

TOWN COUNCIL
Municipal Center Council Chambers
September 9, 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*
Lance Spencer, *Council Member*

Present Via Zoom: Madeleine Kaye, *Council Member*

Also Present: Mac McQuillin, *Town Attorney*
Stephanie Monroe Tillerson, *Town Administrator*
Jim Jordan, *Director of Wildlife and Natural Resources*
John Taylor, Jr., *Planning Director*

IV. Approval of Minutes:

A. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting of August 5, 2025

Mayor Belt stated that the minutes from the August 5, 2025, meeting had been circulated in advance for review by Council Members. He asked if there were any changes or comments regarding the minutes. Mayor Pro Tem Berner and Council Member Spencer indicated that they had previously submitted comments to the Town Clerk.

With those comments incorporated, the minutes were deemed approved.

V. Citizens' Comments (Agenda Items Only):

No citizens provided comments on agenda items.

Before the presentations, Mayor Belt first acknowledged Jim Jordan, the Town's Wildlife Biologist and Director of Wildlife and Natural Resources, who is celebrating his 25th year with the Town of Kiawah Island this week. Mayor Belt praised Mr. Jordan as representing "the best in public service" based on his experience in both local and federal public sectors and congratulated him.

VI. Presentations:

A. American Red Cross - Meaghan Silsby, Executive Director

Meaghan Silsby, Executive Director of the American Red Cross Lowcountry Chapter, accompanied by Board Chair Ambassador Tom Carter, presented on the Red Cross's services in the region. Ms. Silsby explained that the Red Cross mission is "to prevent and alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of our volunteers and the generosity of our donors."

She highlighted that while the Red Cross is known for its large-scale disaster response, it serves the local community every day. In 2024 alone, they responded to over 300 local disasters, primarily home fires, partnering with local fire departments to provide support to victims at no cost. Home fires claim nearly seven lives daily in the United States, but working smoke alarms cut that risk nearly in half. Since 2014, the Red Cross has installed over 1,000 free smoke alarms in the Lowcountry, saving the lives of more than 140 South Carolinians in 2024.

Ms. Silsby reported that in 2024, they provided shelter, food, emotional support, and financial assistance to more than 1,000 people across the Lowcountry. The Red Cross is the largest blood supplier in the United States, providing over 40% of the nation's blood supply. In the Lowcountry, they hosted over 1,200 blood drives and collected more than 24,000 units of lifesaving blood last year. She specifically noted that Kiawah Island participated through the Kiawah Island Resort, collecting over 71 units of blood in 2024, with an upcoming blood drive scheduled for October 8th at the Resort's West Beach Conference Room.

Ms. Silsby noted that the Red Cross also provides preparedness training, with over 4,000 people learning CPR, First Aid, and AED use last year, and reaching over 200 students through disaster preparedness programming. They support military members and families through the Hero Care Network, providing emergency communications, financial assistance, and behavioral health support to over 1,900 cases in the Lowcountry in 2024. Ms. Silsby stated that the Red Cross is a trusted local partner and an integral part of the community's safety net. She emphasized that the 696 dedicated volunteers make this work possible.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner noted that he and Director Harris had recently met with Ms. Silsby, and the Red Cross will start participating with the Community Emergency Response Team he leads, attending their October meeting. Mayor Belt inquired about the geographic area of the Lowcountry chapter, to which Ms. Silsby responded that it covers nine counties, from Georgetown County and Williamsburg down to the Georgia border.

B. Go Green Subcommittee Report Regarding Gas-Powered and Electric Leaf Blowers

Fran Williams, Chair of the Go Green Subcommittee, presented research on electric versus gas leaf blowers as requested by the Council following the discussion on the noise ordinance at the last meeting. The Subcommittee, which includes representatives from all major Kiawah entities, examined two-cycle, four-cycle, and electric blowers.

Ms. Williams presented comparative data showing that while electric blowers are generally quieter (averaging 62 dB compared to 70 dB for two-cycle and 68 dB for four-cycle), the numbers for four-cycle blowers have a wide range. She noted regulatory trends across the country, with some jurisdictions, such as Montgomery County, providing \$1,500 rebates to landscapers transitioning to electric. At the same time, the District of Columbia has banned gas blowers and incentivizes neighbor reporting.

Advances in technology have made electric blowers more powerful and quieter, but entry costs remain high, especially for landscape contractors. Ms. Williams highlighted that homeowners find maintenance difficult on electric blowers. The Resort's experience shows that when they break, they typically must be replaced entirely. Battery logistics remain problematic, particularly for contractors who require multiple batteries or solar-powered chargers for their trucks.

Progress on Kiawah includes the Town's all-electric landscape contractor, KICA's one-crew pilot project with electric blowers focused on noise reduction, and the Resort's conversion of 20% of their landscaping equipment to electric, while moving toward four-cycle leaf blowers due to durability challenges.

The Subcommittee's recommendations include having the Town's landscape contractor present to the Go Green Subcommittee to share experiences, share lessons learned, stay current with new technologies, and develop a Kiawah-wide strategy that includes individual homeowners and landscape contractors.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner asked if the Subcommittee had spoken with contractors using electric machines. Ms. Williams responded that they had not, but noted her own landscape contractor shows no interest in converting due to cost and battery concerns. Mayor Belt suggested that a Kiawah-wide solution would address the issue of competitive disadvantage.

Council Member Spencer pointed out that the discussion should include all gas-powered equipment, like weed eaters and saws, not just blowers. Ms. Williams agreed that solutions for leaf blowers would likely apply to other equipment.

Mayor Belt noted that communities like Washington, DC, have banned two-cycle gas blowers primarily due to noise issues, particularly the low-frequency noise that penetrates walls, as well as environmental and health concerns for operators. He believed the Town should consider banning two-cycle gas-powered leaf blowers due to their noise pollution and inefficiency, whereas four-cycle models pose fewer issues. Consideration could be given to using a carrot versus stick approach, with a phased prohibition over six months to a year, while providing financial incentives.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner mentioned his electric plug-in blower works well without battery issues. Council Member Spencer suggested gathering data from communities that have transitioned to understand real-world experiences beyond subjective resistance to change.

Council Member Farrell inquired if any landscape contractors had been sought out to serve on the Subcommittee. Ms. Williams stated that they had not, because the Go Green Subcommittee is broader than just leaf blowers. If the Council agrees and wants to go forward, they would absolutely have to be included in developing that strategy. He also emphasized that every manufacturer frequently changes batteries, creating disposal concerns. Ms. Williams agreed that staying current with technology is challenging, noting that the Resort's four-cycle blower had just been discontinued.

Council Member Kaye noted that this was an ad hoc response to a request made to the Go Green Subcommittee, which had led to several issues. If the Council is going to ask them to conduct additional research, they need to have some fairly clear direction about what is to be included in that research. The Subcommittee is working on numerous initiatives.

VII. Updates:

A. Mayor

Mayor Belt then addressed the recent water damage at Town Hall. A valve in the ceiling burst, flooding the administrative offices with 2-3 inches of water that had penetrated the walls. The incident necessitated the replacement of carpet, baseboards, and other materials. Mayor Belt commended Mr. Gottschalk and Mr. Nardelli, the Town's Public Works Department, who worked around the clock, as well as Mayor Pro Tem Berner, who took the lead in identifying the likely cause as galvanic corrosion. This phenomenon occurs when two dissimilar metals are improperly combined. Testing revealed at least one other problem area that was precariously close to bursting, which was replaced. Mayor Pro Tem Berner expressed concern about what might be behind walls that cannot be cost-effectively inspected. The Mayor noted staff is exploring water meter sensors and automatic shut-offs to prevent future incidents.

Development updates included:

- Seafields is remaining on track for a temporary certificate of occupancy in mid-October, with the goal of beginning material movement and full occupancy expected by late November. Work continues on a retaining wall to address flooding and runoff issues.
- The MUSC facility is planning a mid-December ribbon-cutting ceremony and is expected to be open by the end of the year. The Mayor hopes to have Dr. Patrick Cawley, CEO of MUSC Charleston, present at an upcoming meeting to discuss the services to be provided.
- Night Heron Park's new Activity Center is expected to open by year's end, possibly in November, with bowling leagues already forming.

Mayor Belt commended KICA for their weekly updates, which have been providing a good summary of some of the off-island developments: the South Market across from Ace Hardware, the status of the Orange Hill Development, the Kiawah Island Clubs' new facility, as well as the flyover at Savannah Highway and Main Road, and even the Trident freestanding medical facility on Maybank.

Mayor Belt stated that the Architectural Design Competition for the proposed Civic and Cultural Center received three detailed submissions by the deadline. The Selection Committee, which includes himself, Mayor Pro Tem Berner, Mark Permar, and other community members, will meet with each of the firms. Mayor Belt announced that a community viewing opportunity is scheduled for Wednesday, September

17th, from 3:00 to 5:00 pm in the Council Chambers, allowing the public to review submissions, provide input, and ask questions of the architectural teams.

Mayor Belt provided updates on issues from KICA's Board meeting, including their speed enforcement on community association roads and their draft gate access policy. He noted that issues regarding access for members and guests, including the terms of that access and whether any fees were associated with it, are uniquely KICA's. Still, the congestion and location of the gate are issues that impact the broader community, and both the Town and KICA, as well as other stakeholders, have to address them collectively. He expressed concern about language suggesting KICA could control access of government officials, noting that South Carolina law gives code enforcement, law enforcement, and emergency personnel the right to carry out responsibilities on both public and private property. He emphasized the need for clarity in the hierarchy of federal law, state law, local law, and then restrictive covenants.

The Mayor discussed the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for managing beach trash. Currently, the Town pays approximately \$84,000 annually for Trident to collect beach trash daily during the peak season; however, most receptacles are located on KICA property without formal permission or liability agreements in place. The MOU aimed to clarify responsibilities for managing trash on the beach and to require cooperation in relocating receptacles before storms. KICA's Board reaction has "not been particularly favorable." The Board raised the issue that the Town should assume this obligation because it receives all the revenues associated with beach franchise agreements. While the franchise revenue covers the beach trash management, the Town spends substantially more on Beach Patrol and other services, which will require continuing conversations.

Mayor Belt stated that the Town's Communications and Public Affairs team has been working on expanding offerings for the community, engaging in conversations with various cultural and artistic organizations in Charleston to establish relationships and/or partnerships. The idea is to dedicate an evening to Kiawah Island residents at various institutions. The first "Kiawah Night" event will take place at the Charleston Museum on October 21st from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM, with the Town providing transportation for 44 people on a first-come, first-served basis.

Mayor Belt stated that the next quarterly community Town Hall will take place on Wednesday, October 8th, at 10:00 am, with KICA Board Chair Kevin Donlon joining the meeting. Residents are welcome to come and ask questions of interest, and we will do our best to provide a response.

B. Council Members

Mayor Pro Tem Berner focused his update on his extensive involvement with the Town Hall flood response, emphasizing his concern about preventing mold and avoiding repeat incidents. He expressed excitement about the Civic and Cultural Center Design Competition submissions, calling it "a spectacular facility." He also mentioned meeting with the Red Cross alongside Director Harris, with the Red Cross planning to attend the next CERT meeting.

Council Member Kaye reported on the following committees and subcommittees:

- The Go Green Subcommittee, under the leadership of Fran Williams, has made significant progress on several initiatives, including recently recording a podcast on composting.
- The Resiliency Committee is working on putting together a massive amount of information and educational materials that will eventually be built into a "Resiliency Library."
- The Environmental Committee has been working on the death of a juvenile bobcat that was reported last month.

Council Member Kaye provided extensive detail on the death of a juvenile bobcat, with necropsy results showing very high levels of second-generation anticoagulants (SGAs). The bobcat was less than a year old and likely spent its entire life on Kiawah, accumulating dangerous SGA levels in just 10 months. While SGAs weren't the direct cause of death (the bobcat was hit by a car), they likely weakened the bobcat and slowed its response time. The South Carolina Department of Pesticide Regulation has taken no

action despite being informed of the issue. She emphasized that SGAs are dangerous rodenticides, noting, "I've heard people say that they would rather have no bobcats than rats. Here's the thing, it's not an either-or proposition." She explained that there are safe, effective pest control methods, starting with rat-proofing houses. The bobcat population had been rebuilding until three years ago, when community interest in protection waned, leading to the bobcats' suffering.

Council Member Kaye stated that a new subcommittee, including Cindy Perry, Pam Wilson, Linda Loeffler, and Jim Jordan, is working on bobcat protection, but emphasized that community support is crucial to reversing the trending decline. Kicking off this renewed push to preserve and protect our bobcats is the "Bobcats and Bluegrass," scheduled for November 7th, featuring music, food, drinks, and merchandise.

Council Member Farrell provided a financial update for the fiscal year-end 2025. Revenues were down approximately \$1 million, primarily due to one special building permit that is expected to be reissued this year. Expenses were up, requiring focus on expense management from now on. Despite this, the Town remains "very healthy," setting aside about \$2.5 million in savings for long-term projects, such as the Civic and Cultural Center. The first month of the new fiscal year shows revenues at 9% of the budgeted amount and expenses at 7% of the budgeted amount.

Council Member Farrell reported that, with the closing of the financials on June 30th, the fiscal audit for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 has commenced, along with the financial controls audit assessment, which was discussed throughout the year. Initial indications show very healthy financial controls. In response to Mr. Hennessy's question, Council Member Farrell stated that KICA is also considering a financial controls assessment.

Regarding the Civic and Cultural Center, Council Member Farrell emphasized that the primary focus will be on cost control. He will conduct a thorough review of all expenditures and ensure they are spent appropriately. He also noted that the Town is not going to spend all the savings generated over the past years; the Accommodation Tax revenue can fund the project.

Mayor Belt stated that the Town would actually have the wherewithal to draw down on its accumulated surplus, which is currently around mid-\$40 million, to cover the anticipated cost of the design for the Civic and Cultural Center in its entirety. However, the expectation is that, since the Town can utilize State Accommodation Tax dollars and associated finances, the addition itself would not require any drawdown from the accumulated surplus. Council Member Farrell added that research is being conducted on ways to finance the cost over time, potentially making it more cost-effective.

Council Member Spencer raised one item: encouraging the Town to explore strategic land purchases in Kiawah's vicinity that could reduce traffic, improve aesthetics, or benefit the environment. He suggested setting up a program similar to state and county land bank programs, where applications could be considered for approval.

Mayor Belt stated that it doesn't preclude pursuing opportunistic purchases as they arise, a practice that has been done in the past and will continue. He also noted that Council Member Spencer's suggestion had substantial merit, and the Town should look forward to moving forward with a task force or a similar initiative. He suggested that this type of recommendation might be embedded in the Comprehensive Plan. Council Member Spencer emphasized urgency, noting "every time I drive down Bohicket Road, I'm seeing a new sign for a parcel for sale."

C. Administrator

Ms. Tillerson provided the Public Safety Report for August on behalf of Director Harris, who was absent due to a family medical issue.

- The top Beach Enforcement issues were dog leash violations, critical habitat violations, and the use of glass containers, resulting in 211 citations and warnings issued.
- General enforcement focused on short-term rentals, beach gear storage permits, and rental inspections.

- The Sheriff's Office made 59 stops, resulting in 46 citations and 13 warnings, as well as one domestic disturbance. Notable incidents involved intoxicated individuals who either lost their way or fell asleep in vehicles.
- The St. Johns Fire Department responded to 39 rescue/medical incidents, as well as 34 fire/false alarm responses.
- Charleston County EMS responded to 33 medical calls, with 22 transports.

Regarding the debris site, Ms. Tillerson explained that the Town lost its DHEC-approved site, off Kiawah Island Parkway, due to zoning issues the Resort is having with the County. The site is not located in the Town boundaries. The Town is working on an Intergovernmental Agreement with Charleston County to use their debris sites on Johns Island. The agreement would allow the County to handle debris pickup after storms, or the Town could do its own pickup with five days' written notice. In the long term, the Town continues to explore purchasing or leasing a 3-5 acre site on Johns Island. Council Member Farrell inquired about the size, with staff confirming that they had previously used about five acres, although FEMA requires a minimum of three acres.

Ms. Tillerson encouraged signing up for the Johns Island Advocate newsletter, highlighting upcoming County Council consideration of Cane Slash Road upzoning on September 11th and transportation sales tax program discussions.

VIII. Old Business:

A. To Consider Approval of **Ordinance 2025-16** - An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 12 – Land Use Planning And Zoning, Article II. - Zoning, Division 3. - Use Regulations, 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 – **Second and Final Reading**

Mr. Taylor presented Ordinance 2025-16 addressing communications towers for second reading. He indicated that a few comments were received from Council Members and the Mayor regarding potential tweaks, recommending approval with minor changes that would not require returning to the Planning Commission, while identifying more substantial changes for future consideration.

Council Member Farrell inquired as to the purpose of the recommendation. Mayor Belt indicated there was a community-wide desire to upgrade the communications infrastructure. To avoid inordinately delaying the process, Mr. Taylor proposes incorporating some formatting and minor changes as an amendment, along with more substantive issues to be considered at a subsequent meeting.

Minor recommended changes included:

- Adding "natural grade" after "tower" in the height measurement provision to ensure consistent measurement from ground level.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner questioned the natural grade measurement, wondering if industry-standard measures were used from the slab to the ground. The discussion included Jonathan Yates from Crown Castle, who confirmed they were comfortable with natural grade measurement.

- Reorganizing sections to separate submittal requirements from minimum standards.

Council Member discussion included the minimum tower height requirement, fall Zone, and aesthetic setbacks. Mr. Yates explained that this was necessary because existing equipment must remain operational while new towers are constructed, which creates siting challenges. The maintenance and inspection requirements were also discussed, with Mayor Belt particularly noting the need for aesthetic maintenance provisions for painted towers.

- Keeping stricken, the aesthetic visual impact criteria that the Planning Commission had removed.

Mr. Taylor indicated that the more substantial issues identified for future amendments included specific maintenance requirements, the retention of expert assistance procedures, and consistency in approval criteria. He also highlighted the drop-and-swap provision, noting that the language was too broad, and recommended including a waiver request in the ordinance to allow some flexibility for a drop-and-swap.

The Council Members discussed adding drop-and-swap waiver provisions to allow existing towers to be replaced at the same location, with some flexibility on setbacks. They also expressed concern about adding new language that's not part of what was approved on the first reading. Mr. McQuillin confirmed that the Planning Commission had reviewed the drop-and-swap language, so adding it would not require resubmitting the ordinance. The Council agreed to include the drop-and-swap waiver provisions, deleting problematic language regarding "land use policy considerations."

Mayor Belt moved to approve Ordinance 2025-16 on second reading as presented. Council Member Spencer seconded the motion.

Mayor Belt moved to approve amending Ordinance 2025-16 with the organizational changes, the addition of natural grade language, and the drop-and-swap waiver provision as edited. Council Member Farrell seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

The underlying motion to approve Ordinance 2025-16 on second reading, as amended, was unanimously approved.

New Business:

A. To Consider Approval of Ordinance 2025-18 - An Ordinance for the Town of Kiawah Island to Amend the Town of Kiawah Island's Comprehensive Plan - *Public Hearing and First Reading*

Mr. Taylor and Planning Commission Chair Joanne Hennessy presented Kiawah Next, the Town's new Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Taylor stated that the process to reach this point was very involved and acknowledged all the people who participated from beginning to end. He also noted that the plan was simplified so that anyone should be able to understand the goals and objectives of the Town's direction.

Mr. Taylor highlighted three critical factors shaping the future:

- Success relies on collaboration among major stakeholders, adding a new "governance" element as the 11th element beyond state requirements.
- Managing growth as Kiawah reaches buildout and enters a redevelopment stage, requiring focus on preserving existing neighborhoods while looking beyond the front gates.
- Maintaining commitment to nature, transitioning from "designing with nature" to "living with nature."
- The Kiawah by the Number section highlights trends and the top impacts that are expected. It provides a snapshot of some of the statistics associated with the next 10-plus years.

Ms. Hennessy stated that a major redo was done in the past months, acknowledging the efforts of Ms. Tillerson and Mr. Taylor, as well as new Planning Commission members Sandy Devine and Maribeth Schmersal, for helping redirect the plan's focus on conservation, limiting density, and planning for resiliency, climate change, and stormwater management.

Mayor Belt acknowledged Ms. Hennessy for her leadership and patience in dealing not only with Planning Commissioners and staff but also with the Mayor's edits and suggestions. Council Members praised the plan's quality and readability. Council Member Kaye called it "nothing short of terrific" with excellent emphasis on resiliency. Council Member Spencer suggested that the next step involves parsing action items with the responsible parties and setting timeframes.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner made a motion to move into the Public Hearing. Council Member Farrell seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Mr. Taylor asked that the public comments received before the meeting be entered into the record.

During the Public Hearing, Mark Permar praised it as "by far the best document of its kind since the town incorporated," highlighting the Kiawah Island Alliance and redevelopment task force initiatives. He suggested adding updated land use regulations as a specific element and clarifying the difference between possible and probable unit counts, given that major undeveloped areas allow both residential and non-residential uses.

Mayor Belt agreed on the need to clarify the numbers, noting that the current infrastructure is already stressed due to the existing dwelling units. He emphasized that adding 300 units over the past 4-5 years

had caused noticeable congestion, and future additions of hotel rooms, short-term rentals, and potentially 20% more dwelling units would further strain the infrastructure.

Mayor Belt made a motion to move back into Regular Session. Mayor Pro Tem Berner seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Council Member Farrell made a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2025-18, which amends the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Mayor Pro Tem Berner seconded the motion.

Council Members engaged in an in-depth discussion of the purpose and how the Town would perform a stress test of the transportation infrastructure capacity under normal and emergency conditions. They also discussed future conversations on strategies and methods for stress tests, as well as the need to begin preparing for the worst-case scenario. Mayor Belt suggested that the next step could be to send it back to the Planning Commission for their assessment of the action items and determination of who should be responsible.

Council members were invited to submit any changes, comments, or questions within two weeks.

Following the discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

B. To Consider Approval of Ordinance 2025-19 – An Ordinance To Amend Chapter 12 - Land Use Planning And Zoning Ordinance Article II. - Zoning, Division 2 – Zoning Map/Districts to Modify Base Zoning Standards, including but not Limited to Lot Coverage, Height, and Setbacks Within Several Zoning Districts - Public Hearing and First Reading

Mr. Taylor presented the Planning Commission recommendations to reduce density by modifying lot coverage, height, and setback standards in several zoning districts. Key changes included:

- R-3 Residential: Reducing maximum lot coverage for multifamily and townhomes from 60% to 40%.
- RST-1 (Resort 1 - Sanctuary/East Beach area): Reducing lot coverage from 70% to 50%, maximum height from 4 stories/70 feet to 4 stories/55 feet, with tiered oceanfront setbacks.
- RST-2 (Resort 2 - West Beach): Reducing lot coverage from 70% to 50%, eliminating the 4-story option to a maximum of three stories/55 feet.
- No changes are being recommended to the community support zoning districts.
- Parks and Recreation: Reducing lot coverage from 70% to 60%.
- Included in the materials were comments from Mr. Permar that were provided to the Planning Commission.

Council Member Farrell made a motion to move into the Public Hearing. Mayor Pro Tem Berner seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

During the Public Hearing, **Mark Permar**, representing himself, Kiawah Partners, and KIGR, strongly opposed the changes. He argued the Town should comprehensively rewrite Chapter 12 rather than make piecemeal amendments. He noted that 607 days remain on the existing Development Agreement with KIGR, suggesting that this time be used for a comprehensive revision.

Mr. Permar explained the RST zones were specifically selected 50 years ago for intense development as "villages," with the Sanctuary designed for an additional 175-room wing and West Beach improvements sized for a 150-room hotel completion. He warned that the changes would make the Sanctuary non-conforming and conflicting with hundreds of millions of dollars in resort investments.

Dave DeStefano raised concerns about potential spot zoning affecting primarily one property owner (the Resort) and possibly constituting a taking.

Mayor Belt responded that previous development agreements themselves involved spot zoning, and the community today shouldn't be bound by decisions made decades ago by developers rather than elected officials. He supported the Planning Commission's systematic approach while awaiting a comprehensive rewrite of Chapter 12.

Council Members expressed a need for more time to consider the implications. Council Member Spencer noted that this appeared to emerge suddenly compared to Captain Sams rezoning. Mayor Pro Tem Berner sought the opinion of legal counsel on spot zoning concerns before voting.

With the request for more time, Mayor Belt noted that many Planning Commission recommendations would be coming to the Council, so there was a need to pay closer attention to their discussions to avoid delaying approvals. Ms. Hennessy agreed with Mayor Belt's suggestion to approve this as a first reading and hold an executive session before the next Council meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner made a motion to move back into Regular Session. Council Member Farrell seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Mayor Belt made a motion to approve the amended Ordinance 2025-19 on its first reading. Council Member Farrell seconded the motion.

Council Members again expressed a need for more time to consider the recommendations further and requested a legal opinion on spot zoning. Mr. McQuillian indicated that he would not give a legal opinion in open session, but had no issue with the approval of the first reading.

Following further discussion, the motion passed 4-1, with Council Mayor Pro Tem Berner abstaining.

C. To Consider Approval of Boat Purchase

Council Member Farrell reported that the Ways and Means Committee unanimously approved purchasing a 2024 Robalo 21-foot center console boat for multiple Town uses, including marsh management, bridge inspections, and Code Enforcement. The boat features a low freeboard for marsh access, but it also boasts a deep-V hull, making it suitable for moderate ocean conditions when needed. The \$70,000 purchase includes a boat, motor, and trailer, funded by budgeted general funds.

Council Member Kaye noted she could think of five scenarios in recent months where this boat would have been useful for exploring environmental issues, including SGAs in marine life.

Mayor Belt moved to accept the Ways and Means recommendation to approve the boat purchase. Council Member Kaye seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

IX. Citizens' Comments:

No citizens offered additional comments.

X. Council Member Comments:

Council Member Farrell thanked Ms. Tillerson for her email regarding hurricane preparedness and evacuation procedures.

Mayor Belt thanked everyone for the thoughtful discussion and input from staff and the community.

Other council members had no additional comments.

XI. Adjournment:

Mayor Belt adjourned the meeting at 4:12 pm.

Submitted by,


Petra S. Reynolds, Town Clerk

10-15-2025

Date

TOKI 2025 Comprehensive Plan
Revisions as of 07.25

Comments 08.29.25

General

This is an excellent document that far surpasses previous versions over the years...the commentary is clear, understandable and well organized...the background information is succinct and helpful in describing the basics of Kiawah Island to those less familiar with scale, magnitude and complexity of community organization...select recommendations of initiatives, such as organizing the Kiawah Island Alliance and a Town Redevelopment Task Force are particularly appropriate for the challenges ahead...with that in mind, please find below additional observations/recommendations to consider prior to advancing for council review

Comments/Recommendations for Consideration

- Pg.9 **Glossary of Terms, KICA:** recommend adding “primary infrastructure behind second gate’ on listing of areas of responsibility...KP: recommend adding “and is responsible for oversight of the Architectural Review Board” on listing of areas of responsibility...
- Pg.10 **Three Critical Factors Shape Kiawah’s Future 1.** Recommend adding “the Town of Seabrook Island” in sentence describing jurisdictions that the TOKI borders
- Pg.12 **1. Development and Growth** Recommend the addition of 1.4 Update Development Standards...assess existing/future development in relationship to outdated development standards and propose new standards based upon lessons learned and evaluation of relevant com-parables
- Pg.15 **Top Trends,** reference to Orange Hill scale should be “maximum of 120 homes”...delete 68 cottages, implication it is base plus cottages is misleading
- Pg.18 **Development of Remaining Residential and Commercial Sites: Growth in new residential developments...**the wording implies the growth from 4,087 completed units to between 4,800 and 5,221 is “primarily driven by multifamily”...depending on choices of whether hotel rooms or multifamily is chosen this may be correct; however, there is no reference to existing single family homesites previously sold which may be developed...as a minimum recommend some reference to scale/magnitude of existing undeveloped homesites, which were 311 as of 08.11.25...this does not include 55 non-buildable or conservancy homesites
- Pg.21 **1.2 Establish a Town Redevelopment Task Force...**this is an excellent idea...recommend restatement of importance of assessing existing development

standards and update as necessary to reflect impact of significant changes in required building standards such as minimum finish floor elevations, ground coverage limits, etc.

- Pg.22 **Understanding Our Community: Kiawah's Audience:** ...there is reference to "...a projected 1,000 dwellings and 300 hotel rooms are expected to be built..." it is not possible to do both...presently select sites allow for either/or residential dwellings/or hotel rooms...recommend greater clarification for what is possible and probable based upon like-kind assessment of previous choices
- Pg.49 repeat of text in last paragraph
- Pg.58 would some reference to increased accessibility for domestic and international travel include Charleston Executive Airport (JZI) on Johns Island be appropriate?...this has played a vital role on connectivity for annual visits as well as select special island events
- Pg.72 **Natural Resources**...graphic is difficult to read/interpret...recommend either break scale down into several segments (such as Pgs. 68/69) or focus on specific areas to better communicate key information
- Pgs.74/75 **Wetlands & Protected Lands**...graphic difficult to differentiate color for Undeveloped Land with specific callouts for East Beach neighborhood sites, such as Windswept Villas, Parkside Villas, Tennis Club Villas, Turtle Point Villas, etc....recommend removing color from villa areas to focus on Wetlands and Protected Lands
- Pg. 76 **Captain Sams Spit**...reference is made to previous relocation projects...recommend identifying those as 1983, 1996 and 2015 to provide perspective of potential cycle time periods...
- Pg.81 **Recreational and Educational Activities**...general description of island-wide recreational facilities appropriately references KICA and KIGR facilities but does not mention KIClub, which provides additional golf, fitness and pool facilities...recommend some reference to be included in description
- Pg.92 **Housing Types**...within the third paragraph reference is made to "...530 potential multi-family units..."this is technically accurate; however, practically not based upon like-kind historical development on the island...additionally, this is only true if the decision to not build additional hotel rooms is made...recommend integrating additional wording that presents a range depending on the decision to build additional hotel rooms
- Pg.97 **Land Use**...ditto comment as above about expanding description of potential residential development count...
- Pg.100 **Future Land Use Categories, High Density Residential**...Shipwatch Villas (19 DU/ac) and Duneside Villas (5 DU/ac) do not meet the density definition for High Density...recommend using Windswept I (9.2 DU/ac), or Tennis Club I (8.7 DU/ac) as representative of max of 12 DU/ac

- Pgs.104/105 graphic reads poorly...improve resolution
- Pg. 111 **Greenspace Network: Parks, Trails & Open Space**...graphic inaccurately represents "...1,537 acres of parks on Kiawah Island."...should be 193 acres as represented on Pg.75
- Pg.119 **Road Conditions and Land Use, 5. Alternative Transportation Promotion**...the concept of an island-wide transportation system is worthy of greater recognition in the document...although an extreme condition, for those that took advantage of the on-island system in place for both PGA tournaments, it showed evidence of the positive impact on traffic flow...additional examples of such a system are winter resorts that effectively integrate campus/grounds wide systems...ours would be a hybrid (such as connecting two core villages and Freshfields) or seasonal in nature, but recommend this topic should be elevated in importance
- Pg.130 there are several references to project locations at "...Folly Beach and Boyd..." where/what is Boyd?

As noted in the opening paragraph, this is a well-organized and informative document, that presents a proactive plan for continuing the basic principles of Designing With Nature and recognizing, after 50 years, we as a community are best served by Living With Nature...the recommendations are offered within the backdrop of collaboration you have posed to the greater Kiawah community...