

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING
MAY 2, 2011 3:00 P.M.
KIAWAH ISLAND MUNICIPAL CENTER**

MINUTES

I. Call to Order: Dr. 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**
 Jim Chitwood
 Dale Anderson
 Lois Bryant, ARB
 Liz King, KIGR
 Charles Davis
 Norm Shea, KICA Lakes
 Dave Achey, KICA Lands
 Jim Jordan, TOKI
 Aaron Given, TOKI

Absent: **David Elliott**

Also Present: **Lakesha Shannon, Town Clerk**

IV. Minutes:

A. Environmental Committee Meeting Minutes of April 4, 2011
Mr. Davis motioned to approve the minutes of April 4, 2011. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson, and passed unanimously.

V. Special Presentation

South Carolina Oyster Restoration Enhancement Program

Mr. Stephen Czwartacki, Shellfish Biologist from the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, provided an overview of the SC Oyster Restoration and Enhancement (SCORE) Program. This program allows volunteers to help build oyster reefs that are used as living shorelines. He explained the value of oyster reefs to the ecosystem, water quality and to the habitat. He noted that the program has been around for ten years and has had about 10,000 volunteers. The volunteers collect recycled oyster shells and place them in mesh bags along the shoreline which recruits oyster growth.

Mr. Czwartacki stated that the DNR provides the State and public shell fish grounds with about 100,000 bushels of oyster shell each year, of which 20,000

is recycled. Anyone with a \$10 saltwater recreational fishing license can go to these areas and pick their own oysters twice per week, two bushels per person. He stated that since SC does not have canneries, the shell has to be purchased from other states at \$2 per bushel. For this reason, it is very important that they collect recycled shell. He noted that about \$160,000 a year is spent purchasing shell from other states.

Mr. Czwartacki stated that the DNR has established a ten year community restoration program with Bear's Bluff and was asked to engage dock owners in Wadmalaw, Johns, Kiawah and Seabrook Islands in the creation of an oyster habitat in Bohicket Creek and the Kiawah River. The DNR agreed to create one acre of oyster reef which will protect one to two areas of salt marsh. This process includes blasting oyster shell onto the shoreline and hanging seeded shell from docks.

Mr. Czwartacki requested help from Kiawah and suggested using Mingo Point to host an educational event for volunteers. He stated that opportunities for Kiawah residents to participate in the program include:

- Shell recycling
- Making bags and hanging them from docks
- Deploying oyster seed shells to the shoreline

Mr. Czwartacki stated that over the past year, 45 dock owners have participated in the program, 430 volunteers with about 1,000 hours, and .84 acres of oyster reef have been built.

Dr. VanDerwerker asked if the mesh bags could be hung underwater on the docks. Mr. Czwartacki responded that the bags can be hung underwater or in whatever position the dock owner prefers. He stated that he would personally come to the docks to educate and assist the owners.

Dr. VanDerwerker commented that it is very important that residents be educated on the program, and the Committee discussed ways to initiate the program on Kiawah.

Mrs. Bryant stated that the ARB should have no problem with the bags hanging from the docks since it would be temporary and underwater.

Mr. Czwartacki explained the importance of choosing the proper location to create an oyster reef.

Dr. VanDerwerker stated that each entity can look at ways to coordinate educational events on Kiawah.

VI. Old Business:

A. Update on Vegetation/Invasive Plant Survey

Dr. VanDerwerker stated that the Vegetation Survey is in the Town's budget and he will update the Committee on any progress.

B. Update on Communications Regarding 2010 Development Agreement

Dr. VanDerwerker stated that Mayor Orban will be forwarding the comments regarding the 2010 Development Agreement to the ARB.

C. Update on Audubon Important Bird Area Nomination

Mr. Given stated that Ann Shahid from the National Audubon Society will present information on the Important Bird Nomination at the next meeting.

Mr. Jordan stated that a Nuisance Wildlife Training will be held in May.

VII. New Business:

A. Wildlife Brochures

Mr. Jordan explained that there are currently 12 different wildlife brochures available that provide information about the groups species found on the Island. He suggested possibly combining all the brochures into one book which will allow for more accessible information. The current cost is \$.25 per brochure and the cost would be \$3.00 per book if the brochures were combined. The Town currently spends about \$2,000 every other year to print the brochures.

Mr. Fister suggested using a barcode system in the book to link the pages to the wildlife website for more detailed information.

After discussing funding and design options, the Committee agreed that combining the wildlife brochures would be a great idea.

As a follow up from last meeting, Mr. Achey stated that he discussed the proposed landscape demonstration site with Mrs. Rucker, and he will begin drawing up a plan and preparing a budget for the project.

B. Nighttime Speed Limits on Kiawah

The Committee reviewed and discussed a report that compared the number of deer and bobcat vehicle collisions by time of day and speed limit. Dr. VanDerwerker stated that the collisions seem to be more related to traffic volume. Mr. Jordan commented that he was surprised by the number of bobcats that were hit during the daytime, and suggested reducing the speed limit in areas that have the most instances.

VIII. Correspondences

None

IX. Citizen Comments

None

X. Committee Member Comments

Wildlife Report-TOKI

Mr. Jordan reported that there were 3 deer hit over the last month. There were also 3 gannets relocated from east beach to west beach.

Mr. Jordan provided an update on the Bobcat GPS Research. There are currently 7 bobcats being tracked, 4 female and 3 male. The first den was located on April 19th near Sora Rail Road and contained 3 kittens, 1 male and 2 female. Mr. Jordan stated that a den was also located near Flyway Drive.

Mr. Jordan stated that the bird banding season final reports are complete and available on the wildlife website. The spring banding season is currently ongoing and 10 sessions have been completed. There were 46 new birds captured, 41 recaptured and 24 species captured.

Mr. Jordan stated that bird nest monitoring will begin this week and signs have been placed in the nesting areas on the east and west end of the beach. The bird monitoring sessions will begin the end of May.

Mr. Jordan reported that the installation process is complete for the College of Charleston Reptile/Amphibian Study and the project will begin this week.

Mr. Jordan reported that there were 4,356 visits to the wildlife website in April. The 2011 Bobcat Management Plan is complete and available on the website. Data from the Piping Plover Survey is also available on the website. He noted that there was a decline in piping plover's on the east end and an increase on west end.

Mr. Shea asked if an alligator would be attracted to deer blood, because there has been a request to clean up deer blood from the roads.

Mr. Jordan stated that people are not abiding by the dog leash regulations on the beach. He stated that that a lot of the problem is due to poor signage and confusion regarding the different zones on the beach. He commented that the current regulations are very difficult to enforce and suggested that the Town go back to the previous regulations. The Committee discussed options for addressing the issue.

KICA Lakes

Mr. Shea stated that a dead alligator was found at Turtle Point with no obvious cause of death. He requested that the Lakes Department be contacted if an alligator is seen not moving for a period of time or behaving abnormally.

KIGR

Mrs. King commented on the condition of the signs at Maritime Forest. Dr. VanDerwerker responded that he would talk with someone about the issue.

Turtle Patrol

Mr. Anderson reported that the turtle season is beginning and the Turtle Patrol will hold their kickoff meeting on May 4th at 6:30 pm at the Sandcastle.

KICA Land

Mr. Achey stated that KICA has established an Invasive Species Management Committee which will meet on May 3rd at 1:30pm. The Vegetation Study will be the outlining piece, and the committee will review 3 components to include: education, rules and regulations, and methodology. Mr. Achey stated that all the Island entities seem to be interested in controlling tallow trees; however, the worst areas need to be identified.

XI. Adjournment:

Mr. Anderson motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:40 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jordan, and carried unanimously.

Submitted by,

Lakesha Y. Shannon, Town Clerk

Approved by,

Greg A. VanDerwerker, Chairman

Date