

TOWN COUNCIL
Municipal Center Council Chambers
December 2, 2025, 1:00 pm

Minutes

I. Call to Order: *Mayor Belt called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.*

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call:

Present at the Meeting: Bradley Belt, *Mayor*
Russell Berner, *Mayor Pro Tem*
Luke Farrell, *Council Member*
Madeleine Kaye, *Council Member*
Lance Spencer, *Council Member*

Also Present: Stephanie Monroe Tillerson, *Town Administrator*
Dorota Szubert, *Finance Director*
Mac McQuillin, *Town Attorney*
John Taylor, Jr., *Planning Director*

IV. Approval of Minutes:

A. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting of November 4, 2025

B. Minutes of the Special Call Town Council Meeting of November 14, 2025

Mayor Belt stated that the minutes for the Town Council Meeting of November 4, 2025, and the Special Call Town Council Meeting of November 14, 2025, were circulated prior to the meeting. No Council Members had significant comments or edits, except for one minor administrative correction noted by Council Member Spencer.

When none were offered beyond an administrative correction, he stated that the minutes were deemed approved.

V. Citizens' Comments (Agenda Items Only):

Jennifer Hayes, Kiawah ARB (Architectural Review Board)

Ms. Hays expressed concerns about the proposed noise ordinance provision that would ban landscape equipment with two-cycle engines. She requested more information about this proposal, particularly regarding stakeholder involvement, the six-month implementation timeframe, potential impacts on landscape maintenance quality, cost implications for residents, and whether the ban would apply to tree removal work. Hayes emphasized that landscape maintenance is key to maintaining Kiawah's beautiful environment.

VI. Presentations:

A. MUSC Update - Tom Crawford, MUSC Health System Chief Operating Officer

Mr. Crawford stated that MUSC Health is firmly committed to providing 24/7, 365 emergency services to the Sea Islands community and has been working diligently over the last couple of years to put up a building which would include that freestanding emergency department, but also include a medical office building that would provide services today but actually grow additional services in the future based on the demand.

Mr. Crawford provided an update on MUSC Health's new facility, stating that the grand opening, scheduled for December 12th from 1-3 pm, is open to the public and that services will commence on December 18, 2025, at 8 am.

Mr. Crawford indicated that emergency services, as you would have at any emergency room, will be available. He explained that emergency services are largely about treating you in the event of a specific event, such as a cardiac or neurological event, a fall, or trauma, where timing is of the essence. He stated that the facility would be supported logistically with ambulances and would also have a helipad if transport to a higher level of care is required.

Mr. Crawford outlines that the facility would start with primary care, cardiology, orthopedics, and rotating subspecialties, with telehealth support, with plans to "continue to grow that based on the demand." Other services include "physical therapy in the building, non-chemo infusion, basic lab services" as well as "radiology, including CT, MRI, and X-ray, which people have to travel for now."

During questioning, Mr. Crawford confirmed that staffing would include an on-site phlebotomist, and primary care, cardiology, and orthopedics services would be available when the facility opens. He indicated that doctors would accept new patients and that transfers from other MUSC facilities would be seamless due to shared medical records. He confirmed that ambulance response on Kiawah would utilize the new facility, explaining that, along with Charleston County EMS, a partnership with Lifeguard, acclimated to providing critical care transport to hospitals, was in place as a backup provider. Also addressed were questions about the facility's trauma capabilities and staffing, as well as how residents could investigate moving their providers to the new facility.

Chairman Farrell thanked MUSC for siting the facility on Kiawah, which was greatly appreciated by the community. Mayor Belt noted that the Town provided financial support for the facility, which will include a healing garden overlooking the lake.

2025 Survey Results – Meredith Blair, Communications & Public Affairs Director

The Town conducted the 2025 customer satisfaction survey to gather community feedback. Ms. Blair presented the survey results, noting that 451 community members participated, of which 98% were full or part-time property owners.

Key findings included:

- 73% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with Town services (up from 69%)
- 74% were satisfied or very satisfied with Town Staff interactions (similar to last year's 73%)

Areas the Town performs well:

- Emergency preparedness (69%, down from last year's 77%)
- Environmental and wildlife support (67%, up from last year's 50%)
- Beach patrol (58%, up from last year's 55%)
- Communication (57%, slightly improved from last year's 56%)

Areas needing improvement:

- Code enforcement (44%, up from last year's 35%)
- Permitting process (40%, unchanged)
- Planning and development projects (35%, improved from last year's 56%)
- Short-term rental compliance (28%, up from last year's 24%)

Key priorities identified through resident comments included:

- Resiliency (flood mitigation, infrastructure, natural habitat preservation)
- Wildlife protection, specifically bobcats
- Traffic and main gate congestion
- Construction/development management
- Speed limit enforcement

Additional comments submitted:

- “What happened to the traffic enforcement we saw for a moment there in August? Contractors are not complying with speed limits despite claims otherwise.”
- “Limit any high-density housing or development that overtaxes the infrastructure.
- “On island access is a floodgate open to everyone and anyone who wants access. Fix the 35-minute backup at the gate for the homeowners.”
- “Development of the island must be stopped. Kiawah is a special place because of its pristine and natural beauty. If people don't want to come here to enjoy the paradise that it is, let them go somewhere else.”

When Council Member Spencer asked about the drop in emergency preparedness ratings despite improvements like the CERT team reactivation, Ms. Blair explained that she did not have any additional insight into the drop but that it kind of correlates with the participation this year, noting that the 451 community members who participated were down from the 773 respondents last year.

Mayor Belt suggested that a fresh look at how questions are composed and what is being evaluated may be needed in the future. Since the survey asked people to identify the top things they think the Town does well, the better question may be satisfaction with each service. Ms. Blair added that the presentation only provided highlights of the survey and that viewing the full survey on the Town's website or eBlast would provide a breakdown and more specific information on different services.

Council Members' discussion included that several of the comments are outside of the Town's purview, but that KICA (Kiawah Island Community Association) would be made aware that the comments were made, and if the drop in participants was linked to the time of survey release, despite extensive advertising or fewer issues are animating the community than two years ago when the survey was last done.

Council Member Kaye expressed being very encouraged by a couple of things, noting "the community seems to have become increasingly aware of resiliency issues" and that "from the wildlife perspective, the work that Mr. Jordan and his team are doing, and all of the emphasis on Bobcat Pledge, Bobcats and Bluegrass, and SGA reduction," the positive results were "a public recognition, a community wide recognition of Mr. Jordan's team and the hard work that they put forward.

VII. Updates:

A. Mayor

Mayor Belt provided several updates. First, he announced that the Town will be conducting additional tree maintenance and aesthetic improvements, along with tree health work on Kiawah Island Parkway, over the next 2 to 3 weeks, which may impact traffic. He explained this was an extension of ongoing work the Town has been doing to improve its right-of-way areas along public roads and would essentially cover the 2-mile stretch of Kiawah Island Parkway from the roundabout to the main gate.

The Mayor stated that at the last meeting, the Town approved the conveyance of a third of a mile of Betsy Kerrison Parkway from the roundabout to Resurrection Road, which includes the causeway and culvert. He noted that accepting conveyance was conditional upon obtaining a satisfactory inspection report. The state inspection confirmed all components are in good condition, with an expected lifespan of 75 years (constructed in 2005). Initial work will include re-striping to improve the turn lane at the Municipal Center, with a possible complete remilling and repaving in conjunction with the Civic and Cultural Center project.

Regarding some of the issues related to the Planning Commission's proposed recommendations on a new Beachfront Overlay, Mayor Belt noted that a public workshop will be held tomorrow afternoon at 1 o'clock and encouraged anyone interested to attend. He emphasized that "contrary to what may have been conveyed or represented by some," this had been a year-long process that began with discussions at Council's Strategic Planning Retreat last January addressing development issues along the beachfront in order to protect the maritime forest, wildlife habitat, vegetative characteristics, protect

against storm surge, and to preserve the aesthetics and character of Kiawah Island. Since the January discussions, the Planning Commission has held numerous public meetings and workshops.

Mayor Belt stated that the Council approved the first reading of the ordinance, with the understanding that additional views and perspectives would be offered. Without acting on a second reading, there was an additional public hearing at the last Council meeting, so this remains an ongoing process, emphasizing a fairly public process.

The Mayor also reported on a recent meeting with construction general contractors, noting there continues to be an extraordinary and unfortunate amount of confusion about the relative roles of the Town, KICA, and the ARB in the zoning and building permitting process. He referenced a survey that incorrectly stated "the required setbacks may be designated and or varied by the Kiawah Island Architectural Review Board. The Architectural Review Board reserves the right to grant variances respecting setback guidelines and or to expand the buildable area," and wanted to "make crystal clear for the record that the Town's Board of Zoning Appeals is the only entity which can grant variances from municipal zoning standards." He emphasized that the ARB has no authority to modify Municipal Zoning Standards. He also clarified that there is no requirement to obtain ARB approval before obtaining Town zoning and building permits.

B. Council Members

Mayor Pro Tem Burner reported on the following:

- His extensive work reviewing the architect's contract for the Civic and Cultural Facility to provide greater control over timing, scheduling, and costs, and expressed satisfaction with the final contract.
- After a meeting with the new EMS Chief, he stated that he was pleased with response times on the island, particularly when factoring in faster first response from the St. Johns fire District and Beach Patrol.
- Preparations were underway for the upcoming marathon on December 13th, with a bomb meeting scheduled for the following day. He encouraged residents to check the website for road closure information, emphasizing that "when they're closed, you're not getting through."

Mayor Belt added important information about EMS staffing changes, explaining that Charleston County EMS has moved Station 10 to a "station-based" model, meaning there would be a 24/7 presence at the station.

Council Member Kaye reported on the following:

- The Go Green Subcommittee's work with the Resort on a major composting initiative for the marathon.
- A new "Kiawah Conversations" program will launch in January as a Town initiative focusing on wildlife, environment, resiliency, and sustainability topics.

Regarding marsh initiatives, Council Member Kaye emphasized that the *Beach Overlay District* should not be conflated with the marsh overlay initiative, which is more complex and involves multiple ongoing studies and projects from various organizations.

Council Member Farrell agreed with Council Member Kaye's point about distinguishing between beach and marsh overlay initiatives, explaining, "the challenges in the marsh are very different from what happens in the beach, much more dynamic and much more complicated." Given its complexity, a science-based approach is being taken, along with measures outlined in the Town's Comprehensive Plan to protect the marsh, beachfront, and river, and ultimately the island's quality of life and environment. He also shared his experience volunteering to build wire reefs and encouraged others to do the same.

Council Member Farrell reported on the following:

- The Town's budget is performing well, with revenue 37% ahead of budget (about \$700,000) and expenses up 28%, allowing an additional \$2 million to be added to reserves.

- Business license fees are being adjusted to maintain revenue neutrality despite classification changes.
- The financial processes assessment is nearly complete and will be presented in January.

Council Member Spencer thanked staff for the successful Veterans Day event, noting "we had really positive comments from the people who showed up, both veterans and people who support veterans." He also announced that the next Infrastructure and Public Works Committee (I&PWC) meeting would be on December 11th from 10 to 11 am instead of the usual first Thursday.

Council Member Spencer discussed the Kiawah Island Utility (KIU) rate increase proposal, explaining that after a Special Call I&PWC meeting with KIU and a thorough review, the Committee had no issue with the proposed rate increase. He noted the extensive state oversight and that KIU shared it would cost approximately \$750,000 to go through the process.

Regarding first readings, Council Member Spencer emphasized an important point: "First reading doesn't mean that the Council is about to approve something. Just helps us progress the process as much as anything for something that we think is directionally on target and needs more actions to come." He used the beach overlay as an example where "Lots of things are happening after that first reading to get it right."

Council Member Spencer reported that progress on cell tower upgrades is moving forward: Crown Castle, which has four sites on the island, has conducted site surveys to determine next steps, and the Planning Department is working through the approval process. He noted that Crown Castle confirmed they have support from at least one carrier for the new sites and increased coverage capacity and range. He estimated it will probably take 18 months to 2 years before we see results. When asked whether all four locations would be completed at the same time or separately, he explained that the Ocean Core site would be fast-tracked because it is the biggest issue right now, and that the others with the fewest constraints would be able to go forward.

C. Administrator

Ms. Tillerson encouraged attendance and community participation at the Planning Commission's Beach Overlay Workshop tomorrow at 1:00 pm.

Ms. Tillerson reported on the following:

- The Town is working with GoGov to improve the Kiawah Island mobile app and is also working on a website redesign, both targeted for roll-out in the first quarter of next year.
- The Citizens' Serve dashboard has been enhanced.
- Upcoming Arts and Cultural holiday special events include the "Sound of Charleston" on December 9th at 7:30 at Seabrook Island Clubhouse.
- The Town insurance has closed out the water damage claim, and the Town will receive a reimbursement of \$228,357 minus our \$3000 deductible.

When Council Member Farrell asked about changes to prevent future incidents, Ms. Tillerson confirmed that the problematic piping had been addressed, and Mayor Pro Tem Berner stated that an inspection indicated no additional dissimilar materials that caused the leak and flood.

Mr. Spicher explained that they had investigated water sensors but encountered challenges with commercial-grade equipment and accommodating the 4-inch requirement. However, Mayor Pro Tem Berner discussed a monitoring system that would electronically transmit water-use data and trigger an alarm for excessive water use.

Ms. Tillerson then indicated that she had been notified that Public Works staff was working with Coastal Burglary Alarm to install water alarms under the sink for less than \$1700 that would notify staff if water is detected.

VIII. Old Business:

A. To Consider Approval of Ordinance 2025-15 – An Ordinance to Establish Noise Standards Within the Town of Kiawah Island and to Repeal Chapter 8, Sections 15-801 Through 15-807 of the Town Municipal Code – First Reading

Mayor Belt provided background on the revised noise ordinance, noting that there had been extensive discussion of decibel levels and measurement distances, as well as a presentation on 2-cycle gas-powered engines, their environmental impacts, and cost-related issues. Council Members were then asked to make any additional suggestions or changes.

Council Member Spencer requested the inclusion of a proposed prohibition on landscaping equipment powered by 2-cycle gas engines to be phased in over a 6-month period. Also received was a request from the Resort for a minor modification to the timing of the golf course landscaping.

Ms. Tillerson explained the current ordinance allows "routine golf maintenance" to start at 6 am, "blowing of parking lots and paths" to start at 6:30 am, and "nonroutine work" to start at 7 am. The Resort has requested that the current golf course maintenance hours be maintained rather than the proposed uniform start time of 6:30 am. Also noted that an email was received from Arbor Care requesting clarification on complying with the 2-cycle engine requirement and if tree companies fall into the landscape maintenance category.

Council Member Spencer made a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2025-15 to revise the noise ordinance standards with the Town of Kiawah Island, and to repeal Chapter 8, Sections 15-801 through 15-807 of the Town Municipal Code. Mayor Pro Tem Berner seconded the motion.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner identified an error in Section 15-805(e)(3), noting that golf course maintenance was prohibited only Monday through Saturday, meaning it would not be prohibited at any time on Sunday. This needed to be corrected to include all seven days.

The discussion then turned to the prohibition on two-cycle engines, with Mayor Pro Tem Berner asking about tree cutting with electric chainsaws. Council Member Spencer responded that they do make 4-cycle chainsaws that are actually a better product, having a more consistent chain speed. When asked about noise levels, Council Member Spencer confirmed they were significantly quieter than those with two-cycle engines.

Council Member Kaye questioned whether the proposed decibel levels were consistent with neighboring communities. Council Member Spencer explained that he had researched California standards and, after comparing them with the Mayor's research, agreed with the Mayor's recommendation that they were appropriate. Mayor Belt clarified that, with a couple of minor exceptions, the 70- and 60-decibel levels are consistent with the current ordinance, noting that some communities, particularly large cities, have slightly higher decibel limits.

Council Member Kaye also raised concerns about whether penalties were "sufficient to deter" violations. Mayor Belt explained that the Town's fine limit is set by state law at \$500 per violation. Council Member Spencer added that the real deterrent is the ability to revoke a business license or issue a stop-work order.

Council Member Farrell posed a philosophical question: "Are we trying to minimize noise, eliminate 2-cycle machines, or both?" Council Member Spencer responded that it was both. Mayor Belt added that 2-cycle engines not only pollute but also produce low-frequency noise that tends to penetrate walls and windows more than high-frequency noise.

Ms. Tillerson then read an email from Mr. Sammy Miller with Arbor Care seeking clarification about whether the two-cycle prohibition would apply to tree care companies. Mayor Belt invited Mr. Miller to speak.

Mr. Miller explained his concerns about electric equipment for tree work: "If you have someone 90 feet up in a tree and the battery goes out while you're in the middle of a cut, that becomes a major safety issue." He also raised concerns about the delineation between landscape and tree care companies that use wood chippers, which operate at over 80 decibels.

When asked about four-cycle chainsaws, Mr. Miller stated that everything on the market right now used in a commercial setting is 2-cycle. New products are being introduced, but the durability technology is not quite there on a commercial level.

Council Members engaged in an in-depth discussion about the delineation between landscape and other service companies, how the two-cycle engine prohibition would affect tree care companies, clarifying that wood chippers with diesel engines would not be affected by the two-cycle prohibition, and whether Council Member Farrell's suggestion to extend the phase-in period from 6 months to 1 year, allowing more time to find new equipment, would be beneficial.

Roger Warren from the Resort expressed concern about the effect of the prohibition on the many contractors who come to the island to work with 2-cycle engine tools. He encouraged looking into an unintended consequence: the contractors may decide not to come out to Kiawah if the change isn't worth it. He noted that if the change from 2-cycle to 4-cycle can be achieved with no loss of time or efficiency and with quality work done in the same amount of time, there's no reason not to do it, but he felt that some supporting data would help him better understand. Mayor Belt responded that the examination focused on how other communities had implemented the transition, also citing the recent Landscape RFP in which all but one company indicated they could be all-electric at the outset or in a phased period.

Discussion then turned to the classification of KICA maintenance operations. Ms. Tillerson stated that KICA has a full maintenance crew by 7:00 am and sometimes as early as 6:00 or 6:30 am. KICA, currently defined as a commercial landscape, cannot start until 8:00 am and would lose an hour of work; therefore, Ms. White is asking to be considered under the same conditions as the Resort. Council Member Farrell agreed to give KICA the same hours as the golf courses. Mayor Belt indicated he was not opposed, but questioned whether the golf course maintenance category would apply to KICA.

Mr. DeStefano, a former KICA board member, stated that the reason they want to be able to start early is to blow the main roads before 7:00 am, when all the commercial traffic comes onto the island.

After extensive discussion, the Council agreed to approve the ordinance on first reading with the following changes: extending the two-cycle engine prohibition phase-in from 6 months to 12 months, adding the Resort's requested golf course maintenance schedule variations, correcting the days of the week error, planning to provide some accommodation for KICA's maintenance needs, and further examination of tree work and the full array of issues between 2 and 4 cycle equipment between first and second reading.

Following the discussion, the motion to approve Ordinance 2025-15 on first reading with the discussed amendments was unanimously approved.

B. To Consider Approval of Ordinance 2025-17 - An Ordinance to Amend Article 4, Finance and Taxation, Chapter 3, Municipal Business Licenses, Section 4-321. – Classification and Rates, Appendix A - Business License Rate Schedule and Appendix B - Business License Class Schedule - Second and Final Reading

Ms. Szubert began her presentation by stating that this was the second reading of the ordinance and explained that it contained two key items. First, she detailed the classification changes that require approval of the updated class schedule, which is required by South Carolina law. Every couple of years, the IRS evaluates the business license classes and may make changes to the classes. She specifically

noted that the current change, about 1800 businesses, will change classes. The majority are short-term rental and management companies that will go from class 7 to class 8.

Ms. Szubert stated that the revenue implications of the classification changes would be a drop in business license revenues of approximately \$65,000. At the first reading, the staff recommended not changing the rates, but the staff now recommends slightly increasing business license fees to offset potential revenue losses from these classification changes. The proposal would leave the base rate unchanged while increasing the rate per \$1,000 by \$0.10. She noted that assuming businesses report the same revenue as the previous year, this adjustment should allow the Town to break even despite the classification changes.

Chairman Farrell provided additional context, explaining that the state drives this, that classification changes can only be made every two years, and that the Town has not changed the rates in four years despite inflation. The rate adjustment was calculated very close to the break-even point, keeping the increase as low as possible while still covering all costs without generating additional revenue. He emphasized the changes would be "revenue neutral" to the Town.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner made a motion to approve the second and final reading of Ordinance 2025-17, with the updated class schedule and a \$0.10 increase in the rate after \$1,000 in gross receipts. Council Member Kaye seconded the motion.

Mayor Belt clarified that what they were approving on second reading differed from first reading, as the chair of the Ways and Means Committee had been absent at the previous meeting and had since had further conversations with Ms. Szubert," leading to the recommendation for the revenue-neutral approach rather than not making any adjustment and having a potential \$65,000 shortfall.

Following the discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

C. To Consider Approval of Ordinance 2025-22 - An Ordinance to Establish a Town of Kiawah Island Design Review Board and Process for Architectural Design Review.- Second and Final Reading

Council Member Berner made a motion to approve the second and final reading of Ordinance 2025-22 to establish a Town of Kiawah Island Design Review Board and process for Architectural Design Review. Council Member Kaye seconded the motion.

Mr. Taylor presented the proposed ordinance, explaining that it establishes a Design Review Board (DRB) for the Town of Kiawah Island, independent of any existing architectural review controls. He noted that at the Planning Commission's November meeting, they recommended approval and made "very minor changes" to ensure consistency in the language across sections 12-130 – Design Standards and 12-24(2), which establishes the Design Review Board.

Mr. Taylor emphasized that the ordinance would apply "only to commercial multifamily development" and would not include "single-family residential outside those particular properties which are not governed or administered by an existing architectural review board," such as certain properties on Eugenia Avenue.

Mr. Taylor stated that there continued to be community concern about the timing of this effort relative to ongoing discussions regarding the transition of the existing Kiawah Island Architectural Review Board to the Kiawah Island Community Association. He indicated that staff supports this ordinance moving forward and highlighted that any transition of the existing Architectural Review Board to the Community Association would not include any properties outside the Community Association's jurisdiction.

Mayor Belt provided an extensive background, explaining that the process began about 2 years ago, following a Council strategic planning session, at which he proposed establishing a joint Town/KICA task force to review issues related to architectural control. Participants invested significant time and effort to facilitate the transfer of architectural control from the developer to the homeowners' association for single-family properties. He expressed his belief that "architectural control, the set of

considerations, should be primarily reviewed within an HOA by the HOA itself and a subordinate body thereof."

Mayor Belt noted his frustration that despite a commitment made "a year and a half ago or maybe more" by one of the Kiawah Partners to transfer control, "That hasn't happened." He explained that the ordinance was "an outgrowth of the lack of any kind of progress" and that recent statements suggested the developer might only transfer single-family review, not commercial or multifamily.

Mr. Taylor added that the Planning Commission had preliminary conversations on potentially combining the Landscape and Tree Preservation Board with the future Design Review Board. He also provided clarification on compliance issues in Section 12-130.

Mr. Roger Warren from the Resort expressed significant concerns about the dual review process that would result, stating "what this forces us to do is go through an ARB process with the Community Association or whomever is going to have that body for the private, because we're part of that we're we're resident there, we will have to go through 2 processes."

The Council Members engaged in an in-depth discussion of Mr. Warren's comments on a dual ARB commercial review process, issues with the current ARB, and Mayor Pro Tem Berner's suggestion to include a trigger that would make this ordinance effective when KICA agrees not to be responsible for providing the ARB for commercial properties.

Mr. Warren stated: "I've been here 23 years, and we've built multiple projects, commercial projects, renovated multiple commercial projects. They are well constituted to handle that process. The ARB is well constituted. " They have done a great job," he asked the Council to consider whether this is the right thing to do right now.

Council Member Kaye proposed a compromise, suggesting the ordinance could allow the existing (the Partner's) ARB to go ahead and have authority for projects behind the gate. At the same time, the Town's board would handle anything that's happening outside the gate.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner suggested tabling the ordinance to discuss with KICA, separating single-family from commercial review. However, Mayor Belt responded that while he had some of those bilateral conversations, the reality was "promises have been made for literally years, and nothing's happened with regard to this."

Ms. Carol Mendendorp asked that Council consider whether the process for multifamily already includes the regine HOA and the ARB, and whether adding an additional layer to the currently established process would be necessary.

Ms. Beverly Fieroh, a former ARB panel member, spoke to clarify that during the two-year task force process, asking "did we ever talk about separating multifamily home, patio home, single-family home, commercial? It was one ARB. We never spoke about separating it out." She noted that according to the general covenants, "all owners, property owners, are subject to the ARB." She referenced the community presentation, which covered all properties. She also noted that, over the last year, there have been further discussions between KICA and the Partners regarding the transition plan, so it has not been tabled or ignored. In response to Council Member Farrell's question, she clarifies that the KICA general covenants do not specify a transfer date but state only that the Partners make the decision.

Mr. David DeStefano, another former task force member, provided additional context about the transition timeline: "Even if they said today, we're going to transition, KICA's plan for the transition, at a minimum, was going to take 2 to 3 years to complete the transition." He explained that KICA would have to "start hiring staff with nothing to do" at a cost of "close to half to 3 quarter of a million dollars to get to the end without the revenue coming in to offset that."

Council Member Spencer strongly supported moving forward, stating that we are hearing all these protracted timelines: 2 years, 4 years, 3 years...and it's not getting done. In the meantime, the Town has a duty to do something in the absence of something getting done.

Mr. Mark Permar from Kiawah Partners confirmed there had been "no discussion about separation of land use type. It's always been considered a whole." He explained that new KICA staff would learn through a phased approach, beginning with maintenance, then modification of existing buildings, then substantial improvements, and finally new construction. When pressed by Mayor Belt to commit to a specific transition date, Mr. Permar could not provide one, stating only that discussions about "the sequence and exact calendar date of where it would start to activate for each phase" were ongoing.

Mayor Belt asked whether the ARB would hold public meetings, conduct a transparent review and appeal process, and allow all impacted stakeholders to be involved. To which Mr. Permar responded that he "could see no reason to change the pattern that has been existing since inception."

After extensive debate, Council Member Kaye proposed going ahead with the ordinance as it stands, including an addendum that, if architectural control is transferred to KICA by June 30, 2026, at that point, the Town will revisit this particular ordinance."

The Council agreed to include this provision, with Mayor Belt stating the specific language: "that it is the sense of the Council to the extent that transfer of architectural control is affected from Kiawah Partners to the Kiawah Island Community Association on or before June 30, 2026, that the Council will revisit this ordinance and consider an appropriate carve out or a waiver from the application of these provisions to properties subject to those KICA covenants." He also clarified that the ordinance's effective date is today.

Council Member Kaye made a motion to amend Ordinance 2025-22 to include the June 30, 2026, provision. Council Member Spencer seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Following the discussion, the motion to approve the second and final reading of Ordinance 2025-22 as amended was unanimously approved.

IX. New Business:

A. To Consider Approval of the 2026 Town Meeting Schedules

The proposed 2026 meeting schedule was presented. Council Member Kaye requested two deletions: "for Environmental Committee, delete July 15" and "For Resiliency, delete July 22."

Council Member Kaye made a motion to approve the 2026 Town Meeting Schedule with the requested deletions, and it was unanimously approved.

B. Discussion of the Charitable Grants Guidelines and Applications

Ms. Tillerson led a discussion about adding a fourth category, Education, to the Town's charitable giving program. She explained that historically, the Town had focused on "Hunger, Health, and Housing" as the three primary categories, which were "memorialized back 2 years ago."

Reviewing recent giving patterns, Ms. Tillerson noted that in 2023, grants were distributed evenly among the three categories. In 2024, it shifted to "51 percent" for Hunger, "38 percent" for Health, and "11 percent" for Housing. The current year showed another shift with "50 percent" for Hunger, "27 percent" for Health, and "20 percent" for Housing.

Staff recommended creating a fourth category called "youth enrichment" to encompass programs like Camp High Hope, Charleston Area Therapeutic Riding, and the First Serve Foundation that really didn't fit the Health, Hunger, or Housing categories but had been funded in the past.

Regarding administrative expense guidelines, Ms. Tillerson presented research showing "7 out of 10 charities" rated by Charity Navigator "spend at least 70 percent of expenses directly on programs." She also noted that organizations with higher admin costs could still be funded if they provided an

explanation. Council Member Farrell suggested "a bare minimum of 70 percent, with an effort to target institutions at 85 percent non-administrative fees."

Council Members engaged in extensive discussion about the nature of this fourth category. Ms. Tillerson explained that "Youth Programs" would include educational support, therapeutic recreation, structured summer and after-school activities, or sports-based development. Mayor Pro Tem Berner stated that he would rather focus on academics rather than broader enrichment programs. Council Member Kaye countered that she would have a looser definition of education.

After the discussion, the Council agreed to change the category name from "Youth Enrichment" to simply "Education." Ms. Tillerson confirmed the definition would include "educational support, tutoring, literacy programs, workforce readiness, or STEM education for underserved students."

Ms. Tillerson reviewed the agreed-upon changes:

- Add "Education" as a fourth category to the existing "Hunger, Health, and Housing" categories
- Establish a 70% minimum program expense threshold with preference for organizations at 85%
- Implementation of a mid-year progress report from grant recipients

The Council also agreed to increase the charitable giving cap from \$200,000 to \$250,000, with several members noting it had not been adjusted in several years.

C. Discussion of the Ad-Hoc Civic and Cultural Center Addition Construction Committee Charter

Mayor Belt introduced the draft charter for the Ad-Hoc Civic and Cultural Center Addition Construction Committee, noting that there was no need to formally appoint a committee at this time, but that the need would arise in the near future, so he was requesting Council input.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner suggested reducing the membership from seven to five. Mayor Belt indicated that he was inclined to start with five, but to allow for adding someone who you find has a particular construction or commercial construction background, not identified at the outset.

Council Member Farrell expressed concern about having Council involvement focused solely on finances, to which Mayor Belt suggested establishing a separate ad hoc committee to address financial issues and asked Council Member Farrell to take on the task of establishing it.

Council Member Spencer questioned the Council's role in making key design and construction decisions before they are made. Also discussed were what decisions should require full Council approval.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner indicated that, customarily, there will be reviews at the 50 percent schematic and 50 percent conceptual phases and asked whether the Council would receive regular updates or reports at every Council meeting. Mayor Belt confirmed that there would be a brief discussion on "what's happening" along with questions and comments.

Council Members expressed interest in regular updates at council meetings and identified milestone decision points. Ms. Tillerson offered to consult with Steve Coe, the architect, to identify key decision points to incorporate into the charter.

The discussion touched on various aspects of the project, including the challenge of fitting the project within the \$9,500,000 building cost and \$12,000,00 for soft costs and contingencies specified in the architect's contract. Mayor Belt discussed some specific design challenges already noted in the current design.

Council Members also discussed whether the Town would need to purchase a grand piano, with suggestions that it could be a fundraising opportunity.

X. Citizens' Comments:

No citizens came forward for comments.


XI. Council Member Comments:

Council Member Farrell reiterated his encouragement for residents to "Sign up to do manufactured wire reefs."

XII. Adjournment:

With no further business, Mayor Belt adjourned the meeting at 4:48 pm.

Submitted by,


Petra S. Reynolds, Town Clerk

1-9-2024
Date