TOWN OF AWENDAW

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Katharine Watkins | *Town Administrator*

Takeya D. White | *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

Special Called Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 31st, 2026

6:00 PM

Awendaw Town Hall

APPROVED

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

At 6:00 pm, Chairman John Osguthorpe, began the Planning Commission Meeting. Commissioner Jeff Hardee, read the Serenity Prayer, recited the Pledge of Allegiance & led the recitation of the Civility Pledge.

B. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Osguthorpe called the meeting to order. Mr. James Gardner, Ms. Kelly Cousino, Mr. Jeff Hardee, Mr. Jay Reigart and Dr. John Osguthorpe were all present. Town Administrator, Mrs. Katharine Watkins, Town Planning Manager, Mr. Daniel O'Hara, Town Planning Clerk, Takeya White and Town Attorney Mr. Mac McQuillin were also present.

Chairman Osguthorpe then began to preface agenda item C, "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. O'Hara prefaced the public comments and opened the floor to Public Comments.

C. Public Comments –

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.

2 members of the public wished to speak:

Andrea Frazier 7854 Gull Bay Drive - expressed concerns regarding prior approval conditions, financial estimates, engineered septic systems, consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, and the absence of tree mitigation documentation.

Lynne Vicary 8470 Doar Road - concurred with previously stated concerns regarding missing meeting minutes, septic systems, and related development issues.

1 comment was submitted digitally:

Susan Cox 6209 Rudder Lane - expressed concerns regarding the adequacy and accuracy of the infrastructure bond estimates for Seewee Sound and urged that all required infrastructure improvements and conditions be completed prior to the issuance of certificates of occupancy.

Motion: To end public comments
Posed By: Mr. Jeff Hardee
Second: Mr. James Gardner
Vote: Unanimous Approval

D. New Business –

The Planning Commission voted to enter Executive Session to receive legal advice regarding the Preserve at Seewee Sound conditional plat matter. A motion was made and seconded, and the Commission entered Executive Session. **[Time Stamp: 13:05/1:47:13]**

Motion: Motion to go into executive session for the stated purpose of receiving legal advice protected by the attorney-client privilege concerning Sewee Sound Plat Review.
Posed By: Mr. James Gardner
Second: Ms. Kelly Cousino
Vote: Unanimous Approval

a. Executive Session for the stated purpose of receiving legal advice protected by the attorney-client privilege concerning Sewee Sound Plat Review. Upon returning to open session, the Council may take action on matters discussed in Executive Session.

Motion: Motion to come out of executive session for the stated purpose of receiving legal advice protected by the attorney-client privilege concerning Sewee Sound Plat Review. [Time Stamp: 54:25/1:47:13]
Posed By: Mr. James Gardner
Second: Ms. Kelly Cousino
Vote: Unanimous Approval

After returning to open session, Town Administrator, Mrs. Watkins stated for the record that no motions, votes, or decisions were made during Executive Session. Mr. McQuillin suggested that the applicant's counsel give his presentation next. Chairman Osguthorpe then moved on to agenda item D, b. and opened the floor to Mr. Lesemann.

b. **The Preserve at Seewee Sound Ph I & II (TMS 680-00-00-055)**
Conditional Plat Review – *Action Item*

Applicant Presentation [Time Stamp: 55:03/1:47:13]

Counsel for Dreamfinder Homes, Mr. Ellis Lesemann, presented the request for conditional plat approval for the Preserve at Seewee Sound subdivision. Representatives from Dream Finders, Bryan Monahan – Director of Accounts, Ken Wroblewski - Director, and Sergio Velasquez – project engineer were also present in the audience

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Key points of his presentation included:

- The subdivision is a two-phase project.
- Phase One infrastructure was described as substantially installed, including roads, stormwater infrastructure, and water lines.
- Approximately $4.7 million had already been invested into infrastructure and approximately $3.2 million into the land.
- A $6 million performance bond had been secured since August 2025.
- The request sought conditional plat approval to allow vertical construction in Phase One while remaining infrastructure work in Phase Two is completed.
- The applicant acknowledged additional information may still be needed and stated willingness to provide any missing documentation requested by staff or legal counsel.

Staff and Legal Clarifications

Town Attorney, Mr. Mac McQuillin clarified that:

- The current conditional plat application was officially submitted on February 18, 2026.
- Additional information had been requested by Mr. O'Hara on February 26, 2026.
- Certain required documents had not yet been provided, including:
    - Bond terms,
    - The contract associated with the bond,
    - Verification and supporting documentation related to the financial guarantee.

The Commission also discussed that:

- The ordinance requires Planning Commission approval of financial guarantees.
- Prior approvals issued administratively may have exceeded staff authority under the ordinance.

Infrastructure and Water System Concerns

Commission members and utility representative, Mr. Ron Bycroft, raised significant concerns regarding incomplete infrastructure, particularly the public water system, including:

- Water lines had not yet passed required pressure testing.
- Required bacteriological testing had not been completed.
- A permit to operate the water system had not yet been issued.
- Certain shutoff valves reportedly did not meet Town standards.
- Concerns were expressed about allowing home construction prior to completion and certification of the public water infrastructure.

Questions were also raised regarding:

- Why Phase One was not being submitted separately for final plat approval,
- Whether the application was complete enough for Commission consideration,
- The feasibility of resolving infrastructure deficiencies before the next meeting.

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Motion & Decision [Time Stamp: 1:18:10/1:47:13]

Commissioner Cousino stated that the application appeared incomplete and questioned whether it should remain on the agenda without all required documentation and testing. Discussion followed regarding resubmittal requirements and outstanding items needed before further consideration. The Commission then made a motion.

Motion: Deny the application until all required materials have been submitted and the application is deemed complete, at which time the applicant may resubmit for consideration on a future Planning Commission agenda.
Posed By: Mr. Jay Reigart
Second: Mr. Jeff Hardee
Vote: Unanimous Approval

The applicant then agreed to:

- Provide the missing bond documentation and related contracts,
- Address staff comments,
- Complete outstanding infrastructure and testing requirements,
- Return with a revised application for future consideration.

E. Old Business – [Time Stamp: 1:21:37/ 1:47:13]

a. Open Space – *Discussion Item*

The Commission made a motion and then transitioned into a discussion regarding a draft Open Space Ordinance framework.

Motion: To Open discussion on Open Space.
Posed By: Mr. Jay Reigart
Second: Mr. Jeff Hardee
Vote: Unanimous Approval

Topics discussed included:

- Creating standalone open space regulations rather than embedding standards in each zoning district.
- Reviewing examples from other municipalities including Georgetown and Beaufort.
- Defining “open space,” impervious coverage, lot coverage, and passive versus active recreation areas.
- Whether larger lots should require less dedicated open space due to existing private open areas.
- Clarifying how open space requirements interact with impervious surface limitations and subdivision regulations.

F. Closing Remarks –

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Chairman Osguthorpe led a discussion regarding affordable and workforce housing challenges, including the potential use of density incentives for essential workers such as teachers and firefighters. He noted that affordable housing is a priority of the Mayor and was therefore brought forward for discussion.

The Commission also discussed the possibility of establishing a stakeholder working group consisting of Council members, Town staff, developers, and public service representatives to further evaluate affordable housing and open space preservation strategies.

G. Adjournment

Motion: To Adjourn
Posed By: Mr. James Gardner
Second: Mr. Jeff Hardee
Vote: Unanimous Approval

The meeting adjourned at 7:47 PM

Next Meeting – TBD (April 21st, *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 Friday, May 8th, 2026, by Takeya White

Final Approval Date:5/11/2026 ***Signature:*** _____

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.

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