

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Kiawah Island Municipal Center

Council Chambers

January 16, 2018; 2:00 PM

Minutes

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

II. Roll Call:

Present: Jim Jordan, Chairman
David Elliott
Jim Chitwood
Lynne Sager
Jim Sullivan
Jane Ellis
Lynette Schroeder
John Leffler

KICA: Andrew Kreminski
KIGR: Liz King
KINHC: Justin Core
Jack Kotz
TOKI: Aaron Given

Absent: Marilyn Olson
Sandra Williams
Robert Simmons

ARB: Amanda Mole

Also Present: Diana Mezzanotte, Council Liaison

III. Approval of Minutes:

A. Environmental Committee Meeting Minutes of September 19, 2017

Mrs. Sager made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2017 Environmental Committee meeting. The motion was seconded and was unanimously approved as amended.

B. Environmental Committee Meeting Minutes of November 14, 2017

Mrs. Sager made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2017 Environmental Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Elliott and was unanimously approved as amended.

IV. Reports:

A. Town of Kiawah Island

Mr. Jordan reviewed his report;

✦ Alligator Research

- Five GPS tags deployed,
 - Three still transmitting at the November meeting
 - Two still transmitting until early January

- No tags currently transmitting
- Collaborative research project with Clemson/Nemours proceeding as an expansion of the research started on Kiawah and may begin as early as this year.

⚡ Bobcat GPS Study

- 2018 work to begin in February with six collars expecting to be deployed.

B. Kiawah Island Community Association Land & Lakes Management

Mr. Kreminski reported on the significant fish kill caused by prolonged cold stress from the recent inclement weather. Approximately 1600 lbs. of redfish and black drum were removed from Bass Pond along with Tilapia and Sea Trout which were removed from the other ponds. It is being speculated that Bass Pond not having an interconnection with other ponds many have contributed to the large amount of fish dying.

C. Kiawah Island Golf Resort

Ms. King expanded on her last report on the temporary rearranging that was ongoing in the Nature Center to incorporate the Fitness Room and Art Studio after the closing of the Straw Market. She stated that after a meeting with the architect, the New Nature Center at Night Heron Park will have approximately 2000 sq. ft. for display area. She asked for any community input on unique or different ideas for displays to include interactive displays and those which may have been viewed at other nature centers.

D. Kiawah Island Architectural Review Board

None

E. Kiawah Conservancy

Mr. Core Reported on upcoming events:

- ⚡ January 30th – Albert George and Kelly Thorvalson from the South Carolina Aquarium
- ⚡ March 28th – Program from Mr. Jordan and Mr. Given with the Wildlife Research Update

Mr. Core reported the Conservancy had put in their budget, funding for three additional GPS monitors for the Town’s ongoing alligator research.

F. Turtle Patrol

No Report

V. Old Business

A. Sea Level Rise

Mr. Leffler reported that at its December meeting the Sea Level Rise Subcommittee was a discussion of the different references for measuring elevations which are used in different situations and are very confusing. Surveyor and contractors use the NGVD29 (National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929) as their reference. Tide tables and the popular media use MLLW (mean lower low water) when reporting fishing tides and king tides events. Following a discussion, the committee decided to adopt MLLW (mean lower low water) as the common standard to use in their discussion and

reporting.

Mr. Leffler stated the January meeting would include discussion of how new building might be designed and existing building retrofitted to mitigate more frequent flooding events.

B. Beach Erosion and Projects

- ✓ **Phase I Beach Scraping** – First phase was completed on October 31st. This phase of work rebuilt damaged dunes along the Ocean Course Golf Course and Turtle Beach. The total cost was \$112,119.
- ✓ **Phase II Beach Scraping** – Second phase of the project was completed on January 11th. This phase included Eugenia Avenue, Mariner’s Watch, The Sanctuary, and The Beach Club. The total cost is estimated at \$110,000.

VI. New Business

B. 2017 Environmental Funding Updates

Mr. Jordan gave an update of each of the programs that received funding from the Environmental Committee during this fiscal year’s funding cycle.

- ❖ Dolphin Education and Outreach Program – NOAA and Lowcountry Dolphin Alliance - \$8,588
 - Work is ongoing
 - Successful getting additional volunteers including members of the Environmental Committee, to educate the public to reduce negative interaction between people and dolphins and some volunteers gather information on dolphin behavior
 - Lauren, with the Low County Dolphin Alliance, monitoring fin patterns, has identified 9 frequent stranding feeding dolphin individuals at the inlet;
 - 6 of these have been documented in Charleston area previously
 - 2 have been seen since the early 1990s
 - 1 is at least 27 years old, has been seen with 4 calves, and has 70 sightings
 - Seabrook Island is starting same program on their side of Captain Sam’s inlet
 - New research project being investigated to run concurrent with educator program
 - “Observational Study to Profile Interference of Dolphin Strand Feeding Behavior and to Evaluate Protection of this Behavior in South Carolina”
 - Utilize silent observers to monitor and catalogue behavior of people and dolphins with and without an educator present
- ❖ Elementary School Programs and Teacher Training – Engaging Creative Minds - \$10,000
 - 5-hour Teacher Training took place on December 6th at Town Hall to participate in projects and a short tour of the Island to prepare for Field Trips in Spring
 - All local elementary schools participating
- ❖ OWLS Program – Kiawah Island Golf Resort - \$2,250

Mr. Core gave an update on the Kiawah Conservancy programs that received funding during this fiscal year's funding cycle.

❖ **Kiawah Conservancy**

- Wildlife Web Cameras - \$10,000 – meeting next week to discuss logistics to set up feeder and mobile cameras
- Bobcat Documentary Film - \$20,000 – under contract to produce a documentary similar to the alligator and sea turtle which were done and will be view at a symposium in the fall. In addition to the video, four 2-3 minutes modules will be included
- Naturally Kiawah Demonstration Garden - \$10,000 – some funding has been used for additional plants and to amend the water system with the remaining funding to be use for infrastructure renovations, additional plants and the replacement of plants damaged by the freeze
- Naturally Kiawah Guest Guide - \$30,000 – under production to be release next spring/early summer
- Travelstory GPS App - \$5,000 – kayak/paddleboard tour route - under production
- Brochures for Maritime Reserve and Garden - \$2,000 – under development

A. 2018 Initiatives and Ideas

Mr. Jordan indicated he asked Committee Members for their feedback on the following questions and reviewed the individual responses received:

- We want to know what you think is working on the island. From a KI environmental perspective, what are you proud of?
 - Turtle Patrol
 - Alligator Tracking
 - I am seeing more cooperation between the Community Association and Conservancy to try to preserve our open spaces. I also feel there is more community interest in preserving our beaches and in protecting our endangered species.

Members stated that the work with bobcats, shorebirds and protection of the beach should be added to the list.

- Suggestions on how we continue to maintain and/or improve in these positive areas?
 - Maintain TOKI support for Turtle Patrol
- From an environmental standpoint, what is your vision for Kiawah in the next 10 years?
 - My vision is to keep as much open space as possible and to promote a balance between our wildlife (i.e. birds, deer, bobcats, turtles). I do not want to see all of our open space and forested areas disappear.
 - As we approach build-out (i.e. vision of Kiawah in 10 years), the decisions related to development become increasingly important and I think this committee has the resources to provide some necessary guidance / feedback / direction in these areas, too.

Members stated that the management of Sea Level Rise should be added to the list.

- What type of initiatives should the island entities consider to keep us moving in the right direction? (Some ideas previously discussed - plastics in our environment, general island aesthetics & how preapproved landscaping plans might help, salt tolerant landscaping, low impact community ideas that could be applied on Kiawah and wildlife maintenance, protection, care and research)

Environmental Impact of Single-Use Plastics Offshore Drilling - most responded

- Encourage (or mandate) less asphalt and explore using porous surfaces
- Investigate recycling discarded building materials from new home builds and/or renovations
- Investigate recycling yard debris as firewood or mulch for local residents
- Explore the balloon ban suggested by one resident.
- Encourage (or mandate) replacing pine straw with a live plant ground cover.
- Encourage KICA to minimize its seasonal garden planting programs in favor of gardens that are multi- seasonal and, encourage homeowners and regimes to return to a more natural landscaping aesthetic
- I'd like to see the Conservancy spend more time on Conservation (e.g. aggressively raising money to buy property not currently developed) and less time publishing paper magazines
- Balloons on the beach
- Golfers in dunes
- Limit development, protect the spit
- Pre-approved landscaping plans is that they should be cost-effective and not be a burden on the home- owner.
- Could we encourage new standards for buildings that better insulate pipes and use freeze resistant outside water faucets?

Members suggested that the list be sorted by what items the Committee is able to handle.

- Do you have any other comments/suggestions for the EC?

- Consider a once a year reminder publication of what gets recycled and how to recycle... i.e. are the bins still in place at the old town hall? People move here from areas that use different recycling standards,
- Understanding the role of the Conservancy and the role of the Environmental Committee and how the two work together seems like a good idea to me.
- While the EC's mission includes education, I am never excited about the education program money that is spent nor do I fully understand how it benefits Kiawah Island.
- I think that the committee does a great job with "beach-related" issues... Would like to see that influence expanded to other issues related to habitat types / environmental concerns across the island.
- Finding a way to become more engaged in the decision-making process of the Town's planning committee and/or providing input to Town Council on things like development agreements / other decisions that have significant impacts on natural resources, wildlife habitat, etc.
- The Sea Level Rise Subcommittee's work, plus the other ideas committee members have presented (plastics, balloons, etc.) are important, but objectives developed from those endeavors will be limited by the opportunity for the committee to present this information and have it utilized when other Town committees or council is making decisions.

Committee Members engaged in an in-depth discussion of the suggestion of "Finding a way to

become more engaged in the decision-making process of the Town's planning committee and/or providing input to Town Council on things like development agreements / other decisions that have significant impacts on natural resources, wildlife habitat, etc.” citing the Town’s recent posting on seismic testing and oil drilling legislation in which the Committee was not asked for any feedback or suggestion. Discussion included a clarification of the resolutions passed by the Town in 2015 and 2017 and the confirmation of the process by which a law suit will be filed by the South Carolina Environmental Law Project when permits are issued for seismic testing. The question was raised on if Council is being proactive enough. Members discussed their opinions on waiting on filing of a law suit, the need for the Town and Seabrook to be more aggressive, and if the Environmental Committee should be more actively involved in motivating Council to do more than passing a resolution.

Discussion also included the Committee’s role to advise Council and using logic versus lobbying to convince Council to take a position. The suggestion was made to poll the Committee on if, as a group, a recommendation should be made to Town Council take a more aggressive approach with their political contacts.

Also discussed was if Council should have asked the Committee to search out the factual arguments for and against oppose seismic testing and oil drilling before taking a position, or if the Committee, or Mr. Jordan, should take on the task of compiling a draft summary of the concerns seismic testing and oil drilling for the next meeting.

The Committee was reminded of its Charter and its advisory role on topics as directed by Council. In that role, it cannot request a summary be prepared and presented to Council, but can pass a motion against seismic testing and oil drilling and encourage Council to aggressively fight against it.

Following further discussion the suggestion was made to take a vote of the Committee, report to the Mayor that the Committee was in favor of taking a more aggressive stand on the issue, and ask the Town if, with the expertise on the Committee, it would like the Committee to do any additional work on this issue.

Mr. Elliott made a motion that the Environmental Committee recommends to Town Council that in view of the urgency of the issue, Council consider taking an aggressive political position, consider filing comments and look to the Environmental Committee for any contribution or support. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sullivan.

After discussion that the motion was not advising on an Environmental issue the motion was revised.

Mr. Chitwood made a motion that the Environmental Committee strongly supports Council's position against seismic testing and oil drilling and offers the Committee's assistance with any request that would help take a more aggressive stance. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Schroeder. The motion was passed with Ms. King abstaining from voting. Ms. King indicated she did not know the position of the Resort and could not vote at this time.

Mrs. Mezzanotte suggested setting up another subcommittee to look at some of the other issues suggested by the Environmental Committee

VII. **Citizen Comments:**
None

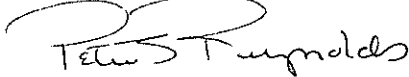
VIII. **Chairman's Comments:**
None

IX. **Committee Member Comments:**
None

X. **Adjournment:**

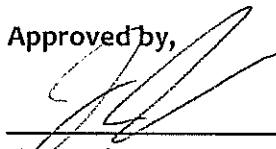
The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm.

Submitted by,



Petra S. Reynolds, Town Clerk

Approved by,



Jim Jordan, Chairman

2-16-18

Date