

**COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
MEETING**

**Kiawah Island Municipal Center
Downstairs Conference Room**

October 14, 2014; 3:00 PM

MINUTES

I. Call to Order:

II. FOIA: Notice of this meeting has been published and posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Kiawah Island.

III. Roll Call:

Present:

**Mary Johnson, Chairman
Linda Dove
Frances Boyd
Jack Kotz
Joyce Keegel**

Absent:

Mary Kasman

Also Present:

**Stephanie Braswell-Edgerton
Mayor Charles Lipuma**

IV. Approval of Minutes:

A. Communication Committee Meeting Minutes of September 9, 2014

Mr. Kotz motioned to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2014 Communications Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Keegel and was unanimously passed.

V. Citizen Comments:

None

VI. Old Business:

None

VII. New Business:

A. Social Media

Mayor Lipuma called attention to the article in the Post and Courier today in which it is stated that the Town had purchase property on Betsy Kerrison and will evict Mr. Sidi Limehouse. To provide clarification he indicated that the Town has for quite some time been looking for property to construct a new Municipal Center. Mayor Lipuma

stated that the present situation of limited space not only inside but outside parking has made it necessary to move forward with a plan for the future.

Mayor Lipuma stated that the search entailed looking for available property on and off Island. The result was that property on-island was deemed to be very expensive at one million per acre and limited to outside the gate. He indicated that the property that was located on Betsy Kerrison has been for sale since 2013 and is contiguous to Kiawah. The negotiations with the owners has produced a confidentiality agreement that legally prevented disclosure of any information. He also noted that the state's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) provided that Municipalities that are looking into land purchases are specifically excluded from releasing information on the terms of the negotiations and can operate in Executive Session until the property is purchased and deed has been executed.

Mayor Lipuma clarified that the Town HAS NOT purchased any property, no deed has been recorded and the Town is bound by the confidentiality agreement to not reveal any information on the negotiations. He indicated that the Town is now trying to prepare a Public Statement to address the article and provide some background without releasing any detailed information.

Mayor Lipuma explained that the property that is being looked at has no availability to any sewer service and has forced the Town as part of its due diligence to apply to the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) for a septic system permit.

Mayor Lipuma stated that the article made the Town the villain in requiring Mr. Limehouse to vacate the property. He clarified that any rental terms are between the property owner and the tenant and the Town is not the property owner. He indicated Mr. Limehouse's current lease expires on December 31st.

Mrs. Johnson added, contrary to rumors, the Town had done its due diligence in looking at a number of properties on and off the Island and the expansion of the current Municipal Center. She and Mayor Lipuma discussed the Council's planning for future expansion while the Town has funds available. Mrs. Johnson also explained the Town taking over Building Services and the annexation of Freshfields has provided a revenue stream that may not be there once the Island is built out. Council members have given up their offices to provide space for the additional building/permitting officials. An upstairs construction project earlier this year provided more office and storage space but the building is still not ADA compliant and does not relieve the parking issues.

Committee members offered the Mayor their opinions on ways to dispel the misinformation that has been disseminated within the boundaries of the confidentially agreement. Members discussed in depth the need for the Town to have to have a communication plan and one spokesman. Mayor Lipuma stated he would be the spokesman at the public information meetings that are planned in the event the DHEC permit is approved.

Members discussed the need for a formal letter to be sent personally from the Mayor to each resident informing them of the **facts** behind the proposed purchase of the property and who will be paying for it. Mrs. Johnson made the suggestion to send the letter as a *Constant Contact* email as well as other media and social media outlets.

Mrs. Johnson indicated that since it was not known if the property was suitable for the purpose intended, the Town's Attorney and Administrator advised Council that the release of the information would be premature and is covered by the Freedom of Information Act.

Mayor Lipuma read the Public Statement to be released. Committee members made suggestions on edits to be made to the statement. Mrs. Braswell-Edgerton called attention to the social media comments that have been circulating in response to numerous Facebook and Twitter postings. She stressed the need to address those concerns in the Public Statement. Mayor Lipuma and members made further edits to the statement and the need for a more personal approach.

Members discussed the issues that have been raised by the misinformation of the article in the Post and Courier and the reactions that for the most part have been emotional.

Mrs. Johnson stated that so far in the election that are four candidates for Council seats and four seats available. At this point she indicated that she enjoyed working with the members over the last two years but did not know if she would be working with the Communications Committee in the future. She stated that she has tried to make changes to the Committee charter that would provide the Committee with the authority to work independently but was unsuccessful. She noted that the Communications Committee has been in existence for many years but this Committee has been the first to take action as a Communications Committee. She stated that she hoped the new Council would be able to come to a decision on the future of the purpose of the Committee. She felt the idea to disband the Committee entirely would shut off an avenue of communication from homeowners in the unique Kiawah community.

In looking back, she made a list of the Committee’s accomplishments;

- Committee recommended upgrade to website that the Chair presented to Council for approval.
- Committee reviewed and approved the color, format and photo from the Kiawah Photo Club member for the main page of the website.
- Created a fast access sheet to make it easier for residents to become familiar with new website navigation.
- Worked with the administrator to create and edited a series of articles for the first year on “How the Town Serves You” and selected a different area of responsibility for each month.
- For annexation, Mrs. Johnson attended every meeting to include ones at Cassique. The Committee created Question and Answer presentation that was posted to the website for the first time and was updated after every meeting.
- Created a *Constant Contact* e-blast to inform upcoming Arts Council events, announcements by the Town and activities announcements.
- Advanced Arts Council events by electronic ticket printing and advancing further to allow performing group to forward the e-blast to their email list to print tickets.
- Wrote and published the first “Year in Review”, “Charitable Grants and Contributions Review”, an announcement of Freshfields and the new hotel.
- Given the project to address the Town’s Communication, the Committee made the recommendation for a bi-weekly e-blast and quarterly Town Notes with the addition of the “Mayor’s Corner”.
- The beginnings of a social media platform for the Town with the website upgrade.

Mrs. Johnson briefly described a demographic of the public uses of social media broken down into media, gender, medium income and age group. Also was included was the monthly email statistics that would be saved for discussion at the next meeting. She indicated that she would encourage the Committee to continue to view the analytics to determine what articles are important to the resident readers.

VIII. Chairman’s Comments:

None

IX. Committee Member Comments:

None


X. Citizen Comments:

None

XI. Adjournment:

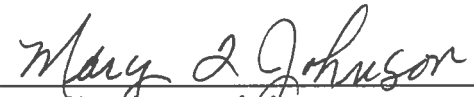
The meeting was adjourned 4:14 PM.

Submitted by,

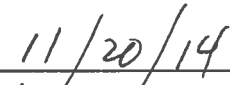


Petra S. Reynolds, Town Clerk

Approved by,



Mary Q. Johnson, Chairman



Date