



## PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Kiawah Island Municipal Center  
November 5, 2025; 3:00PM

### AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order:**
- II. **Roll Call:**
- III. **Approval of Minutes:**
  - A. Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of October 8, 2025 [Tab 1]
- IV. **Public Comments**  
*(Agenda Items Only)*
- V. **Old Business:**
  - A. **Stormwater Management – Phase II Update** [Tab 2]  
Phase II: Development of specific stormwater standards for the Town of Kiawah Island. *(Overview of Next Steps – Discussion; No Action)*
  - B. **Continuation of Enhanced Protections for Beachfront and Environmentally Sensitive Areas – Phase II Update** [Tab 3]  
Phase II: Enhanced protections for marsh front and properties adjacent to critical area. *(Discussion; No action taken)*
- VI. **New Business:**
  - A. **Zoning Text Amendment Application(s):**
    - 1) **Ordinance 2025-22 (#AZO25-000010) Town of Kiawah Island Architectural Review Controls** [Tab 4]  
Request to amend the Town of Kiawah Island’s Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance to establish a design review board and associated architectural standards. - Section 12.24.2 Design Review Board. and Section 12.130 Design Standards. *(Town Council First Reading – October 14, 2025)*
- VII. **Correspondence/Staff Comments:**
  - A. KiawahNext Update
  - B. Development Project Updates
  - C. Resiliency Committee Updates
- VIII. **Public Comments:**
- IX. **Commissioner Comments:**

**X. Adjournment:**

**Public Comments:** The public is encouraged to attend meetings to share comments directly to members of the Planning Commission. Persons interested in submitting written public comments should email their comments to the Planning Department, [tokiplanning@kiawahisland.gov](mailto:tokiplanning@kiawahisland.gov) referencing the case number.

**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](#).

# 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*  
Patea 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 Overlay 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 P[lan 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 23<sup>rd</sup>. 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 13<sup>th</sup> - A presentation on composting by Smart Recycling
  - December 4<sup>th</sup> - 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**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**Town of Kiawah Island Zoning Ordinance Amendment Request**  
**Case AZO25-000010 Case History**

**Planning Commission Meeting: September 10, 2025**  
**Town Council Workshop: September 23, 2025**  
**Public Hearing and First Reading: October 14, 2025**  
**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 establish a review body 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.

The proposed ordinance establishes two new sections as referenced:

- Section 12-24.2. Design Review Board
- Section 12-130. Design Standards.

Background: In 2023, The Town of Kiawah Island and the Kiawah Island Community Association formed 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. 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. 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 proposed design review board will operate and function independently of any existing architectural review controls.

Legal Framework: The proposed 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)

The proposed ordinance establishes a Design Review Board and administration of architectural design controls via an established *Town of Kiawah Island Architectural Design Principles and Guidelines*.

**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**

The next stage of this process in establishing architectural review controls for the Town, is to formulate principles, standards, and or guidelines. Planning staff has incorporated design review frame and recommends refined design principles be established to guide decisions of the proposed design review board. These principles consider the following elements:

- Site Orientation and Building Layout
- Massing and Scale
- Building and Structure Heights
- Fenestration
- Environmental Stewardship

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

#### **PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING SEPTEMBER 10, 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.

**Planning Commission recommend approval by a vote 6 to 0.**

**The recommendation incorporates next stages to refine "Town of Kiawah Island Town of Kiawah Island Design Review Principles and Guidelines"**

#### **TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP SEPTEMBER 23, 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.

Town Council reviewed and discussed proposed ordinance, discussing compensation of board members and the standards and guidelines of review for the board. Planning staff noted the potential amendments for further discussion and approval at the next Town Council meeting.

**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING OCTOBER 14, 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.

**Town Council voted to approve on first reading (4-1). These changes from PC recommendation include adding the measures of review into the ordinance which the Design Review Board would consider in evaluating development projects. Signage was added to the list of measured categories. Based on the changes the Planning Commission will review prior to second reading. Town Council will consider second reading in December 2025.**

**SECTION 6-29-870.**Board of architectural review; membership; officers; rules; meetings; records.

(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.

(B) The board shall consist of not more than ten members to be appointed by the governing body of the municipality or the governing body of the county which may restrict the membership on the board to those professionally qualified persons as it may desire. The governing authority or authorities creating the board may remove any member of the board which it has appointed.

(C) The appointing authorities shall determine the amount of compensation, if any, to be paid to the members of a board of architectural review. None of the members may hold any other public office or position in the municipality or county.

(D) The board shall elect one of its members chairman, who shall serve for one year or until he is re-elected or his successor is elected and qualified. The board shall appoint a secretary who may be an officer of the governing authority or of the board of architectural review. The board shall adopt rules of procedure in accordance with the provisions of any ordinance adopted pursuant to this chapter. Meetings of the board must be held at the call of the chairman and at such other times as the board may determine. The chairman or, in his or her absence, the acting chairman, may administer oaths and compel the attendance of witnesses by subpoena. The board shall keep minutes of its proceedings, showing the vote of each member upon each question, or if absent or failing to vote, indicating that fact, and shall keep records of its examinations and other official actions, all of which immediately must be filed in the office of the board and must be a public record.

HISTORY: 1994 Act No. 355, Section 1.

**SECTION 6-29-880.**Powers of board of architectural review.

The board of architectural review has those powers involving the structures and neighborhoods as may be determined by the zoning ordinance. Decisions of the zoning administrator or other appropriate administrative official in matters under the purview of the board of architectural review may be appealed to the board where there is an alleged error in any order, requirement, determination, or decision.

HISTORY: 1994 Act No. 355, Section 1.

**SECTION 6-29-890.**Appeal to board of architectural review.

(A) Appeals to the board may be taken by any person aggrieved or by any officer, department, board, or bureau of the municipality or county. The appeal must be taken within a reasonable time, as provided by the zoning ordinance or rules of the board, or both, by filing with the officer from whom the appeal is taken and with the board of architectural review notice of appeal specifying the grounds of it. The officer from whom the appeal is taken immediately must transmit to the board all the papers constituting the record upon which the action appealed from was taken. Upon a motion by a party or the board's own motion, the board may remand a matter to an administrative official if the board determines the record is insufficient for review. A party's motion for remand may be denied if the board determines that the record is sufficient for review. The board must set a rehearing on the remanded matter without further public notice for a time certain within sixty days unless otherwise agreed to by the parties. The board must maintain a list of persons who express an interest in being informed when the remanded matter is set for rehearing, and notice of the rehearing must be mailed to these persons prior to the rehearing.

(B) An appeal stays all legal proceedings in furtherance of the action appealed from, unless the officer from whom the appeal is taken certifies to the board, after the notice of appeal has been filed with him, that by reason of facts stated in the certificate a stay would, in his opinion, cause imminent peril to life and property. In that case, proceedings may not be stayed otherwise than by a restraining order which may be granted by the board or by a court of record on application, upon notice to the officer from whom the appeal is taken, and on due cause shown.

(C) The board must fix a reasonable time for the hearing of the appeal or other matter referred to it, and give public notice of the hearing, as well as due notice to the parties in interest, and decide the appeal or other matter within a reasonable time. At the hearing, any party may appear in person, by agent, or by attorney.

HISTORY: 1994 Act No. 355, Section 1; 2003 Act No. 39, Section 7, eff June 2, 2003.

#### Effect of Amendment

The 2003 amendment, in subsection (A) added the last four sentences relating to remand procedures, in subsection (C) substituted "the hearing" for "it" and "appeal or other matter" for "same", and in subsections (A),(B), and (C) made nonsubstantive changes.

**SECTION 6-29-900.**Appeal from board of architectural review to circuit court; pre-litigation mediation; filing requirements.

(A) A person who may have a substantial interest in any decision of the board of architectural review or any officer, or agent of the appropriate governing authority may appeal from any decision of the board to the circuit court in and for the county by filing with the clerk of court a petition in writing setting forth plainly, fully, and distinctly why the decision is contrary to law. The appeal must be filed within thirty days after the affected party receives actual notice of the decision of the board of architectural review.

(B) A property owner whose land is the subject of a decision of the board of architectural review may appeal either:

(1) as provided in subsection (A); or

(2) by filing a notice of appeal with the circuit court accompanied by a request for pre-litigation mediation in accordance with Section 6-29-915.

A notice of appeal and request for pre-litigation mediation must be filed within thirty days after the decision of the board is postmarked.

(C) Any filing of an appeal from a particular board of architectural review decision pursuant to the provisions of this chapter must be given a single docket number, and the appellant must be assessed only one filing fee pursuant to Section 8-21-310(C)(1).

HISTORY: 1994 Act No. 355, Section 1; 2003 Act No. 39, Section 8, eff June 2, 2003.

#### Effect of Amendment

The 2003 amendment added subsections (B) and (C) and designated the existing paragraph as subsection (A).

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## Town of Kiawah Island

### Design Review Board –~~Architectural~~ Design Principles & Guidelines

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#### Purpose

These design principles and guidelines are intended to guide property owners and design professionals in achieving thoughtful, context-sensitive architecture that reflects Kiawah Island's unique character. All projects should reinforce the Town's principle of Living with Nature within the comprehensive plan by integrating built form with the Island's natural landscape, scale, and community character.

#### Implementation and Review

- The Design Review Board will apply these guidelines as a framework for review, balancing flexibility with consistency.
  - Applicants are encouraged to submit contextual studies, perspective renderings, and material samples demonstrating how projects meet these principles.
  - The DRB may require modifications where proposals conflict with the intent of these principles and guidelines.
- 

#### A. Site Orientation and Layout

##### Principles

- Respect the Island's natural topography, vegetation, and ecological systems.
- Prioritize site planning that reduces visual and environmental impacts.
- Encourage connections to the pedestrian and open space network.

##### Guidelines

1. Orient primary building facades to maximize natural light and ventilation while minimizing heat gain.
2. Position buildings to preserve significant trees, wetlands, dunes, and other natural features.

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3. Avoid large expanses of paving; cluster parking areas and screen them with native landscaping.
  4. Site buildings to maintain view corridors to natural features (marsh, forest edges, ocean).
  5. Incorporate pedestrian pathways, shaded outdoor areas, and connections to nearby amenities.
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## B. Massing and Scale

### Principles

- Ensure buildings complement the ~~Island's Town of Kiawah Island's~~ human-scaled, natural character.
- Break down larger developments into visually cohesive but distinct components.
- Use form and rhythm to harmonize with surrounding development and natural setting.

### Guidelines

1. Employ varied rooflines, articulated facades, and step-backs to avoid monolithic appearances.
  2. Use massing strategies that reflect a hierarchy of forms (primary volume with secondary wings or terraces).
  3. Break large buildings into smaller scaled segments to maintain pedestrian-friendly proportions.
  4. Design transitions between building elements to reduce perceived bulk at edges or along public frontages.
  5. Consider how massing interacts with the skyline and treeline, ensuring natural dominance.
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## C. Building and Structure Heights

### Principles

- Building height should reinforce Kiawah's low-rise, nature-focused identity.

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- Height should transition thoughtfully to surrounding contexts, especially near sensitive habitats and existing neighborhoods.

### Guidelines

1. Limit building heights to maintain a harmonious relationship with surrounding vegetation and structures.
  2. Step down heights along sensitive edges (adjacent single-family areas, critical area, marsh fronts, or ocean fronts).
  3. Use roof forms (hipped, gabled, or gently sloped) to blend with the natural canopy line.
  4. Screen rooftop mechanicals and equipment with architectural enclosures integrated into building design.
  5. Avoid flat-topped silhouettes that create stark contrasts with the natural environment.
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### D. Fenestration (Windows, Doors, Openings)

#### Principles

- Openings should contribute to human scale, rhythm, and transparency while respecting privacy and energy performance.
- Fenestration should enhance the building's relationship to the outdoors and natural light.

#### Guidelines

1. Windows and doors should be proportioned and grouped to create balanced compositions.
2. Avoid excessive expanses of unbroken glass; use mullions, bays, or screens to provide rhythm.
3. Orient and shade fenestration to minimize glare and heat gain while maximizing natural light.
4. Employ materials and colors that reduce reflectivity and blend with natural surroundings.

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5. Encourage the use of porches, loggias, screened rooms, and recessed openings to create depth and shadow.
  6. Ground-floor fenestration should promote activity and visual connection with the public realm.
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### **E. Environmental Stewardship and Process**

#### **Principles**

- Protect Kiawah's ecosystems during and after construction.
- Minimize disruption and restore impacted areas.

#### **Guidelines**

1. Establish tree/vegetation protection zones before construction.
2. Employ low-impact construction access and staging to development sites.
3. Use native plantings for restoration and landscape.
4. Integration of pervious materials and nature based solutions for stormwater management
5. Encourage sustainable materials and energy-efficient building practices.

TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND

**ORDINANCE 2025-22**

**AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH A TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND DESIGN REVIEW BOARD AND PROCESS FOR ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN REVIEW.**

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Kiawah Island recognizes the need to establish a review body to provide a clear and transparent process for the architectural design review of commercial, mixed-use, civic, and multi-family residential developments within the Town of Kiawah Island; and

**WHEREAS**, to further protect the public interest, the Town seeks to establish a body which makes provisions to protect and improve the unique character of the Town of Kiawah Island.

**WHEREAS**, the text amendment would be consistent with the purposes and intent of the adopted Comprehensive Plan and would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare of the Town of Kiawah Island; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission held a meeting on September 10, 2025 at which time a presentation was made by staff, and an opportunity was given for the public to comment on the text amendment request; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission, after consideration of the staff report, subsequently voted to recommend to Town Council that the proposed amendment be approved; and

**WHEREAS**, Town Council held a Public workshop on September 23, 2025 providing the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed amendment.

**WHEREAS**, Town Council held a Public Hearing on October 14, 2025 providing the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed amendment.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED AND ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND IT IS ORDAINED BY THE AUTHORITY OF SAID COUNCIL:**

**Section 1                      Purpose**

The purpose of this Ordinance is to amend Chapter 12 - Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance to establish a Design Review Board.

**Section 2                      Ordinance**

- (1) The Town hereby amends Division 1. Generally establishing Sec. 12-24.2 Design Review Board as shown in the attached “Exhibit A” which is hereby incorporated herein by reference.

- (2) The Town hereby amends Division 4. Supplemental Regulations establishing Sec. 12-130. Design Standards as shown in the attached “Exhibit B” which is hereby incorporated herein by reference.

**Section 3**                    **Severability**

If any part of this Ordinance is held to be unconstitutional, it shall be construed to have been the legislative intent to pass said Ordinance without such unconstitutional provision, and the remainder of said Ordinance shall be deemed to be valid as if such portion had not been included. If said Ordinance, or any provisions thereof, is held to be inapplicable to any person, group of persons, property, kind property, circumstances or set of circumstances, such holding shall not affect the circumstances or set of circumstances, such holding shall not affect the applicability thereof to any other persons, property, or circumstances.

**Section 4**                    **Effective Date and Duration**

This Ordinance shall be effective upon its enactment by the Town Council for the Town of Kiawah Island.

**PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND ON THIS \_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_ 2025.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Bradley D. Belt, Mayor**

**ATTEST:**

**By:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Petra Reynolds, Town Clerk**

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: October 14, 2025

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:

**Sec. 12-24.2. Design Review Board.**

(a) Creation. The Town of Kiawah Island Design Review Board (DRB) has been created and is authorized to act pursuant to S.C. Code 1976, §§ 6-29-870—6-29-910.

~~(a)(b)~~ Intent. The intent of establishing the Design Review Board and initiating design review is to enhance the Island's character, preserve property values and protect the unique identity of the Town of Kiawah Island. The Design Review process is intended to promote architectural design that is compatible in mass, scale, site orientation and design with existing development of the Town and in harmony with the natural environment.

~~(b)(c)~~ Composition and appointment of term of office of members.

- (1) The Design Review Board shall consist of five members, at least three of whom must be property owners or resident members. ~~The DRB shall consist of a cross section of compensated design professionals and non-compensated property owners or resident members,~~ all to be appointed by the Mayor and approved by the Town Council. At least ~~four~~ three members shall be registered design professionals or have relevant professional credentials and expertise in the areas of architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, construction or similar field. The term "resident member" means a person who resides permanently within the Town of Kiawah Island for not less than eight months of each calendar year.
- (2) The term of office for members shall be ~~three~~ four years from the date of appointment. Any vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term by the Town Council. ~~Only compensated members are eligible to receive compensation for their service at the discretion of Town Council. All members may also be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred in connection with their official duties, provided the Town Council has approved such expenditures in advance. Compensation shall be set by Town Council. The Board members shall serve overlapping terms of three (3) years each. At the time of the creation of the Design Review Board, three of the Board's five (5) members shall serve terms of one (1), tTwo (2) and three (3) years as designated by the Town Council. Their successors shall be appointed for a full three (3) year term. The Board members appointed to fill the additional two (2) places on the Board shall serve terms of two (2) and tThree (3) years, as designated by Town council and their successors shall be appointed for full three (3) year terms. Members are all eligible for reappointment.~~
- (3) No member shall serve more than three consecutive terms of office; provided, however, that such member shall be eligible to hold such office after a break in service of 12 months.
- (4) No member shall hold an elected public office in the Town of Kiawah Island or Charleston County.
- (5) The DRB shall elect a chair and vice-chair for one-year terms.
- (6) The Planning Director or designee shall serve as Secretary of the DRB.

~~(c) Administrative office.~~ The Office of the DRB shall be located in the Town Municipal Center. All applications or requests and other papers to be filed with the DRB are to be filed with the Planning Director or designee of the Kiawah Island Planning Department not less than 30 working days prior to the DRB meeting at which the matter will be heard.

(d) Rules of procedures and records. The DRB shall adopt rules of organizational procedure and shall keep a record of its resolutions, findings, and determinations, which record must be a public record. The DRB shall keep minutes of its proceedings, showing the vote of each member upon each question or, if absent or failing to vote, indicating such actions, all of which shall immediately be filed in the office of the DRB and shall be a public record. The DRB may purchase equipment and supplies and may employ or contract for such staff and such experts as it considers necessary and consistent with funds appropriated by Town Council.

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~~(d)~~(e) *Meetings.* Meetings of the DRB shall be at the call of the Chairperson and at such other times as the DRB may determine.

- (1) All meetings of the DRB shall be open to the public.
- (2) The Chairperson may call a special meeting of the Design Review Board. In the event that such a special meeting is called, the Chairperson, at their discretion, shall give notice to interested parties that any or all pending matters before the DRB will be heard and considered at such special meeting.

~~(e) *Rules of procedures and records.* The DRB shall adopt rules of organizational procedure and shall keep a record of its resolutions, findings, and determinations, which record must be a public record. The DRB shall keep minutes of its proceedings, showing the vote of each member upon each question or, if absent or failing to vote, indicating such actions, all of which shall immediately be filed in the office of the DRB and shall be a public record. The DRB may purchase equipment and supplies and may employ or contract for such staff and such experts as it considers necessary and consistent with funds appropriated by Town Council.~~

(f) *Functions and powers.* The Design Review Board shall have the following powers:

(1) The DRB shall have jurisdiction over all lands within the municipal limits of the Town of Kiawah Island.

(2) The DRB shall establish a process for sequenced reviews that will protect and improve the visual and aesthetic character of development within the Town of Kiawah Island.

~~(2)a. Review, approve, approve subject to conditions or deny approval for: construction, enlargement or improvements governed by this Zoning Ordinance that relates to the design, mass, siting or exterior appearance of a structure, except for those actions deemed to be routine maintenance by the Planning Director.~~

(3) The DRB shall review and render decisions using standards and guidelines as referenced within the "Town of Kiawah Island Design Review ~~Standards~~Principles and Guidelines" on development projects within the municipal limits of the Town of Kiawah Island, excluding single-family residential, except single family residential which are not subject to review or purview of any established architectural review board.

~~(4) The DRB shall be in place to review and render decisions on proposed non-single-family residential developments pursuant to established architectural standards and guidelines of the Town of Kiawah Island.~~

~~(5)~~(4) The DRB may recommend such legislation as may be needed and practicable to pursue the purpose for which the DRB was established.

(g) *Filing of applications to the Design Review Board.*

(1) All applications and matters brought before the DRB shall be heard in the order of filing at the regular meeting of the DRB; provided, however, that the DRB shall set its meeting agenda and determine the number of applications it will hear.

(h) *Published notice for hearings of the Design Review Board.* Applications considered for a final review decision of the DRB shall be held pursuant to notice provisions as specified in Section 12-156.

(i) *Decisions of Design Review Board.* The DRB shall approve, approve with conditions or disapprove applications submitted pursuant to this article and the "Town of Kiawah Island Design Review Principles and Guidelines".

(1) The DRB may grant relief from established principles and guidelines, where exceptional circumstances exist and where the DRB determines that the applicant demonstrates the relief does not adversely affect the character of the properties within the vicinity nor interfere with the purposes of this article.

(2) The DRB may attach to it such conditions regarding the location, character, or other features of the proposed building or structure as the DRB may consider advisable to protect neighborhood character,

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aesthetic or property values in the surrounding area, or to promote the public health, safety, or general welfare.

- (j) *Lapse of approval.* DRB approval shall lapse and be of no further effect 18 months after the date the application and development plans were granted approval by the DRB.
- (k) *Minutes of the Design Review Board.* The decisions of the DRB shall be in writing and signed by the Chairperson or designee. The minutes of the DRB shall show the vote of each member upon each question, or if a member is absent or fails to vote, the minutes shall indicate such fact. The decisions of the DRB shall be filed in the offices of the DRB. These decisions shall be a public record.
- (l) *Appeals from Design Review Board decisions.* Any person who may have a substantial interest in any decision of the DRB or any officer or agent of the Town may appeal from any decision of the DRB to the Circuit Court in and for the county by filing with the clerk of such court a petition in writing setting forth plainly, fully and distinctly wherein such decision is contrary to law. Such appeal shall be filed within 30 calendar days after the decision of the DRB ~~is rendered~~ has been noticed to the applicant.

(Ord. No. 2024-01, § 2(Exh. E), 4-2-2024)

**Sec. 12-130. ~~Architectural~~ Design Standards.**

- (1) *Purpose and Intent.* The purpose of these regulations are 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.

The intent of these regulations is to:

- a. Preserve the natural character of existing neighborhoods;
- b. Ensure aesthetic compatibility with existing character of Kiawah;
- c. Promote integrated development with nature;
- d. Maintain and or improve aesthetic values; and to
- e. Establish consistent application of minimum standards and guidelines for architectural design.

- (2) *Applicability ~~and~~ Exemptions.* The provisions of this article apply to all real property within the municipal limits of the Town of Kiawah Island, excluding single-family residential ~~developments~~, except single family residential ~~developments~~ which ~~are is~~ not subject to review or purview of any established architectural review board.

- (3) *~~Design Architectural~~ Standards and Guidelines.* Proposed developments shall be reviewed in accordance the provisions of this article and the "Town of Kiawah Island Design Review Principles and Guidelines". The following standards shall be utilized by the board and the Planning Director in reviewing the plans, drawings, sketches and other documents as required for review and or approval. These standards are intended to guide property owners and design professionals in achieving thoughtful, context-sensitive architecture that reflects Kiawah Island's unique character. All projects should reinforce the Town's principle of Living with Nature within the Comprehensive Plan by integrating built form with the Island's natural landscape, scale, and community character. These standards are not intended to affect the use of property or any by right entitlement of applicable zoning regulations, with the exception of the siting and design of development.

- a. Site Orientation and Layout: Developments should respect the Island's natural topography, vegetation, and ecological systems; prioritize site planning that reduces visual and environmental impacts; orient primary building facades to maximize natural light and ventilation while minimizing heat gain; position buildings to preserve significant trees, wetlands, dunes, and other natural features.; avoid large expanses of paving; cluster parking areas and screen them with native landscaping. site buildings to maintain view corridors to natural features (marsh, forest edges, ocean); and incorporate pedestrian pathways, shaded outdoor areas, and connections to nearby amenities
- b. Massing and Scale: Developments should ensure buildings are appropriately scaled and complement the Town of Kiawah Island's natural character; break down larger developments into visually cohesive but distinct components.; use form and rhythm to harmonize with surrounding development and natural setting; employ varied rooflines, articulated facades, and step-backs to avoid monolithic appearances; use massing strategies that reflect a hierarchy of forms (primary volume with secondary wings or terraces); break large buildings into smaller scaled segments to maintain pedestrian-friendly proportions; design transitions between building elements to reduce perceived bulk at edges or along public frontages; and consider how massing interacts with the skyline and treeline, ensuring natural dominance.
- c. Building and Structure Heights: Building height should reinforce Kiawah's low-rise, nature-focused identity; height should transition thoughtfully to surrounding contexts, especially near sensitive habitats and existing neighborhoods; limit building heights to maintain a harmonious relationship

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with surrounding vegetation and structure; step down heights along sensitive edges (adjacent single-family areas, critical area, marsh fronts, or ocean fronts). use roof forms (hipped, gabled, or gently sloped) to blend with the natural canopy line. screen rooftop mechanicals and utility equipment with architectural enclosures integrated into building design; and avoid flat-topped silhouettes that create stark contrasts with the natural environment.

- d. Fenestration (Windows, Doors, Openings): Openings should contribute to human scale, rhythm, and transparency while respecting privacy and energy performance; fenestration should enhance the building's relationship to the outdoors and natural light.; windows and doors should be proportioned and grouped to create balanced compositions.; avoid excessive expanses of unbroken glass; use mullions, bays, or screens to provide rhythm; orient and shade fenestration to minimize glare and heat gain while maximizing natural light. employ materials and colors that reduce reflectivity and blend with natural surroundings. encourage the use of porches, loggias, screened rooms, and recessed openings to create depth and shadow; and ground-floor fenestration should promote activity and visual connection with the public realm.
- e. Environmental Stewardship and Process: Developments should protect Kiawah's ecosystems during and after construction; minimize disruption and restore impacted areas; establish tree/vegetation protection zones before construction; employ low-impact construction access and staging to development sites; use native plantings for restoration and landscape; integrate use of pervious materials and nature based solutions for stormwater management; and use sustainable materials and energy-efficient building practices.
- f. Signs: The shape, configuration, location, design, color, texture, lighting and materials of all exterior signs and outdoor advertising structures or features should not detract from the design of proposed or existing buildings and structures and the surrounding properties.

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(4) *Application and Review Stages.*

- a. *Preliminary Review:* Prior to advancing a development project, the applicant shall submit for preliminary review and approval to the Design Review Board. Preliminary Review shall not constitute final approval of architectural design.
- b. *Final Review:* Prior to submitting for zoning review and approval, applicants shall receive final Design Review Board approval.

(5) *Design Review Board.*

- a. The Design Review Board shall review with the authority to approve, approve with conditions, or disapprove developments in accordance with the provisions of the article.

(6) *Inspections, Violations, and Fines.*

- a. The Town reserves the right to inspect the site or property at any reasonable time for compliance with approved standards and guidelines. Town Staff may inspect the site one year after the issuance of a permanent Certificate of Occupancy in order to ensure compliance with the approved plans.
- b. If the Town finds a development in violation of this article or if an applicant fails to satisfy any condition that was imposed as part of the original or revised approval of the proposed development that was made pursuant to the provisions of this article, the applicant or property owner shall be in violation of this article.

- c. Any applicant or property owner in violation of this ordinance shall be subject to fines or penalties as prescribed in this article and or other remedies and enforcement actions pursuant to section 12-214.

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