

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
FEBRUARY 7, 2011; 3:00 PM  
KIAWAH ISLAND MUNICIPAL CENTER  
UPSTAIRS CONFERENCE ROOM**

**MINUTES**

**I. Call to Order: Mr. VanDerwerker called the meeting to order at 3:00pm.**

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

**III. Roll Call:**

**Present:** Greg VanDerwerker, Chair  
David Elliott  
Jim Chitwood  
Dale Anderson  
Jim Jordan, TOKI  
Norm Shea, KICA Lakes  
Lois Bryant, ARB  
Aaron Given, TOKI  
Liz King, KIGR

**Absent:** Dave Achey, KICA Lands  
Chuck Davis, KINHC

**Also Present:** Tumiko Rucker, Town Administrator  
Lakesha Shannon, Town Clerk

**IV. Minutes:**

**A. Environmental Committee Meeting Minutes of November 1, 2010**  
Mr. Jordan motioned to approve the minutes of November 1, 2010. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson. After minor edits, the minutes of November 1, 2010 were unanimously approved as corrected.

**V. Old Business:**

None

**VI. New Business:**

**A. Comprehensive Plan Report Card**

Mrs. Rucker gave a brief explanation of the Comprehensive Plan Report Card which will reviewed monthly by each committee. Mrs. Rucker stated that the Comprehensive Plan review was a very lengthy process in which information was gathered from several entities. The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan Report Card is to review the overall objectives and implementation strategies

needed to complete each task on a regular basis. Mrs. Rucker noted that the Natural Resources Element focuses on wildlife, conservation efforts, and the beach. Mrs. Rucker stated that she would like to receive a brief written monthly report from the committee outlining how they are addressing the objectives and implementation strategies. These reports will be compiled into a detailed quarterly report which will be presented to the Planning Commission and recommended to Town Council.

Mr. Chitwood requested to know the sources of income for the Town and if there are any changes likely in the future. Mrs. Rucker responded that budget information can be presented to the committee at the March meeting. Mrs. Rucker also provided the committee members with a copy of the Town's Popular Financial Reports.

Mrs. Rucker announced that the Town's Wildlife Website has been submitted for the MASC Annual Achievement Award in the Communications Category.

#### **B. 2011 Environmental Committee Meeting Schedule**

Mr. VanDerwerker noted that several of the committee meeting dates fall on holidays. He asked if the committee would like to consider changing its meeting date, or would they like to reschedule conflicting dates as they occur. Mr. Anderson suggested changing the meeting date to the second Monday of each month. Ms. Bryant stated that this change would be in conflict with her schedule. The committee agreed to continue meeting on the first Monday of each month.

#### **C. Development of a 2011 Work Plan**

Mr. VanDerwerker recommended that the Environmental Committee present an Island-Wide Vegetation Survey proposal to Town Council for consideration in the budget. He stated that several groups are experiencing problems with invasive plants. He noted that the last study was completed in 1975 by the Kuwaitis. Mr. VanDerwerker stated that he has contacted a professor at the Citadel who was very enthusiastic about helping to complete research for the proposed study. The proposed study would be complete in one to one and a half years and the cost would range from \$20,000 - \$25,000.

Mr. Chitwood questioned whether the results of this study would be of any value to the Town.

The committee had a lengthy discussion of various concerns and suggestions to control tallow trees and other invasive plants on the Island.

Mr. Jordan commented that infrared photography would be a great starting point for this research. He discussed possible findings from this approach.

Mr. Chitwood commented that this may be the best opportunity to tackle tallow trees since there are currently resources available and a high level of interest from various entities to address this issue. He feels that the tallow trees are the single biggest threat to vegetation on the Island and suggests that resources be used to focus on that issue.

The Committee discussed various ways to educate residents on invasive plants and its threat to the overall vegetation.

Mr. VanDerwerker, Mr. Jordan and Mr. Given will meet with the professor from the Citadel to discuss the proposed study in further detail.

Mr. Shea commented that Kiawah is very fortunate to be located in an area that is beneficial for research sites. Mr. Shea stated that KICA has looked at potential studies; however, they are not structured to support research. He suggested that the Town look at a potential study on major sources of pond contamination. Mr. Shea stated that funding is needed to research ways to improve water quality of ponds and lakes. Mr. Shea added that new EPA Water Quality Regulations for storm water runoff are focusing on smaller municipalities.

#### **D. Johns Island Schools – Educational Visits to Kiawah**

Mr. VanDerwerker requested to know if there were any issues with students participating in educational visits to the Island.

Ms. King commented that the Resort does a mentoring program with Johns Island High School on a regular basis. They also work with Haut Gap and with Angel Oak on the Children's Garden Project. She commented that the schools have become more willing to take advantage of the educational opportunities on the Island.

The committee agreed that funding should be maintained in the budget for educational opportunities.

Mr. Given commented that it would be a great opportunity to have students come to the Island to experience birds up close. Mr. Jordan suggests targeting middle and high school age students. Mr. Jordan also stated that residents who volunteer at the schools can help advertise educational opportunities.

#### **E. Nuisance Wildlife Training**

Mr. VanDerwerker stated that the busiest season on the Island is approaching and asked if all is well with nuisance wildlife training and response. Mr. Jordan stated that staff from several entities has previously attended nuisance wildlife training so there are people qualified to respond. Ms. King suggested that wildlife staff respond to calls when alligators are over five feet long. Mr. Jordan will propose an April date for nuisance wildlife training.

**F. Animal Rescue / Euthanasia**

Mr. Jordan stated that security is doing a great job handling animal rescue. Ms. King commented that the Resort is usually the first point of contact for animal rescue calls, however; there are issues when the wildlife staff is unavailable on the weekends. She asked if there is a policy for handling these issues on the weekend and who would be the contact person. Mr. Shea asked that Ms. King direct this concern to him so that he may address it further.

Mr. Given commented that he is a firm believer in moving injured animals out of sight and letting nature take its course instead of automatically putting them down.

**VII. Correspondence**

Mr. VanDerwerker stated that Charleston County Council has banned the use of plastic bags for yard waste. He stated that once these bags are dumped in the landfill, the plastic contaminates the chipped material. Mr. VanDerwerker stated that plastic yard bags can be replaced with paper yard waste bags.

**VIII. Citizen Comments**

None

**IX. Committee Member Comments**

Mr. Chitwood stated that KICA's Landscape Service Provider Certification is currently in progress. He reported that 40 of the expected 140 companies have been certified.

Mr. Chitwood commented on the Wildlife Management Research on Kiawah Island Five Year Plan. He stated that this plan, which was developed by Mr. Jordan and Mr. Given, is currently in progress. The plan is currently before the Executive Committee of the Conservancy for review. He stated that most of the plan's funding will be covered by the Conservancy and the remaining funding will be provided by the Town. Mr. Chitwood requested input from committee as the plan is in its final phase.

Mr. Elliott stated that KDP and the Conservancy are working together to produce an environmental-oriented video of Kiawah.

Mr. Elliot requested that Town Council recognize the contributions of Dr. Robert Cowgill who recently passed away. Dr. Cowgill served as the first chairman of the Town's Wildlife Committee, and founded the Kiawah Island Naturalist Club.

Mr. VanDerwerker suggested that the proposed Vegetation Survey or a similar study be named in Dr. Cowgill's honor.

Mr. Jordan asked if the Town should consider helping to fund the 5-Year Plan. He stated that a lot has changed over the years with the Conservancy taking over the majority of the funding. The Town currently provides funding of \$5,000 - \$8,000 to the Environmental Committee for projects; however, Mr. Jordan suggests increasing funding to at least \$15,000, maybe more depending on future projects.

The Committee had a lengthy discussion regarding the need to request more funding for the 5-Year Plan to complete necessary research.

### **Wildlife**

Mr. Jordan provided an update on the current bobcat tracking and bird banding studies.

Mr. Jordan stated that they are still awaiting permission from KDP to complete a Reptile/Amphibian Study.

Mr. Jordan stated that the Resort was provided a letter of support from the Town and granted permission to drive on the beach during the 2012 PGA.

### **KICA Lakes**

Mr. Shea reported on the recent cases of dead pelicans being found in ponds. There were 15-20 dead pelicans discovered. He stated that specimens have been collected and sent to a lab to be analyzed and the cause of death is likely cold weather. Mr. Shea also reported that several dead tilapias have shown up in ponds. He stated that one can expect to see several tilapias around March due to the change in temperature. Mr. Shea is currently working with Mr. Ballentine to replace nature placards on the Island.

### **KIGR**

Ms. King announced the upcoming April 16<sup>th</sup> Earthfest in the Park featuring Tony Mills.

## **X. Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

**Submitted by,**

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**Lakesha Y. Shannon, Town Clerk**

**Approved by,**

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**Greg VanDerwerker, Chairman**

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**Date**