

# PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Kiawah Island Municipal Center

Council Chambers

May 3, 2023; 2:00 PM

## Minutes

I. Call to Order: *Mr. Dowdy called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.*

II. Roll Call:

**Present:** Bill Dowdy  
Joanne Hennessy  
Larry Iwan  
Madeleine Kaye

**Absent:** Andy Capelli  
Ronald Curran  
Luke Farrell

**Also Present:** John Taylor, Jr., *Planning Manager*  
Michael Heidingsfelder, *Council Liaison*  
Blake Reeves, *LS3P*

III. Approval of Minutes:

A. Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of February 8, 2023

*Ms. Hennessy made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2023, Planning Commission Meeting to the next meeting. Ms. Kaye seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.*

B. Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of March 8, 2023

*Mr. Iwan made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2023, Planning Commission Meeting to the next meeting. Ms. Kaye seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.*

C. Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of April 5, 2023

*Ms. Kaye made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2023, Planning Commission Meeting to the next meeting. Ms. Hennessy seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.*

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

V. Old Business:

A. **KiawahNext Update**  
Initial Phase Stakeholder Engagement Review

Mr. Taylor stated KiawahNext was part of the Comprehensive Plan Update Public Outreach. Meetings in February and March were held with a number of different stakeholders to get their feedback. Mr. Reeves, a representative of the consultant team of LS3P, will provide a summary of the findings of the two stakeholder engagement components and the community survey.

Mr. Reeves reviewed and discussed the following:

**Project Objective**

- “A plan everyone can get behind”

**Project Structure**

- State Requirements
  - Processes
    - Inventory of Existing Conditions
    - Statement of Needs and Goals
    - Implementation Strategies
  - Comprehensive Plan Components
- Option Opportunities that were discussed.
  - Approachable Language
  - Compelling Graphics
  - Digital & Online Formats
  - Mission, Vision, & Goals
  - Community Engagement Feedback
  - Quotes & Anecdotes
  - Action Playbook
- Plan Parts/Stages
  - Stage 1 – Assess Period
  - Stage 2 - Empower
  - Stage 3 – Implement
- Project Inputs
  - Community Engagement
  - Stakeholder Engagement
  - Best Practices
  - Analysis

Mr. Reeves stated that there were a lot of topics to cover during the meeting. Entering a new phase of the project, the purpose was to name challenges, not identify solutions, and there was no need to determine the source of feedback but to determine priorities that should be part of the thinking that would guide the next steps.

Mr. Reeves and Mr. Taylor responded to Ms. Hennessy’s concern that there had not been any meeting open to the broad community besides the small stakeholder representative groups to get further community input by stating that the community would be engaged throughout the process. The primary goal has been to obtain feedback through the online survey, and the community at large showed a significant amount of support and involvement in the survey. Commission members discussed the suggestion that reaching out to different groups and presenting the survey feedback in a workshop format or community meeting may be advantageous to the engagement component.

Mr. Reeves reviewed the community engagement approach and the statistics on the number of survey respondents, website views, and survey question responses. Commissioners reviewed and discussed a summary of the recurring responses received, engaging in an in-depth discussion that the responses shown on the slides did not reflect a ranking from the most to least received.

- What makes Kiawah great?
- What does Kiawah lack?
- What changes or additions would improve your experiences here on Kiawah?
- Which ideas best represent the culture of Kiawah?
- Which features best define the physical character of Kiawah?
- What risks should we be aware of if we are making changes or improvements to any elements of Kiawah?
- What, if any, concerns do you have about Kiawah’s future?

Mr. Reeves reviewed several graphs of quantitative answers to questions identifying areas as strengths or weaknesses and a summary of the feedback from the community engagement.

The Town of Kiawah expressed a desire for...

- Affordable + experiential food options (grocery, restaurants, cafes + coffee shops)
- Village-like, small-business retail
- Easier access to everyday needs
- Seamless integration of buildings within nature
- A thoughtful mix of housing options
- Casual places to gather
- Mobility options that support ease of travel
- Development sensitive to natural ecosystems
- Actionable measures against climate change
- A greater network of leisure trails and bike paths
- Expanded access to clubhouse amenities
- A wider range of cultural, arts, and entertainment activities
- Easier access to nearby medical facilities

Mr. Reeves reviewed the stakeholder engagement feedback organized in the ten comprehensive plan required categories.

1. Population & Demographics
2. Economic Development
3. Natural Resources & Environment
4. Cultural Resources & Amenities
5. Community Facilities, Infrastructure, & Governance
6. Housing
7. Land Use, Zoning, and Regulations
8. Transportation & Mobility
9. Priority Investments
10. Resiliency

Commissioners discussed items in the Economic Development category, including commercial retail behind the gate, walkability, and tourism. In the Natural Resources & Environment category, the discussion included permanent protection for areas along the beach and changing harmful practices.

Also discussed was the use of “the town” when referencing the community, clarifying the organization of the Town of Kiawah Island as TOKI and that the information being shared represents what was gathered through the community survey and the stakeholder listening sessions. It is not to present as an absolute representation of what will be part of the actual plan but what will be refined during the next stage. All the feedback received and shared is unedited and unprioritized to provide transparency throughout the process.

Following the review of the categories, Mr. Reeves reviewed the Next Steps of looking at the challenges and confirming the process is heading in the right direction, figuring out what priorities will be taken on, turn into recommendations for later, or turns into regulation. He reviewed a concept of repositioning the project approach to frame the discussion of the plan facets through the lens of resiliency.

Mr. Heidingsfelder stated it would have been good to have representatives from the Resort, KICA (Kiawah Island Community Association), and the ARB (Architectural Review Board) in attendance to view the presentation where they could make comments and asked that they attend future meetings.

**Donna Windham, Executive Director of the Conservancy, 80 Kestral Court**

Ms. Windham indicated that she had a question about the process undertaken so far. When saying the Conservancy was one of the stakeholders interviewed, she wanted to be clear that she and one of her staff members were emailed, and both replied to attend but were told that only one needed to attend. She did not know if the person was asked to address all the questions in the process or just looking at the environment. Still, it was one staff member's opinion speaking for the Conservancy, and she wanted it to be stated very clearly that she did not believe it was not representative of the Conservancy as a whole.

Mr. Taylor reviewed a list of takeaway items based on what he heard that would give him guidance and direction for our next steps for planning staff. Again, he stated that what was provided was just what was heard, unfiltered and raw.

- Presenting all of the information in a more systematic way that ranks what would be top priorities based on qualitative formats. In addition, it affirms how the responses, from a data standpoint, inter-life to the qualitative responses.
- Publish a stakeholders list and continue to publish the list throughout the process.
- The noted issue with the terminology would be addressed
- Additional drop-in meetings should be scheduled for the community to provide additional comments or concerns.

In closing, Mr. Taylor stated that overall, none of the feedback was surprising and was probably consistent for most of the people he spoke to, including senior staff, their various departments, and the committees they engage with.

**VI. New Business:**  
None

**VII. Correspondence/Staff Comments:**

Mr. Taylor introduced Mr. Daniel Vincent as Planner 1, whose responsibility is supporting the Planning Department, zoning administration, and some involvement with long-range planning.

Mr. Taylor stated that the Marsh Management Workgroup set three priorities. The first was to develop a comprehensive communication strategy around the Marsh Management Plan on educating the community and actively pushing residents to do that on their individual properties. Ms. Kaye, heading up the workgroup, would provide a brief report on the progress.

Ms. Kaye stated that the communication plan development was well underway, and the sketch out was about 80 percent done. Ms. Pomrenke would be working with Ms. Kaye to develop it more fully.

Meetings have taken place with representatives from many organizations in this workgroup. The most critical element is reaching out across all sorts of island entities, even into the County, to ensure that some really good people are coming together to work on this plan.

Ms. Kaye stated that the Conservancy has been extremely helpful and will highlight the first educational offerings to educate and incentivize some of these projects, including the Rain Gardens program.

Mr. Taylor stated that the second priority for the Marsh Management Workgroup is looking at pervious impervious surfaces across the island and current standards today. What standards can be changed, and what standards could be incentivized for property owners to begin to make a

substantial difference in how we look at stormwater and nature-based solutions on the island. The final one having been talked about is what happens at the Kiawah River Bridge public access. The Environmental Committee has been charged with providing their expertise and recommendations working with a subgroup of the Marsh Management Group.

Mr. Taylor provided an update on the landscape tree ordinance to Ms. Hennessy, Mr. Iwan, and Mr. Curran. He stated that despite a small pause, the staff is currently preparing to draft the language and that he would schedule something for this month to get back on track.

Mr. Taylor stated that one of the planning priorities set at the beginning of the year was a review of our zoning ordinance that would be critical for the Town, with the 2013 Amended and Restated Development Agreement with the master developer expiring at the end of this year. A number of things need to be added as a new ordinance or revised language to ensure there are no inconsistencies once that development agreement goes away. A workgroup has been formed with members of staff and Council to work on the project, and a number of those ordinance amendments would eventually make their way back to Planning Commission.

Mr. Taylor stated that Town Hall is one of the approved installation sites for the Rain Garden project mentioned by Ms. Kaye. Planning has been working with Mr. Bundrick with the Conservancy to really understand the benefits so that it can be utilized as a platform of the Marsh Management Plan and to also encourage residents on what to do on their properties.

**VIII. Council Liaison Comments:**

Mr. Heidingsfelder stated that Town Council is intensively working on several mitigation measures for the traffic situation at the first gate. He reviewed the items that are being considered and are wanted to be implemented,

- the right lane to exit the island will have no stop sign,
- the left lane will make a more distinct turn into Beachwalker Drive in a way that you cannot go straight, but you have to turn
- approve a contract with a quasi-police force to help us guide traffic in the mornings and afternoons.

Mr. Heidingsfelder stated that at the Town Council meeting, following Mr. Wilson's authorization to provide more information to the community, there was a great deal of discussion of the Amended And Restated Development Agreement relating to one property in The Preserve. Also, in an Executive Session, Council worked on a letter of intent about the potential purchase of the Kiawah Island real estate property, which would give the Town substantial flexibility for a longer-term solution for the first gate traffic problem and then, in conjunction with approving the letter of intent a project with Kimley Horn was approved to work on more details for this intersection.

**IX. Public Comments:**

None

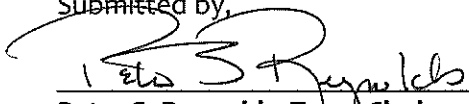
**X. Commissioner Comments:**

Mr. Iwan stated that he participated in one of the open discussion sessions and was surprised by an apparent need for a more formal organization-to-organization communication channel. He thought the informal ones would be sufficient, but it was very clear in that communication session that the individuals in the groups wanted to have something more of a formal basis, structured and regularly scheduled.

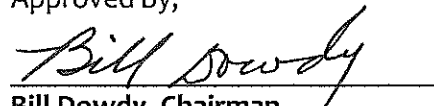
XI. Adjournment:

*Mr. Iwan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:29 pm. Ms. Kaye seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.*

Submitted by,

  
Petra S. Reynolds, Town Clerk

Approved by,

  
Bill Dowdy, Chairman

6-7-2023  
Date