensive Plan;
- b. The proposed amendment is consistent with the purposes and intent of this article;

- c. The purpose of the proposed amendment is to further the general health, safety and welfare of the Town of Kiawah Island;
- d. The proposed amendment corrects an error or inconsistency or meets the challenge of a changed condition.

PLANNING STAFF REVIEW

In the Fall of 2024, planning staff begin engaging with tower companies regarding cellular coverage and opportunities for improvement. At the December 3, 2024 Town Council meeting, representatives from tower companies provide a community update on the challenges to improved coverage for Kiawah.

Over the course of several months, an established work group composed of members of the Infrastructure and Public Works Committee, Planning Commission, and Planning and Public Works staff and Kiawah Island Community Association, have met with various providers to include AT&T, Verizon and T-Mobile to better understand the opportunities and challenges for Kiawah regarding cellular coverage.

The proposed changes are not solely for residents' quality of life but for public safety. Public Safety officials, code enforcement, including Barrier Island Ocean Rescue have shared issues with signal at various points on the island.

On May 1st the Town's Infrastructure and Public Works Committee made recommendations regarding modification to the Town communication tower ordinance and broader infrastructure, including support of 150' tower heights. Please note this recommendation within support material. This recommendation follows several meetings and workgroup sessions held with providers and cell tower companies regarding the need for additional height because of Kiawah's tremendous tree canopy. Tangential to the proposed ordinance changes, the Infrastructure and Public Works Committee is engaging with providers for comprehensive strategy to address island wide coverage to include Freshfields Village.

Following this recommendation, the Town began a comprehensive revision of its communications tower ordinance. The proposed changes are attached. The proposed ordinance amendment is one of many prongs that are connected to larger desired outcomes regarding infrastructure, in particular improved cellular coverage island wide.

Planning staff finds the proposed amendment satisfies the approval criteria pursuant to §12-158(6) and recommends approval.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING JUNE 4, 2025

Notifications: Notice of this meeting has been published and posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Kiawah Island.

The Planning Commission after discussion established a subcommittee of Mr. Ryan, Mr. Connolly and Mr. Babinec to further review and return with a recommendation by the next Planning Commission meeting July 2, 2025.

The subcommittee presented a revised draft. The following is a summary of the main changes that were made to the draft language provide by the subcommittee:

Tower height provision - The maximum height for a new tower is now set at 150 feet, but new towers that will be 120 feet or higher require a report from a SC licensed professional engineer to indicate that the height is required because there are no available alternatives on other towers that are in the proximity of the new tower. The report is to be funded by the applicant and should not pose any significant additional

burdens as the analysis may be part of their due diligence in constructing a new communications tower.

Stealth tower provision - This provision has been deleted. Based on our limited understanding of communication towers a stealth tower limits the effectiveness of antennas located on a tower. We recognize the trade off between tower aesthetics and effectiveness and we have chosen to prioritize the effectiveness of new towers in the hope that fewer towers may be needed on Kiawah

Site requirements - Given the new communications towers can be higher than the current towers we have increased the minimum distance requirements for a new tower to be at least 200 feet from a residential structure. We have also increased the height requirement for a security fence from six feet to eight feet.

Antenna requirements - We have eliminated the requirement that a new communication tower must house equipment for four carriers. This is an operational decision for the tower manufacturer. Their decision will be based on tower availability on Kiawah and recommendations from a professional engineer.

Balloon test - We have added language to detail public notice requirements for balloon tests. This is a critical notification requirement so that property owners are fully informed of pending changes in nearby communication towers. We have eliminated the provision in this section to allow alternatives to balloon tests. This is too important to consider an alternative that does not meet the time and visibility requirements for the balloon test.

Planning Staff recommends the Planning Commission consider the following:

A collocation provision remains as tower companies expect to collocate. Collocation aides in the total number of towers.

Include a provision for how tower heights are administered to prevent interpretation questions in the future.

Modify professional engineer licensed in the State of South Carolina to designated engineer or radio frequency professional. The design and outputs produced for cell towers function a little differently in the communications industry, this allows for the right personnel to provide and or administer the report as well as relaxes the South Carolina requirements as many of teams for the design may not be local to South Carolina.

Standardizing the proposed public notice requirements for balloon testing to the Town's existing public notification requirements.

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING PUBLIC HEARING AND FIRST READING

Notifications: Notice of this meeting has been published and posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Kiawah Island.

Sec. 12-103. Conditions of use.

(m) *Communications towers.*

(1) *Purpose and legislative intent.* The Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 affirmed the Town of Kiawah Island's authority concerning the placement, construction and modification of wireless telecommunications facilities. The regulations of this section are designed to site communications towers on Kiawah Island. It is the intent of this article to allow for the harmonious co-existence of communications towers and other land uses. It is also the intent of this article to reduce the overall negative impact of communications towers. ~~by:~~

~~a. Reducing the number of towers needed through a policy of encouraging collocation; and~~

~~b. Encouraging the following, if collocation is not feasible:~~

~~1. The use of stealth tower design, as defined in subsection (m)(43) of this section;~~

~~2. The clustering of towers (tower farms);~~

~~3. The placement of towers away from roadways;~~

~~4. The provision of effective screening; and~~

~~5. The location of communications equipment on existing structures.~~

~~(2) Collocation exemption. Proposed communications equipment collocating on existing towers and structures without adding to their height shall require only a zoning permit and shall not be subject to the requirements of this section.~~

~~(23) Tower height provision.~~

~~a. New communications towers that are to be built at an existing communication tower location, may be permitted up to a maximum height of 150 feet subject to the requirements set forth in this section.~~

~~— The height of the tower shall be measured from the base of the tower to the tower's highest point inclusive of any antennas. For stealth towers placed on buildings or other structures, the height shall be measured from natural grade to the highest point.~~

~~b. Communication towers may exceed the maximum height limits established in this article provided that a special exception is granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals pursuant to the provisions of Section 12-161. Requests for such special exceptions must be submitted and approved prior to the approval of site plan review and any issued zoning permit. Applicants must demonstrate the need for additional height is necessary to meet the service provider objectives, and that no practical alternative location or technology could achieve the same service coverage. If the height of a proposed communication tower that is being built at the location of an existing communication tower will equal or exceed 120 feet its application must be accompanied by a report from a professional engineer licensed in the State of South Carolina that states:~~

~~1. that the antenna(s) planned for the proposed communication tower cannot be accommodated on any existing or approved communication towers within a two (2) mile radius of the proposed tower location due to one (1) or more of the following reasons:~~

~~a. Existing Site. There are no existing communication towers or sites suitable to accommodate the proposed communication tower or antennas.~~

b. Inadequate Structural Capacity. The new antennas would exceed the structural capacity of an existing communication tower.

c. Interference. The new antennas on the new communication tower would cause interference impacting the usability of other existing or planned equipment at the existing communication tower location.

d. Inadequate Height. The existing communication approved towers within the search radius cannot accommodate the planned equipment at the height necessary.

e. Land Availability. Additional land area is not available (when necessary).

~~(43) ———— Stealth tower provision.~~

~~a. For the purposes of this section, the term "stealth tower" means a communications tower not exceeding 120 feet in height designed to unobtrusively blend into its existing surroundings so as not to have the appearance of a communications tower and is designed to hide, obscure, or conceal the presence of the towers and antennas. Examples of stealth towers include, but are not limited to, antenna tower alternative structures, architecturally roof-mounted antennas, building-mounted antennas painted to match the existing or proposed trees and landscaping, antenna structures designed to look like light poles or electrical utility poles, artificial trees, clock towers, flagpoles, steeples, water towers or water tanks.~~

~~b. All proposed stealth tower designs must be approved by the Planning Director.~~

~~c. A complete zoning permit application for a stealth tower that meets all requirements of this article shall be approved.~~

~~(354) ———— Preapplication meeting. Prior to submitting a formal application for a zoning permit for a communications tower the applicant is required to attend one or more preapplication meetings. The purpose of the preapplication meeting is to address key issues which will help to expedite the review and permitting process. The Planning Director may conduct a site visit at the preapplication meeting.~~

~~(465) ———— Zoning permit submittal requirements. Prior to zoning permit approval, all applications for communications towers shall complete the site plan review process as provided in section 12-162. In addition to any site plan review requirements, the application must contain the following items:~~

- ~~a. A site plan, drawn to engineer's scale, showing the location of the tower guy anchors (if any), existing or proposed buildings and structures or improvements, including parking, driveways or access roads, fences and protected Grand Specimen Trees affected by the proposed construction. If there are no Grand Specimen Trees affected, a surveyor's statement on the site plan must be shown. Adjacent land uses shall also be noted on the site plan, with precise measurements noted between the proposed tower and any residential structures on surrounding properties.~~
- ~~b. The site plan must show a vegetated buffer with a detailed plant list, either existing or installed, that provides an effective screen from public rights-of-way and adjacent property owners and across view corridors. If a buffer is to be installed, its placement on the site will vary in order to provide the most effective screening from public view as determined by the Planning Director. Required materials will be based on installation of a 25-foot buffer around the fenced area.~~
- ~~c. Elevation drawings of the proposed building and structures. The height and typical design of the tower and buildings, typical materials to be used, color, and lighting shall be shown on elevation drawings. The applicant shall submit documentation justifying the total height of any communications towers, facility and/or antenna and the basis therefor. In cases where the~~

proposed height of a new communication tower will equal or exceed 120 feet the applicant must submit a report as described in section 12-103 (m) (2) (b) above.

- d. Additionally, color and material samples shall be provided. The tower must be located no closer to a residential structure than a distance equal to 1.5 feet for each foot in height of the proposed tower plus 50 feet as measured from the center of the proposed tower. At a minimum, there must be a ~~200~~50-foot distance between the proposed tower and a residential structure.
- e. A ~~eight~~six-foot nonclimbable fence must be placed around the tower and any associated building. Guy wires may be fenced separately.
- ~~f.~~—The proposed tower must be located such that adequate setbacks are provided on all sides to prevent the tower's fall zone from encroaching onto adjoining properties. The fall zone shall be determined by an engineer certified by the State of South Carolina in a letter which includes the engineer's signature and seal.
- ~~g.f.~~ For the purposes of collocation review and review of efforts at siting a tower on the same lot near an existing tower, the applicant shall submit satisfactory written evidence such as correspondence, agreements, contracts, etc., that alternative towers, buildings, or other structures are not available or suitable for use within the applicant's tower site search area that are structurally capable of supporting the intended antenna or meeting the applicant's necessary height criteria, providing a location free of interference from other communication towers, or available at the prevailing market rate (as determined by staff communication with persons doing business within the industry). Additionally, the applicant shall make every effort to build the proposed tower in such a manner as may allow other telecommunication users to collocate.
- ~~h.g.~~ Proposed towers may not be located within 1,000 feet of the center of an existing tower unless the proposed tower is to take the place of an existing tower at the same location and the existing tower is removed pursuant to Sec. 12-103 (m) (11). applicant certifies that the existing tower does not meet the applicant's structural specifications and the applicant's technical design requirements, or that a collocation agreement could not be obtained at a reasonable market rate. In the event of the situation set forth in this subsection, the clustering of new towers on the same parcel near existing towers is permitted.
- ~~i.h.~~ The proposed tower shall only be illuminated as required by the Federal Communications Commission or Federal Aviation Administration. Nighttime strobe lighting shall not be incorporated unless required by the Federal Communications Commission or Federal Aviation Administration. If lighting is required, the applicant shall provide a detailed plan for sufficient lighting that shall be as unobtrusive and inoffensive as permissible under state and federal regulations, and an artist's rendering or other visual representation showing the effect of light emanating from the site on neighboring habitable structures within 1,500 feet of all property lines of the parcel on which the communications towers are located.
- ~~j.i.~~ Communications towers shall contain a sign no larger than four square feet to provide adequate notification to persons in the immediate area of the presence of an antenna that has transmission capabilities. The sign shall contain the names of the owners and operators of the antennas, as well as emergency phone numbers. The sign shall be located so as to be visible from the access point of the site. No other signage, including advertising, shall be permitted on any facilities, antennas, antenna supporting structures or antenna towers, unless required by law.
- ~~k.j.~~ A copy of the tower's proposed search rings illustrating signal strength for each carrier at their heights.

k. To ensure the removal of towers which do not meet requirements for continued use or proper maintenance, a statement of financial responsibility shall be submitted for each tower and a performance bond for the amount of anticipated removal costs shall be posted. The bond must be renewed as necessary to ensure that it is maintained at all times during the existence of the tower.

l. Structural drawings for the proposed tower.

~~l. Proposed new towers shall illustrate adequate space on the proposed communications tower to accommodate at least four (4) carriers, ensuring the structural capacity to support their equipment.~~

m. The applicant shall furnish a visual impact assessment which shall include:

1. A zone visibility map which shall be provided in order to determine locations where the tower may be seen.
2. Pictorial representations and rendering of before and after view from key viewpoints both inside and outside the Town including, but not limited to:
 - (i) Major highways and roads;
 - (ii) State and local parks;
 - (iii) Historic districts;
 - (iv) Preserves and historic sites normally open to the public; and
 - (v) Any other location where the site is visible to a large number of visitors, travelers or residents.
 - (vi) Any other location as determined by the Planning Director.
3. An assessment of the visual impact of the tower base, guy wires and accessory buildings from abutting and adjacent properties and streets.

(76) *Retention of expert assistance and reimbursement by the applicant.*

- a. The Town, pursuant to its professional services procurement policy, may hire any consultant and/or expert necessary to assist the Town in reviewing and evaluating the application, including the construction and modification of the site, once permitted, and any requests for recertification.
- b. ~~An The applicant shall deposit with the Town funds sufficient to reimburse the Town for all be reasonable-responsible for any costs incurred for these services including but not limited to of the consultant and expert evaluation and consultation to the Town in connection with the review of any application, including the construction and structural evaluation and inspection of the tower, and modification of the site, once permitted and any recertification requests. The initial deposit shall be \$8,500.00. The application will not be processed until receipt of this initial deposit. The Town will maintain a separate escrow account for all such funds. The Town's consultants/experts shall invoice the Town for its services in reviewing the application, including the construction and modification of the site, once permitted. If, at any time during the process this escrow account has a balance less than \$2,500.00, the applicant shall immediately, upon notification by the Town, replenish said escrow account so that it has a balance of at least \$5,000.00. Such additional escrow funds shall be deposited with the Town before any further action or consideration is taken on the application. In the event that the amount held in escrow by the Town is more than the amount of the actual invoicing at the conclusion of the project, the~~

~~remaining balance shall be promptly refunded to the applicant. The applicant shall not be entitled to receive any interest earnings on unused funds.~~

- c. ~~The total amount of the funds needed as set forth in subsection (m)(6)b of this section may vary with the scope and complexity of the project, the completeness of the application and other information as may be needed to complete the necessary review, analysis and inspection of any construction or modification. The applicant shall submit a deposit in the amount of \$5,000 within 15 days of a completed application to be used towards necessary review, analysis and inspection of any construction or modification. The applicant shall not be entitled to receive any interest earnings or unused funds.~~

e. ~~Town Council may authorize the waiver of any required costs or deposit pursuant to subsection.~~

~~(87) Balloon test~~*Surrounding property owner notification.*

a. ~~In order to better inform the public, in the case of a new communications towers, the applicant shall hold a balloon test as follows:~~

1. ~~Applicant shall arrange to fly, or raise upon a temporary mast, a minimum of three-foot diameter brightly colored balloon at the maximum height of the proposed new tower.~~
2. ~~The dates, (including a second date, in case of poor visibility on the initial date) shall be provided to the Planning Director ten days after receipt of the complete application notice.~~
3. ~~The dates shall be set at minimum 15 days prior to the Planning Director making a final decision on the zoning permit.~~
4. ~~The balloons shall be flown for ten consecutive hours between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.~~

~~b. Public notice requirements for balloon test~~

~~a. Town wide public notice via Town electronic newsletters shall be made at least two weeks prior to the balloon test.~~

~~b. Additional public notice to neighboring property owners - The Town shall contact all property owners within a radius of 500 feet as measured at the site of the center of the new communication tower. The public notice shall advise property owners of the upcoming balloon test as well as the proposed height and other features of the proposed communication tower.~~

~~b. The Town may consider alternative plan to a balloon test as appropriate and approved by the Planning Director.~~

~~bc. Once the application is deemed complete by the Planning Director for a communications tower zoning permit, the Planning Department shall provide parties in interest, personal, posted and newspaper notice in accordance with the requirements of section 12-156. The public notice shall include the dates of the balloon tests as provided by the applicant and the date the Planning Director must make a final decision on the zoning permit.~~

~~(98) Time limit for staff review.~~ Upon receipt of an application deemed complete by the Planning Director for a communications tower zoning permit, the Planning Director shall have a maximum of 45 days to act on the application. The 45 days begins from the date the applicant is sent written notice of a complete application from the Planning Director. Failure to act on the application within 45 days will result in the applicant being granted a zoning permit.

~~(109) Zoning permit approval criteria.~~

-
- a. A complete zoning permit application for a ~~stealth-communication~~ tower that meets all requirements of this article ~~may be approved, approved with conditions or denied.~~ ~~shall be approved.~~
 - b. Upon review of a complete application, no zoning permit shall be issued for a communications tower, until the Planning Director determines that the proposed tower complies with the following criteria and standards:
 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.
 2. If a completely new tower is necessary, the applicant must provide written proof of attempts at collocation and siting a tower on the same lot near an existing tower were proven not feasible or practical.
 3. The applicant has pursued any available publicly owned sites and privately owned sites occupied by a compatible use, and if not utilized, that these sites are unsuitable for operation of the facility under applicable communications regulations and the applicant's technical design requirements.
 4. Staff shall review and approve the color and materials to be used for the proposed tower.
 5. If the Planning Director finds a proposed communications tower will have a substantially negative impact on a surrounding area or adjoining property, the use shall fall under the special exception (S) provisions of this article.
 - c. In determining whether the use shall fall under the special exception (S) provisions the Planning Director may consider one or more of the following items:
 1. The proposed use will be detrimental to adjacent land uses including historical sites;
 2. The proposed use will have a negative aesthetic visual impact;
 3. The proposed use will have an adverse ~~ea~~ffect on the environment (not including radio frequency emissions); and
 4. The proposed use is contrary to the public health, safety or welfare.
- (~~1110~~) *Tower abandonment.* A tower that is not used for communication purposes for more than 120 days (with no new application on file for any communication user) is presumed to be out of service and the owner of such tower must notify the staff and remove the tower within 50 days. Towers which are not maintained by the owner according to the Town building code shall be removed by the owner within 60 days. To ensure the removal of towers which do not meet requirements for continued use or proper maintenance, a statement of financial responsibility shall be submitted for each tower and a performance bond for the amount of anticipated removal costs shall be posted. Removal costs shall be charged to the tower owner. The bond must be renewed as necessary to ensure that it is maintained at all times during the existence of the tower.

(Code 1993, § 12A-302; Ord. No. 2005-08, § 12A-302, 10-12-2005; Ord. No. 2006-08, § 2.1(12A-302), 11-7-2006; Ord. No. 2016-04, § 1, 9-6-2016; Ord. No. 2023-22, § 2(Exh. A), 11-28-2023)

Infrastructure & Public Works Committee Recommendation to Planning Commission and Town Council on Cellular Communications Coverage Improvements

Background/Problem Statement: There are issues affecting Kiawah cellular coverage for all three major national wireless communications providers. These issues include:

- Coverage gaps resulting in dropped calls or no signal
- Poor signal strength resulting coverage gaps and poor indoor coverage
- Slow data speeds making it difficult to download web pages and use more robust apps

These issues are both quality of life as well as public safety issues. Examples of public safety issues are potential inability to dial 911 in emergencies and that many public safety tools operate across cellular networks. Critical infrastructure such as power, water, and sewer communicate over cellular networks as well.

Discussion:

Members of the I&PWC committee along with Town Staff conducted a series of meetings over the last several months with the three major national wireless communications providers and the two primary tower companies on Kiawah to understand the current coverage provided, what if any limitations constrained them from providing better coverage, and possible solutions to improving coverage (the current Planning Commission Chair and a KICA rep also participated on many of those meetings).

All the providers and tower companies stated the primary limitations to coverage improvement are insufficient tower height to get all their radios above the tree canopy and the requirement for stealth radios which attenuate signal strength.

The I&PWC considered possible concerns about tower height and more visible non-stealth radios. Staff, the I&PWC Chair, and Planning Commission Chair also conducted site visits to evaluate increased height and non-stealth radios. One cell site (Sora Rail) is already 160' and does not seem to adversely affect the aesthetics. It is likely Kiawah will require three additional 150' towers at existing sites to provide needed coverage. The I&PWC believes the need for modern cellular communications for quality of life and public safety supercedes possible aesthetics concerns. The cell tower sites are primarily in remote locations and even the current towers above the tree canopy are not overly noticeable.

Recommendations:

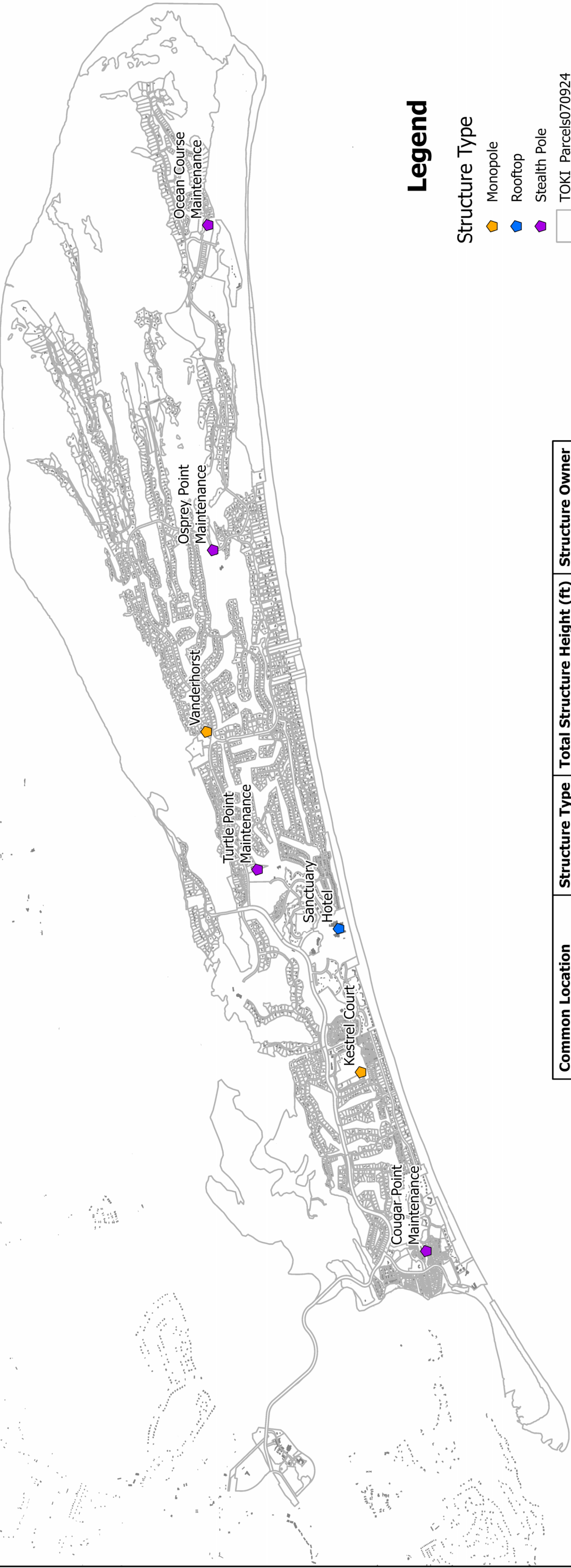
- Amend Town zoning ordinances to allow up to three new 150' cellular towers
 - This was the unanimous recommendation from the wireless and tower providers
 - This allows up to 4 cellular providers on a tower at 120', 130', 140' and 150' levels. 10' vertical separation is required between provider radios. This also allows for a 4th emerging provider to be hosted and provider coverage.

- Note: cellular service is sold to consumers not only directly from the wireless provider but also through 3rd parties. Examples: Xfinity cellular uses the Verizon network, Cricket uses the AT&T network, and Mint Mobile uses the T-Mobile network. Dish is the emerging 4th national carrier and it is reasonable to expect them to need tower placement in the next several years. Allowing for this 4th carrier is an important capital consideration for the tower companies in determining willingness to invest in the new, taller towers.
- Amend Town zoning ordinances to no longer require stealth radios
 - Removing this constraint allows for stronger signals which increases coverage and data speed

Copy to:

Town Administrator
Public Works Director
Planning Director
Clerk

Kiawah Communication Towers



Legend

Structure Type

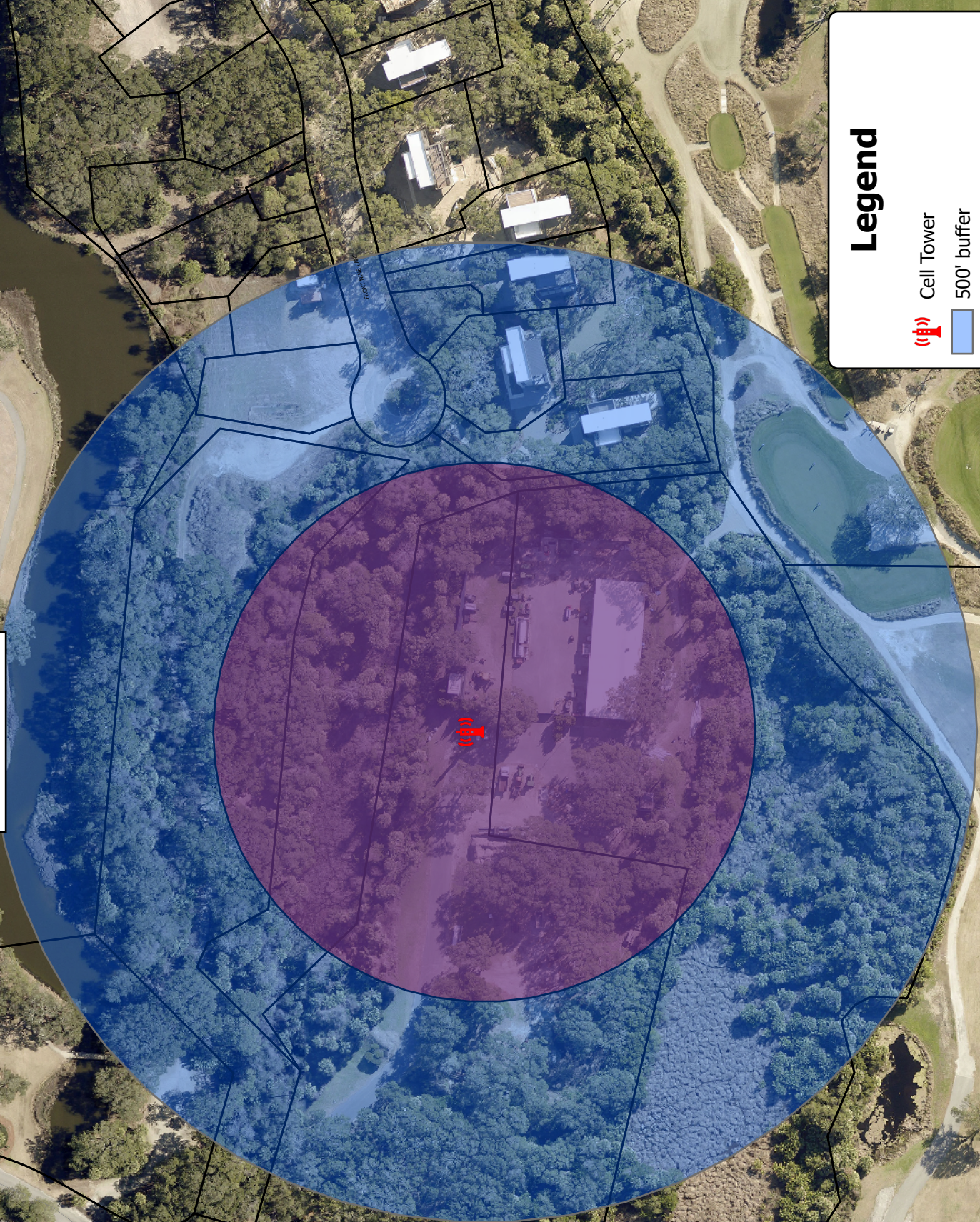
- ◆ Monopole
- Rooftop
- ⬠ Stealth Pole

- TOKI_Parcels070924
- 2021 Building Footprints




Common Location	Structure Type	Total Structure Height (ft)	Structure Owner
Kestrel Court	Monopole	173	American Tower
Vanderhorst	Monopole	105	Independent
Cougar Point Maintenance	Stealth Pole	80	Crown Castle
Turtle Point Maintenance	Stealth Pole	80	Crown Castle
Osprey Point Maintenance	Stealth Pole	97	Crown Castle
Sanctuary Hotel	Rooftop	65	Independent
Ocean Course Maintenance	Stealth Pole	70	Crown Castle

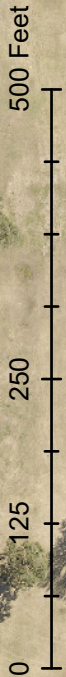


Area Map



Legend

-  Cell Tower
-  500' buffer
-  275' buffer



From: Robert Edgerton <robert.edgerton@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 24, 2025 10:24 PM
To: Craig Harris
Cc: Michael Sosnowski; John Taylor
Subject: Re: Cellular Towers

The worst places for cell coverage for us are the areas around Ocean Marsh Road, Blue Heron Pond Road, Falcon Point Road, and Ocean Park. Those have consistently been dead zones for many years.

You're correct about last 4th of July- I think the sheer volume of connected cellular devices overwhelmed the towers and we basically experienced what I would consider a cell service blackout for several hours. Our MDT's, cell phones, and other connected devices were unable to get an open cell to connect to receive incoming data or make outgoing calls. I think this event was island-wide, but for sure effected the entire beachfront.

-RE

On Apr 23, 2025, at 2:06 PM, Craig Harris <charris@kiawahisland.org> wrote:

Rob/Soz,

John's team has been did a deep dive into cellular towers throughout the island. I believe this will be a major step in getting our communication better across the board. Moreover, John asked if you and your guys keep us posted on any communication failure/problems so we can illustrate for public safety purpose. For example, 2024 4th of July festival, we had no connection throughout the entire day while on the beach or near the Sanctuary. A concise but brief example with location is all he needs.

Thanks!



Craig Harris Sr.

Director of Public Safety

Direct: 843-973-8121

Cell: 843-806-7826

charris@kiawahisland.org

www.kiawahisland.org

4475 Betsy Kerrison Parkway
Kiawah Island, SC 29455

Get Social



Kiawah Island Golf Resort
One Sanctuary Beach Drive
Kiawah Island, SC 29455

05.28.2025

Town of Kiawah Island
Planning Department
4475 Betsy Kerrison Pkwy
Kiawah Island, SC 29455

Subject: Stakeholder Support for Draft Section 12-103 – Communications Towers Regulation

Dear Planning Director and Members of the Town Council,

On behalf of Kiawah Island Golf Resort, I am writing to express our support for the proposed updates to Section 12-103 of the Town Code, addressing the conditions for the use, placement, and permitting of communications towers on Kiawah Island.

As one of the island's largest employers, hospitality leaders, and a long-standing steward of Kiawah's pristine environment and guest experience, we recognize the growing need for modern, reliable telecommunications infrastructure. At the same time, we are equally committed to ensuring that all development aligns with the island's natural beauty, environmental values, and low-impact architectural character.

The draft ordinance represents a thoughtful and balanced approach that we strongly endorse. By encouraging collocation, stealth design, and tower clustering, the Town is advancing the necessary modernization of infrastructure while minimizing the visual and environmental footprint of new installations. These strategies align closely with our commitment to protecting the scenic views, tranquility, and overall guest experience that define Kiawah Island as a world-class destination.

We particularly support the ordinance's:


- Emphasis on visual impact assessments and buffer zones;
- Strict height and siting criteria to preserve view corridors and residential character;
- Comprehensive preapplication processes that ensure transparency and collaborative planning;
- Use of performance bonding and maintenance requirements to ensure long-term site responsibility;
- Provisions for public notification and visibility testing, which foster community trust.

Reliable telecommunications service is vital not only for residents and emergency preparedness, but also for the resort's operations and the needs of thousands of guests and international visitors.

The permitting standards, combined with the option for professionally supported application reviews, offer a fair and accountable pathway for meeting these needs without compromising the values that make Kiawah exceptional.

We appreciate the Town's work in revising Section 12-103 and encourage its adoption. The ordinance provides a clear and enforceable framework for infrastructure expansion while honoring the principles of design excellence, and community input. Kiawah Island Golf Resort remains committed to supporting these values and stands ready to collaborate further during implementation and review processes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger M. Warren". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Roger M. Warren, PGA
President



Memo

To: Whom It May Concern
From: Neil Anthony Tijing, AT&T Mobility RF Engineer
Date: 06/10/25
Re: RF Statements for proposed tower replacement for 072-372 on Kiawah Island, SC

This memo is written in support of Crown's application referenced above for replacement/redesign of existing stealth wireless telecommunications site (AT&T site number 072-372) on Kiawah Island, SC.

The proposed tower replacement will allow AT&T to deploy additional tower-mounted equipment that will allow us to modernize our network and better serve the customers on Kiawah Island. The existing stealth tower only allows for a single antenna per sector face, limiting AT&T in the frequencies and technologies that it can deploy. To upgrade to 5G and the latest C-Band 5G+ spectrum, additional antennas and tower-mounted hardware are necessary, which requires a new monopole. The proposed height increase for the tower will enable AT&T to enhance service for customers by improving in-building coverage for numerous homes. Elevating AT&T's antennas will reduce signal loss and distortion caused by intervening obstructions. For more detailed information, please refer to the attached map.

The following statements are made in accordance with the requirements of the zoning ordinance and to clarify AT&T's compliance with all the standards of the FCC.

The requested activity will allow AT&T to modernize its equipment and expand its 5G network on Kiawah Island and provide the ability to deploy the new C-Band 5G+ spectrum, providing increased speed and reliability of service to AT&T customers. Raising AT&T's antenna centerline will allow for improved coverage to AT&T customers on the eastern portion of Kiawah Island, especially those using their devices within their homes.



This specific tower location (AT&T site number 072-372 or SCL03721) is located at 1002 OCEAN COURSE DRIVE, KIAWAH ISLAND, SC 29455 and provides coverage to the eastern end of Kiawah Island.

AT&T will not exceed the power level requirements mandated by FCC after completion of this project.

AT&T will not interfere with public safety communication and will comply with the FCC requirements. AT&T will expeditiously remedy any physical or RF interference with other wireless devices or services.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (803) 319-2048.

Respectfully,

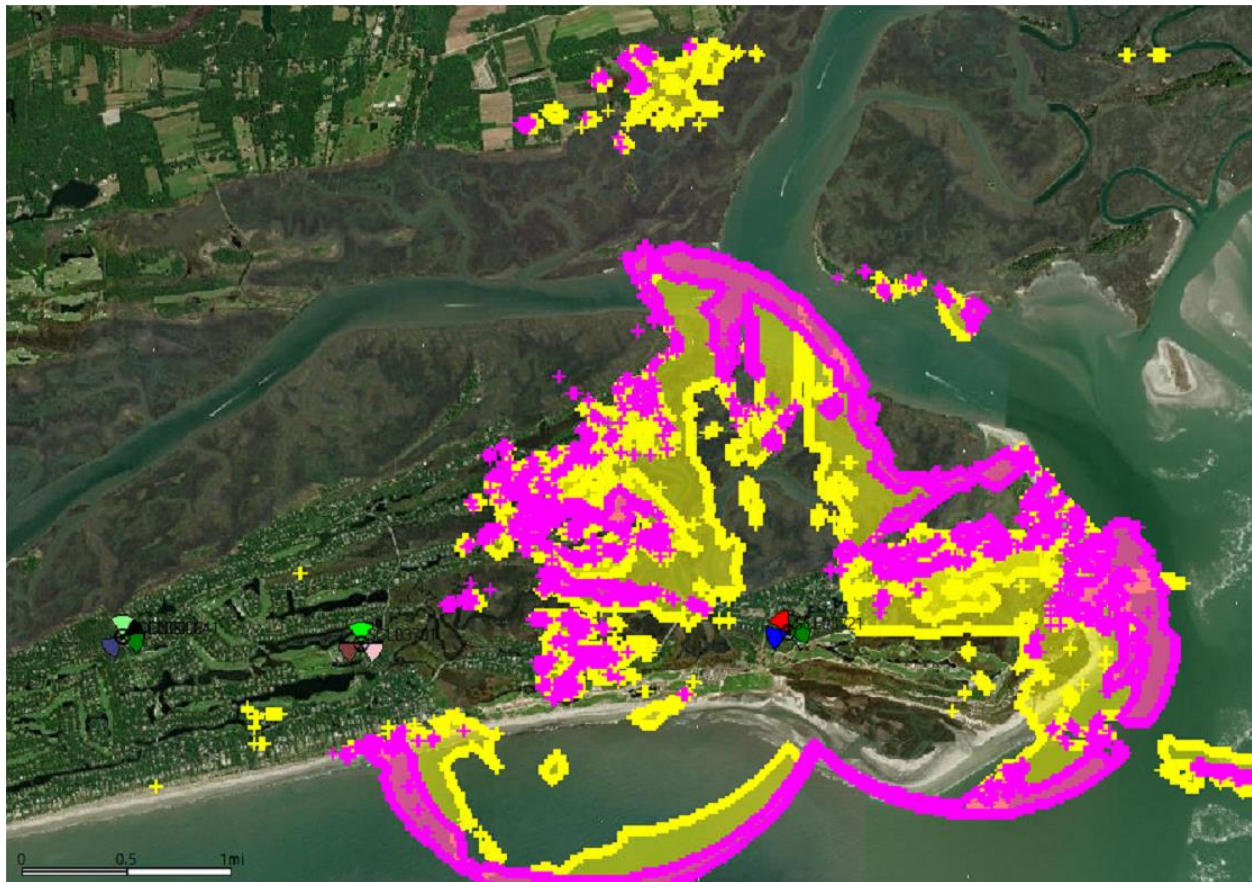
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neil Anthony Tijing".

Neil Anthony Tijing
RF Engineer
AT&T Mobility

Coverage analysis for AT&T

Increasing AT&T's antenna height to approximately 150ft (from the current 60ft) would provide noticeable in-building coverage and quality improvements to customers in both Yellow and Purple highlighted areas (approximately 220 homes). Increasing AT&T's antenna height to approximately 120ft would only provide these improvements to homes in the Yellow highlight (the approximately 40 homes in Purple areas would only benefit from the 150ft height).

In-building coverage is increasingly important to users in the age of smartphones and social media. Users increasingly demand constant connectedness and utilize their devices for a wide range of entertainment, business, educational, and other personal uses throughout their day and wherever they are. The homes within the highlighted areas in the map below would be expected to receive improved levels of service from raising AT&T's antenna centerline.



**TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND
PLANNING COMMISSION**

RESOLUTION 2025-01

**A RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND ADOPTION OF THE
2025 TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - KIAWAHNEXT**

WHEREAS, the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 (S.C. Code § 6-29-510 et seq., as amended) requires local governments to establish a Comprehensive Plan, the local planning commission review the Comprehensive Plan or elements of it as often as necessary, but not less than once every five years, and update the Comprehensive Plan at least once every ten years; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Kiawah Island Planning Commission has guided the preparation and drafting of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan in compliance with the requirements of the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Kiawah Island Planning Commission has ensured that the Comprehensive Plan includes consideration of current and future conditions, public input, data analysis, maps, and goals and implementation strategies consistent with the Town's vision and objectives; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan reflects the community's shared vision for the future, and addresses key elements including governance structure, population, economic development, natural resources, cultural resources, community facilities, housing, transportation, land use, priority investments, and resiliency; and

WHEREAS, the Future Land Use Map is amended Comprehensive Plan reflects the community's shared vision for the future, and addresses key elements including governance structure, population, economic development, natural resources, cultural resources, community facilities, housing, transportation, land use, priority investments, and resiliency; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Kiawah Island Planning Commission has held several workshops and reviewed the recommended comprehensive plan and determined that it is in the best interests of the Town and its residents to formally consider and adopt the plan; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Kiawah Island Planning Commission has and voted to recommend adoption of the 2025 KiawahNext Comprehensive Plan in accordance with applicable statutory requirements; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND PLANNING COMMISSION, TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1 Resolution

Consideration and Recommendation of Approval: 2025 The Town of Kiawah Island Comprehensive Plan – KiawahNext as referenced in “Exhibit A”. Town Council shall hereby acknowledge receipt and shall consider its formal adoption at the next duly noticed public meeting.

Section 2 Effective Date and Duration

This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption by the Planning Commission.

PASSED, APPROVED, BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION FOR THE TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND ON THIS 2ND DAY OF JULY 2025.

Joanne Hennesey, Planning Commission Chair

John Taylor, Jr. , Planning Director

Petra Reynolds, Town Clerk

Establishment of the Town of Kiawah Island Board of Architectural Review / Design Review Board (BAR/DRB)

I. Background, Purpose and Legal Authority

Background: In 2023, The Town of Kiawah Island and the Kiawah Island Community Association agreed to form the Architectural Review Board Joint Workgroup with the goal of collaborating on the formation of a new, community-led architectural control function. This workgroup initially focused on identifying concerns around the cost, consistency and transparency of the existing architectural control processes on Kiawah. The goal of this transition was to permanently place responsibility for the architectural integrity of Kiawah Island into the hands of property owners. The developer stated during a December 2023 Town of Kiawah Island meeting that it intends to work with KICA to transition ARB authority. With the efforts, considerations and actions of this transition process to date, there is uncertainty of the comprehensive timeline and future architectural controls for development on Kiawah.

Purpose: With the uncertainty of architectural controls for development in the future for Kiawah Island, the Town of Kiawah Island now finds that it is in the public interest to amend the Town of Kiawah Island Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance to establish a body which makes provisions to protect and improve the unique character of Kiawah Island. The Town of Kiawah's established architectural design review will operate and function independently of any existing architectural board.

Intent: To provide a clear and transparent process for the architectural design review of commercial, mixed-use, civic, and multi-family residential developments in the Town of Kiawah Island, ensuring new development projects support community character and environmental stewardship.

Legal Framework: The DRB would be established under the authority of:

- South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 (Title 6, Chapter 29, SC Code) (S.C. Code 1976, §§ 6-29-870—6-29-910)
 - *Section 6-29-870 (A) "A local government which enacts a zoning ordinance which makes specific provision for the preservation and protection of historic and architecturally valuable districts and neighborhoods or significant or natural scenic areas, or protects or provides, or both, for the unique, special, or desired character of a defined district, corridor, or development area or any combination of it, by means of restriction and conditions governing the right to erect, demolish, remove in whole or in part, or alter the exterior appearance of all*

buildings or structures within the areas, may provide for appointment of a board of architectural review or similar body.”

- Municipal Home Rule Act (Title 5, SC Code)
 - *Section 5-1-10 (A) “A municipality having a certificate of incorporation issued by the Secretary of State and a township established by act of the General Assembly are declared to be perpetual bodies, politic and corporate, entitled to exercise all the powers and privileges provided for municipal corporations in this State, and subject to all the limitations and liabilities provided for municipal corporations in this State. (B) The incorporation or corporate capacity of a municipality or township established by act of the General Assembly must not be attacked in any court in this State except as provided by statute.”*

These laws empower local municipalities to create design review boards and adopt zoning ordinances that regulate the design of development within their jurisdictions.

II. Board Structure and Membership

Scope of Authority: All real property within the Town of Kiawah Island municipal limits would be subject to the established review board. The Town would need to consider applicability to both residential, and commercial or other development types.

Membership Structure: South Carolina State law prescribes the framework for membership. *[Section 6-29-870.Board of architectural review; membership; officers; rules; meetings; records.]*

Existing Town of Kiawah Island quasi-judicial review boards as the Board of Zoning Appeals and the Landscape and Tree Preservation Board have three (3) year terms, staggered with a 3-term limit. With the difficulty of recruiting and retaining the level of professional expertise necessary for an architectural design review board, it is recommended that proposed membership of the DRB serve a lesser term, allowing for a two (2) year term to ease recruitment and increase commitment. To aide recruitment, recruitment could be extended to non residents or property owners and professionals not on Kiawah. The proposed DRB should contain a cross section of expertise / representatives as described below. It should be noted that members must disclose conflicts of interest per SC Ethics Act. It is recommended a board of seven members.

Personnel	Qualification
Licensed Architect	Experience with sustainable or coastal design

Landscape Architect	Background in native, ecological, or low-impact landscaping
Planner	Knowledge of land use and planning best practices
Environmental Expert	Coastal ecology, wetlands, or marine biology background
Construction Expert	Developer or builder familiar with LEED/green building construction best practices
Resident/Property Owner	Kiawah Island resident or property owner with interest in design
Town Staff (non-voting)	Planning, zoning, or code enforcement representative

III. Architectural Design Standards and Review Principles and Policies

Guiding Principles: The specific functions and powers of an established review board are prescribed by the Town Council as consistent with South Carolina state statutes. In developing those functions, powers and potential guidelines, the Town Council should consider approval criteria for the proposed board with the following principles and policies in mind.

- Ensure a distinct understanding and balance of the built environment and the natural environment;
- Preserves the natural beauty and ecological function of the area.
- Reduces adverse aesthetic impacts on the public good and existing community character.
- Promote quality development and sound architectural design standards that complement Kiawah’s unique natural coastal setting.

Core Design Standards: When considering review of development projects, the established board may adopt guidelines and policies at its discretion.

- **Site Organization**
 - Protect topography, view corridors, existing trees, marshlands, and dune systems.
- **Architectural Form**
 - Encourage compatible Lowcountry vernacular design (e.g., elevated structures, broad eaves, natural materials)
 - Limit building height and massing to complement surrounding context.
- **Sustainability and Resilience**
 - Promote passive design, solar orientation, and green infrastructure.
- **Landscaping and Open Space**
 - Use of native or adaptive species in all planted areas
 - Incorporate green buffers, bioswales, rain gardens, and permeable paving.

- Provide pedestrian connectivity to existing networks.
- Promote wildlife corridors.
- **Public Realm and Connectivity**
 - Minimize surface parking and enhance aesthetic screening.
 - Provide infrastructure amenities where appropriate (trails, open space, etc.)

IV. Implementation Timeline

Below is a standard phasing template for implementation. The findings and initial work of the established joint TOKI and KICA ARB Taskforce (Phases I-III) should be a resource utilized by staff, the Planning Commission and Town Council. As there has been a head including framework considerations, significant stakeholder engagement to date, Town staff can begin drafting language specifically around the required ordinances for which the board would be established and consider reviewing development applications. The drafting of architectural design guidelines should have input from the design community. This can occur through small committees and public workshops. Guidelines can be adopted by policy through resolution or codified through the zoning code. There are advantages and disadvantages of each which center around enforceability and flexibility for design.

An ordinance and draft of the standards would be prepared for consideration by the Planning Commission for recommendation followed by Town Council adoption. It is recommended that consideration be given to the recruitment of potential members as this nears consideration for recommendation and adoption.

Phase	Key Actions
Phase 1: Initiation	Draft ordinance language; identify roles and responsibilities
Phase 2: Stakeholder Input	Hold public forums and engage developers, residents, and professionals
Phase 3: Draft Standards	Prepare architectural design guidelines; align with comprehensive plan and zoning code
Phase 4: Board Formation	Recruit, interview, and appoint board members; conduct training sessions
Phase 5: Ordinance Adoption <i>(simultaneous with Phase 4)</i>	Public hearing and final adoption of ordinance and standards by Town Council
Phase 6: Infrastructure	Modify internal permitting system to accommodate applications and review procedures
Phase 7: Board Launch	BAR/DRB operational; begin accepting applications

V. Ordinance Development and Adoption Process

Below is an overview of the adoption process to which the DRB would be constituted by the Town Council. The greatest timetable would be to establish architectural design standards and guidelines.

- **Drafting Ordinance**
 - Drafted by Town Planning Department and Legal Counsel
 - Takes similar format to BZA and LTPR
 - Reviewed for compliance with:
 - SC Code § 6-29-870 (Establishment of Design Review Boards)
 - Local zoning enabling laws and comprehensive plan.
- **Drafting Architectural Guidelines**
 - Prepared with small workgroup staff and design teams.
 - Consider separate architectural design manuals.
- **Committee and Public Review**
 - Present ordinance and draft architectural design guidelines to:
 - **Community Workshop(s)**
 - **Town Planning Commission** for recommendation
 - **Public hearing** as required by SC Code § 6-29-760.
 - **Town Council** for two readings and final adoption
- **Final Provisions**
 - The ordinance and or rules of procedure of a new review board should address:
 - Board authority, jurisdiction and functions and powers.
 - Board composition and appointment term of office.
 - Application and review procedures
 - Architectural design guidelines and policies
 - Public notice requirements
 - Conduct or procedures of application hearings
 - Sequencing of review and approvals
 - Appeals process.
 - Enforcement and compliance penalties

VI. Application and Review Process

1. Pre-Application Meeting

- Informal discussion with staff and DRB members
- Review of conceptual ideas and site feasibility

- Site analysis and site visit
- 2. **Application Submission**
 - Includes site plans, architectural renderings, landscape plans, sustainability checklist, etc.
- 3. **Staff Review**
 - Ensures completeness and zoning compliance.
- 4. **DRB Meeting**
 - Public meeting to discuss project.
 - Applicants present; public may comment.
- 5. **Decision**
 - DRB may approve, approve with conditions, or deny.
 - Written findings provided for decisions.
- 6. **Appeals**
 - May be submitted within 30 days to designated appeals board per ordinance.

VII. Evaluation and Monitoring

- **Annual DRB Report** to Town Council
 - Includes project approvals, sustainability achievements, challenges, and public feedback.
- **Architectural Design Guidelines Review** every 5 years.
 - To incorporate evolving best practices, climate adaptation strategies, and community input

VIII. Resources and Additional Considerations

Please note the reports produced by the TOKI/KICA ARB Taskforce

[Phase I Report](#)

[Phase II Report](#)

[Phase III Report](#)

The Town's existing Landscape and Tree Preservation Board has had limited action since being constituted. This board could also be expanded and repurposed to include architectural review, opposed to a separate review board. This could save on some added resources and time dedicated administratively to support and serve a new review body. The Town must consider budgetary discussions on establishing a new board, staffing and administrative related expenses such as permitting and processing applications.

IX. Summary

The proposed Kiawah Island architectural design review body provides a transparent, legally grounded, and environmentally conscious mechanism for managing commercial and multi-family development in the town. Its structure, independent from the ARB and rooted in South Carolina's enabling legislation, ensures a balanced approach to growth that respects both community character and ecological integrity.

John Taylor

From: Kim Buck <buckfam4@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 29, 2025 10:57 AM
To: TOKI Planning
Subject: Cell service

I am contacting you regarding the current issue of poor cell service on the island. Our home is on Blue Heron Pond and we have one person using AT&T and one using Verizon. The coverage for Verizon is effectively non-existent. We have one corner of one room where you can get some service. When the person with AT&T is not there, it is completely unsafe. We are relatively close to the fire station yet getting a call to them for help could be not possible.

Please make correcting this problem a priority for the island.

Kim Buck
2 BHP