TOWN OF AWENDAW

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Katharine Watkins | *Town Administrator*
Donna F. Steed| *Clerk/Treasurer*

Town of Awendaw
South Carolina
SETTLED 1696

Chris Crolley | *Mayor*

Town Council
Paul Brown | Wendy Helms
Grace Gasper | Rodney Porcher
Kent Prause | John Timmons

Town of Awendaw
Planning Commission Meeting
Agenda

Monday, March 16th, 2026
6:00 PM, VIRTUAL (Click Here for Link)
Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/s/86484012525
Meeting ID: 864 8401 2525
Passcode: 697175
One tap mobile
US: +13126266799,,86484012525# or +16468769923,,86484012525#

A. Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance & Reading of the Civility Pledge

At 6:00 pm, Chairman John Osguthorpe, began the virtual Planning Commission Meeting by reading the Serenity Prayer, reciting the Pledge of Allegiance & he also read the Civility Pledge for all.

B. Call to Order and Roll Call – [Time Stamp: 1:00]

Chairman Osguthorpe called the virtual meeting to order. Ms. Kelly Cousino, Mr. Jeff Hardee, and Dr. John Osguthorpe were present, confirming a quorum. Commissioner Reigart was absent. Town Administrator, Mrs. Katharine Watkins, Town Planning Manager, Mr. Daniel O'Hara, and Town Planning Clerk, Takeya White, were also present. Commissioner James Gardner joined the meeting at 6:04 pm.

C. Approve Minutes as available – FEBRUARY 17TH & FEBRUARY 23RD, 2026

Chairman Osguthorpe then moved to agenda item C, "Approval of Minutes" and entertained a motion to approve the February 17th & February 23rd meeting minutes. There was no discussion.

Motion: To approve the minutes of the February 17th & February 23rd meetings.
Posed By: Ms. Kelly Cousino
Second: Dr. John Osguthorpe

APPROVED

Vote: Unanimous Approval

Chairman Osguthorpe then began to preface agenda item D, "Public Comments," and asked if there were members of the public who wished to speak and passed the meeting on to the Planning Manager, Mr. Daniel O'Hara.

D. Public Comments – ***There were none.***

The public comment period will be limited to a total of 25 minutes. Each speaker will have up to 2 minutes. No individual may speak more than once until all others wishing to comment have had an opportunity.

E. New Business –

a. Proposed amendment to Town of Awendaw's Zoning Code Definitions

The Planning Commission considered a proposed amendment to the Town's Zoning Code to add a definition of "structure." Staff explained that the term is referenced throughout the code and that the addition would provide a clear and consistent definition. The Commission briefly discussed the scope of the definition, noting that it broadly applies to any improvements placed on a property, including temporary structures and signage. After discussion, Chairman Osguthorpe entertained a motion.

Motion: To recommend approval of the proposed definition of "structure."
Posed By: Ms. Kelly Cousino
Second: Dr. John Osguthorpe
Vote: Unanimous Approval

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

b. Residential Zoning District Discussion

The Commission transitioned into a broader discussion regarding residential zoning districts. Members reviewed a preliminary framework developed by two Commission members (Commissioner Cousino & Commissioner Hardee), based on the Town's Comprehensive Plan, which recommends three primary residential categories: Conservation Residential, Rural Residential, and Village Residential.

The proposed framework includes:

- Splitting Village Residential into two districts (VR-1 and VR-2) to account for varying residential densities;

APPROVED

- Maintaining consistency with the Comprehensive Plan's guidance on lot sizes and development patterns; and
- Establishing a logical progression of zoning districts from higher-density residential areas to lower-density, rural areas.

Discussion also included consideration of creating or maintaining an agricultural or agricultural-residential zoning district. Commissioners noted that many surrounding jurisdictions include such districts and that they serve to protect farmland, reduce development pressures, and allow for agricultural and residential uses to coexist.

Significant discussion focused on the relationship between zoning classifications and agricultural tax assessments. Members expressed concern that changes to zoning district names, permitted uses, or minimum lot sizes could unintentionally affect property owners' eligibility for agricultural tax benefits. It was noted that state law references agricultural use and income thresholds; however, there remains some uncertainty as to whether zoning designation or actual land use is the determining factor.

The Commission acknowledged that much of the Town is currently zoned agricultural and emphasized the need to proceed cautiously with any zoning changes to avoid unintended impacts on residents. Members discussed the prevalence of small-scale or "hobby" farms and the importance of preserving opportunities for such uses within the Town.

Consensus was reached on the following:

- Additional research and clarification are needed regarding agricultural tax eligibility and its relationship to zoning;
- Consultation with the Town Attorney, a tax professional, and/or the South Carolina Department of Agriculture should be pursued; and
- Agricultural uses should be carefully considered in the development of future zoning districts.

The Commission agreed to move forward with drafting non-controversial residential districts (VR-1 and VR-2), including development standards such as lot size, setbacks, and permitted uses, while continuing to evaluate options for agricultural and lower-density districts.

Staff and Commissioners Hardee & Cousino were assigned the task to present a preliminary draft of the residential zoning districts at a future meeting.

No further action was taken. Chairman Osguthorpe then moved on to Agenda item E, c with a motion.

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c. Meeting Schedule for Planning Commission - **[Time Stamp: 38:37]**

Motion: To open discussion on Agenda item E(c), "Meeting Schedule for Planning Commission"
Posed By: Dr. John Osguthorpe
Second: Mr. James Gardner
Vote: Unanimous Approval

The Commission opened discussion regarding the future meeting schedule. Staff advised that the Town Attorney has a recurring conflict on the third Monday of each month and requested consideration of shifting Planning Commission meetings to either the second or fourth Monday to allow for greater participation.

The Commission discussed availability and scheduling considerations, including coordination with Town Council meeting timelines. Staff recommended the second Monday of each month as the most efficient option to allow adequate time for agenda preparation and transmittal of items to Town Council. With no objections from Commission members, a motion was made.

Motion: To recommend shifting regular Planning Commission meetings from the third Monday to the second Monday of each month.
Posed By: Mr. James Gardner
Second: Dr. John Osguthorpe
Vote: Unanimous Approval

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Town Administrator, Katharine Watkins, clarified that the change will require formal adoption by Town Council through an ordinance amendment.

Mr. O'Hara also advised that an updated meeting calendar will be presented at the next meeting to provide public notice of the proposed change.

Mr. O'Hara then requested feedback on scheduling a potential special-called meeting to address postponed plat reviews. The Commission expressed general support, with a preference for selecting a date outside of Mondays to accommodate member availability. The Planning Clerk would circulate a poll to determine a suitable date and time.

H. Closing Remarks – *There were none.*

After hearing no additional remarks, Chairman Osguthorpe entertained a motion to adjourn.

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I. **Adjournment – [Time Stamp: 44:35]**

Motion: To Adjourn.
Posed By: Dr. John Osguthorpe
Second: Mr. James Gardner
Vote: Unanimous Approval

Next Meeting – TBD (April 20*th, 2026)*

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT, THE PRINT MEDIA WERE DULY NOTIFIED, ALONG WITH A HARD COPY POSTED AT CITY HALL. • SHOULD YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, PLEASE CONTACT PLANNING AT (843) 931-8125.

DRAFT Minutes Respectfully submitted on Monday, April 20th, 2026, by Takeya White

Final Approval Date: 4/21/2026 *Signature: Takeya D. White*

Note: These meeting minutes are not verbatim. To watch the full meeting video, please visit the town's YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@TownOfAwendaw.

APPROVED