

TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND
2021 Council Strategic Planning Retreat
Kiawah Island Municipal Center
Council Chambers
January 21, 2021

MINUTES

Call to Order: *Mayor Labriola called the Retreat to order at 8:30 am.*

Pledge of Allegiance:

Present at the meeting: John D. Labriola, *Mayor*
Dan Prickett, *Councilmember*
Maryanne Connelly, *Councilmember*
John Moffitt, *Councilmember*
Dr. Scott Parker, *Councilmember*

Also Present: Stephanie Tillerson, *Town Administrator*
Brian Gottshalk, *Public Works Director*
Jim Jordan, *Wildlife Biologist*
John Taylor, Jr., *Planning Director*
Petra Reynolds, *Town Clerk*
Stephanie Braswell Edgerton, *Communications Manager*

Council & Committee Priorities (2021):

Councilmember Moffitt stated that in yesterday's discussion of Public Works, the presentation included a staff person's addition to assume some of the responsibilities currently covered under the contract. A continuation of the Public Works discussion will include the Sora Rail Solid Waste site and opportunities to address maintenance issues.

- Public Works Committee and Projects
 - Wet Trash & Recycling Center
 - Solid Waste (beach and Parkway collection)

Mr. Gottshalk stated that the Town contracts with Carolina Waste to remove the trash, recycling, and yard debris on the island. The site is located on Kestrel Court, and the improper use of the site has been an ongoing issue. Despite efforts to mitigate the issue, this year, a spike in irresponsible behavior has led staff to believe that the island has outgrown the Kestrel Court site.

Mr. Gottshalk stated that staff had explored the idea of closing the Kestrel Court site and moving it to the Municipal Complex. The new site would increase disposal capacity and control vehicular flow in and out of the facility. The site would be equipped with an upgraded camera system and provide a better ability to monitor activity. The staff contacted an architect who is developing a site plan and has estimated that the project should cost no more than \$400,000.00. The goal of completing the site by the PGA will be determined by the county permitting process.

Councilmembers discussed the design of a new site, project funding options, Carolina Waste equipment, and possible rate increases. Following the discussion, Councilmembers agreed for staff to move forward with the evaluation of the project.

- Property Value, Branding Study (HR&A Study)

Mr. Taylor gave a review of Planning and Zoning responsibilities. The short-term or day-to-day responsibilities include zoning administration and permit review with long-term or Long-Range Planning focusing on the Comprehensive Plan and development agreements. He noted three items from a planning standpoint that was important for the Town to focus on in the next several years.

- “The Era of Redevelopment” is an overarching theme on how the Town encourages residents to reinvest into older properties when new development comes to an end.

Councilmember Moffitt stated the HR&A Study includes an extensive list of recommendations and proposed putting together a defined workgroup charged with taking the HR&A recommendations and creating an action plan that lays out specific objectives and timelines for this year, in three years and five years. Following an in-depth discussion, it was agreed to begin work on forming a workgroup, and a proposal brought back to Council for review.

- “Beyond the Gates” - As more growth happens in the region, development and including infrastructure pressure is increased along the Betsy Kerrison Parkway corridor and on the edge of town limits.

Mr. Taylor discussed the need for the Kiawah Community to pay closer attention to what is happening on Johns Island and the region, the impact of growth and development on Kiawah, and the role the Town plays in engaging with others beyond on island entities as the ARB, KICA, Kiawah Partners, and the Resort.

Discussion included the work and positions of the Johns Island Task Force, representation on the Task Force, surrounding properties that have sold, the challenges of potential development, and conservation of properties on Johns Island.

Mr. Taylor indicated that a priority was the Comprehensive Plan review that is done every five years. He noted that work had begun, was stalled by COVID, but would be revisited this year. He reviewed some of the studies that would be incorporated into the plan.

- “Adaptive Management Planning” Flood mitigation and sea-level rise is a concern which, if not addressed, could have long-term detrimental public safety, environmental, and livability effects on our community.

Mr. Taylor stated that continuing the work already done on Adaptive Management Planning will be important to the Town, along with getting the development of a Marsh Management Plan underway.

- Annexation Plan

Mr. Taylor stated that annexation planning for Kiawah is going to be protecting the Kiawah identity and brand. The development of the surrounding properties will impact what Kiawah’s “front door” looks like.

- Development Agreements

Mr. Taylor discussed the Development Agreements with the Developer and the Resort, both of which have been extended and amended for Parcel 13, the Ocean Course, and West Beach. He indicated that the bulk of the agreements do not require a significant amount of attention other than reviewing the remaining entitlements and extension dates.

- Planning Commission and Board of Zoning and Appeals

Mr. Taylor stated he would be internally reviewing:

- zoning ordinance amendments to aid in resolving some inconsistencies,
- issues with flood maps,
- cleaning up Zoning Map to correct inconsistencies,
- looking at alternatives for the marsh side of the island,
- looking at giving the Town more purview in the review process of bullheads and erosion control structures,
- tree protection in the areas not under the ARB purview; and,
- a review of detached accessory structures.

Discussion included understanding and defining the responsibilities of the island entities to eliminate confusion in the community.

Ms. Tillerson read questions submitted by Ms. Wendy Kulick. Ms. Kulick asked if the Town has looked at the cost of taking over the ARB and the economic implications to the Town, KICA, and the ARB. Ms. Kulick also asked if the Town has any discussion with KICA about it.

Mayor Labriola responded that the Town has not had any discussion with the Community Association on this subject. It was his opinion that the Town should begin a dialogue and would look forward to that conversation. He stated that it was critical that any efforts should make it easier for the community to navigate.

Council & Committee Priorities (2021):

Mr. Jordan stated the Environmental Department included himself and Mr. Given. Having two full-time Biologists was a testament to how serious the Town was about protecting and managing the Kiawah environment. He stated the department's mission is to manage, promote and maintain the Town's natural resources through research, monitoring, management, and public education.

- Sea Level Rise “resiliency/adaptive management” plan

Mr. Jordan stated that a subgroup of the Environmental Committee worked for about two years to produce a report on flood mitigation and sea-level rise and brought it to the community's forefront. The concept of an adaptive management plan, managing complex systems with unpredictable influence, came out of the original report. Mr. Jordan reviewed the three main phases or components of the plan as:

- Phase 1 - Stakeholder engagement and threshold definition – work completed - identified thresholds or categories to monitor.
- Phase 2 – Develop a monitoring program for those areas
- Phase 3 – Design response plan

Mr. Jordan reviewed the objectives for the current year:

- review the threshold areas,
- consolidate current management plans and monitoring activities,
- collect additional information on threshold areas where needed,
- complete threshold definitions; and,
- complete recommendations, or draft a monitoring program for all thresholds.

Mr. Jordan stated that a full-scale adaptive management plan for flooding on the island is approximately two years from completion.

- SGA's

Mr. Jordan stated that second-generation anticoagulants (SGAs) are a poison used to control rats and mice by inhibiting the recycling of Vitamin K, vital to the blood clotting process. The rodents internally bleed to death within three to seven days after consuming a lethal dose. He explained that when any predator (bobcat) eats these dead/dying rodents, the SGAs begins to build up in their body and can accumulate a lethal dose if they continue to feed on poisoned rodents.

Mr. Jordan reviewed a timeline of the activities from 2017 that showed a decline in the bobcat population, a rise in the deer population, annual mortality rates as high as 75%. In 2019, a collared bobcat found dead was sent to the lab, where it was determined the death was due to the consumption of SGAs. In 2020 collection of other predators found dead or dying confirmed an issue that needed to be acted upon.

Mr. Jordan stated in April 2020; Council was considering an ordinance to regulate the use of SGAs. The ordinance was pulled when the State notified the Council that only the Clemson Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) could regulate the use of pesticides. With the death of two additional bobcats, a request was made to the DPR in July 2020 for a one-year moratorium and the Bobcat Guardian Program's launch. The DPR request was denied in August 2020, stating that voluntary effort would work. The DPR created a task force to gather data to prove voluntary efforts were working. In November 2020, the DPR report showed limited progress on the issues. A letter was drafted reviewing the information provided as unsatisfactory or needing additional information.

Discussion included the DPR refusal to regulate SGAs. Regulation is accepted differently in some communities, if alternative pesticides that are as effective. The results of the DPR pest control survey, and success of the Town's voluntary program, EPA pesticide review, repopulation of the bobcats, and efforts for direct communication with pest control and management companies that have not taken will continue to be taken.

Mr. Jordan stated he was providing a report to the Mayor for a letter to be sent to Senator Chip Campsen regarding Task Force results. He indicated that there would be a continuation of the Bobcat GPS Study, a continued look at mortality rates, a continuation of anticoagulant testing of dying Kiawah wildlife, and a continuation of Education/Outreach efforts (Bobcat Guardian program).

Mr. Jordan explained that discussions had taken place with Clemson professors on a four-year Ph.D. research study project looking at bobcats, SGAs, rodents and providing data to answer countless questions. He indicated the proposal is complete, along with a tentative budget, and was not looking for funding.

- Kiawah Conservancy

Mr. Jordan stated the Town has a long-term relationship with the Conservancy since its founding. He reviewed the history of Conservancy funding up to the Town's request for the Conservancy to design projects around pertinent subjects such as the sea-level rise and flooding in the marsh. The Town has funded phase one of the marsh vulnerability study and the groundwater projects. Phase two will be presented to the Environmental Committee for review and recommendation for inclusion in the next fiscal year budget.

- Environmental Committee
 - Beach Management Plan

The State requires all coastal municipalities to have a Beach Management Plan in place. Every five years, the plan is reviewed with a complete revision every ten years, requiring DHEC approval. The plan must include the ten criteria and must be in place to receive federal beach

renourishment funding. The first plan was completed in 1992, with full updates completed in 2006, 2012, and 2020. The 2020 update was approved by the Council and had to go through the formal DHEC approval process.

Mr. Jordan stated that Kiawah has one of the healthiest beaches in the State. He reviewed the beach renourishment project completed by the Town in 2006 at \$3.6 million and the beach renourishment project in 2015 at \$538,00.00. In the late fall of 2017, a storm caused severe erosion of the dunes along most of the Kiawah beachfront. The Town completed a sand scraping project at the cost of \$200,000.00. With the damage being caused by a storm, the cost was reimbursed by FEMA.

- Deer Culling

Mr. Jordan stated deer are a keystone species and can impact their environment by what they eat. On Kiawah, they are an iconic species but have public safety risks of vehicle collisions and transmitting certain diseases. He stated that deer numbers started rising in 2017 when the bobcat population started declining, and deer numbers have substantially increased every year.

Mr. Jordan was asked to develop a deer management plan for the island, which the Council approved in April 2020. He indicated that the program would utilize sharpshooting to harvest deer from the island, the state permit and tags have been received, the harvest work will be completed by March 1st, and all the meat from the harvested deer are donated to charity.

Mr. Jordan stated that 100 tags would be utilized in the first year of the program, which will likely have to be continued for several more years.

Discussion included the areas that would be targeted, the length of the harvest taking approximately seven to ten days, and that the harvested deer will be transported to the processor providing approximately 12,000 meals.

Wrap up

Mayor Labriola thanked the Councilmember for attending. He reviewed the items accomplished:

- Identified the priorities that are critical for 2021
- Discussed the implications and the conditions necessary to accomplish the priorities with continuing to outline a timetable of the priorities and how they fit in a workplan for 2021
- Key dates of the 2021-2022 Financial Plan
- Identification of on the terms of responsibilities and assignments
- Emphasis on the importance and focus on communications

Mayor Labriola asked members and staff to consider timing of reporting and the frequency of the reporting.

Mayor Pro Tem Prickett echoed the Mayor's comments. In addition to Council's business, the other and the sometimes-harder job is thinking out over the next ten years and how decisions made now will make a difference then. He noted many of the programs are building a database that will help for decades, and several of the programs are good because they cross over the annual budget and get people thinking out over ten years.

Councilmembers Moffitt stated that the Retreat was amazingly helpful. He stated that he ran for Council because he wanted to be involved in what happens to the Town.

Councilmember Parker said it felt like a tree was planted today, and hopefully, in thirty years, it will be the right tree to provide what the Town needs. He stated that other Councils have done similar things and had

longer to know the long-range vision. Still, he felt like the members have recognized that the Town is fundamentally going to change on their watch, and Members have got to take a bigger step in planning the right today.

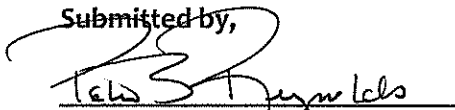
Councilmember Connelly stated that she enjoyed the two days of the Retreat. She felt a lot was going on, Kiawah and that the future would continue to build on the discussion of the past two days. She felt that follow-up was important and that Mayor Labriola had ideas based on his experience to be very beneficial to all. She commented on the importance of live streaming for those who are not comfortable attending meetings in-person.

Ms. Braswell Edgerton creates the Town Notes and is always looking for articles or ideas. Please keep in mind that if you have some great article you may think is helpful for the community.

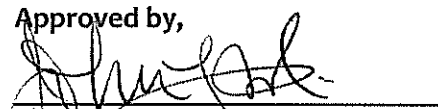
One last thing; Ms. Tillerson stated during the process of drafting the first Emergency Ordinance; Town Council wrote into the ordinance that any monies collected from fines imposed as part of a violation of the Emergency Ordinance would be donated to an organization to help restaurant workers unable to work because of the pandemic or some organization that is helping the hospitality industry. After doing some research, a lot of these different organizations are no longer in existence. As a commitment that she would like for the Town to carry out, Ms. Tillerson stated she would search for some other type of organization and compile a list for Councilmember to review. Ms. Tillerson stated the last time she checked; there were about \$5000.00 in funds to donate and maybe as high as \$6000.00 by now.

Councilmember Parker made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:21 am. Councilmember Moffitt seconded the motion and was unanimously passed.

Submitted by,


Petra S. Reynolds, Town Clerk

Approved by,


John D. Labriola, Mayor

3-5-2021

Date