

Public Safety Committee Regular Meeting

September 16, 2025 @ 10:00 AM

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Seabrook Island Town Hall, Council Chambers
2001 Seabrook Island Road
Seabrook Island, SC 29455



MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kortvelesy called the meeting to order at 10:02 am.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present: Dan Kortvelesy; Chairman, Committee members Dr. Carl Bergren, John Kinne, and Dr. Leslie Baylis

Town Staff Present: Joe Cronin (Town Administrator) and Peter Wiggins (Clerk/Treasurer).

FOIA STATEMENT

The Clerk/Treasurer confirmed that the meeting was advertised in compliance with the requirements of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act. Agendas were posted and furnished to news media and all others requesting notification.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 19, 2025

Mr. Kinne motioned to approve the minutes of August 19, seconded by Dr. Baylis.

Mr. Kinne's motion was approved UNANIMOUSLY.

NEW BUSINESS

**Charleston County
Emergency Management
Email**

Chairman Kortvelesy stated there were a few items in the email from Charleston County Emergency Management that caught his attention. He stated that Charleston County informed the town that federal disaster agencies will more closely scrutinize disaster declaration requests going forward. The email went on to say that coordination on damage assessment between local municipalities and Charleston County will be critical moving forward. Chairman Kortvelesy commented that members of CERT have performed wind damage surveys after storms, and said these surveys need to be as accurate as possible considering Charleston County's email.

Chairman Kortvelesy stated that the other item that caught his attention was debris operations. He stated that in the past, the Equestrian Center allowed their pasture to be used as a debris removal and processing site. Chairman Kortvelesy stated he had heard

that there was a site in Hollywood that could potentially be used as a debris removal and processing site, but it was concerning because these debris removal sites are getting further away from Seabrook Island.

Dr. Bergren asked if the town is currently contracted with companies for debris removal.

Chairman Kortvelesy stated the town has two contracts for debris removal and processing. He further stated it was his concern that if processing sites are moved further away from Seabrook Island, the town may incur increased costs.

Dr. Bergren asked if the current contracts specify a fixed cost for debris removal.

Mr. Cronin stated the town has fixed costs, per the contract. He stated what costs a resident may incur for removal of a tree from private property is something over which the town has no control. He further stated the town is technically only responsible for debris clearing on the public portion of Seabrook Island Road. He further stated there was no guarantee, that if the town assisted with debris clearing behind the SIPOA security gate, the town would be reimbursed for those costs. He stated this was purely due to the roads behind the security gate being privately owned.

Chairman Kortvelesy said there have been discussions, purely in the interest of public safety, the town assisting with clearing of debris along Seabrook Island Road only. He stated this would allow SJFD and Charleston County EMS to access the island as well as allowing for SIUC vehicles to access the island.

Mr. Cronin stated that before every hurricane season, the town's disaster preparedness contractor submits a cost estimate to the town estimating costs of disaster recovery for all hurricane strengths. He stated that for a Category 5 storm, the costs would be at least \$10,000,000. He stated that the town only has a few million dollars at its disposal. He closed by saying that the town could not, even if it wanted to, assist with debris clearing behind the gate. He stated this was only due to the cost.

Mr. Kinne stated he had a concern with Charleston County requiring an individual representing Seabrook Island be on duty at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in the event of an emergency.

Mr. Cronin stated that, in the event the town hires a Public Safety Director, this individual would be assigned to deploy to the EOC.

OLD BUSINESS ITEMS

Low Speed Vehicles (LSV's)

Chairman Kortvelesy stated he would like the committee to consider a few points related to the LSV issue. He stated the first point is the enforceability of any ordinance the committee chooses to recommend. He stated the next point is the nature of the LSV issue. He asked if it was a safety issue or rather an issue of inconvenience. He stated that if it is only a matter of motorists being caught behind an LSV, he would rather the committee not be involved.

Chairman Kortvelesy stated the committee could take one of a few different paths. He stated the first path could be that the committee recommends no action be taken. He reminded the committee that a decision to not take any action is a decision. He stated the second path the committee could take is recommending the installation of pullout lanes for LSV's so faster moving traffic could safely pass. He stated a third path that had been discussed was reducing the speed along the entire length of Seabrook Island Road thus reducing the difference in speed between traditional vehicles and LSV's. He stated another path the committee could take is banning LSV's along Seabrook Island Road. He noted that there may be an enforcement issue due to deputies being unable to enforce local ordinances.

Mr. Kinne stated another option would be to raise the speed limit on Seabrook Island Road, thus prohibiting LSV's due to state statute banning LSV's on roads with speed limits above 35 miles per hour. He further stated that whether there are deputies to enforce the new rule or not, the pressure to follow the rules will self-enforce a prohibition of LSV's

Chairman Kortvelesy stated he has seen LSV's on Bohicket Road near the intersection of Maybank Highway. He stated that he sees LSV's on this road despite the prohibition of LSV's on roads with a speed limit of greater than 35 miles per hour.

Dr. Baylis asked if the committee recommended pullouts, would the pullouts be installed on both sides of Seabrook Island Road.

Chairman Kortvelesy stated they would be installed on both sides.

Mr. Cronin stated the town would need a recommendation from a qualified engineer if the committee were to recommend installing pullouts.

Dr. Bergren stated another option would be to widen Seabrook Island Road or the multi-use path so either could accommodate an LSV lane.

Dr. Baylis asked if LSV's that will be housed at the new Seafields facility can access Freshfields without needing to use Seabrook Island Road.

Mr. Cronin stated the design, submitted as part of their encroachment permit, included an access point from the rear of Seafields onto the Freshfields property. He went on to say that after the fact, the town was informed that the Town of Kiawah Island had approved a gate at the access point. Mr. Cronin stated the town has had discussions with the Town of Kiawah Island about the proposed gate due to the town of Seabrook Island basing their encroachment permit approval on traffic using a rear access point into Freshfields.

Dr. Baylis and Mr. Kinne asked if a traffic camera could be used for data collection purposes.

Mr. Cronin stated he was unaware of any statute forbidding cameras from being used for data collection purposes.

Chairman Kortvelesy proposed asking SIPOA for access to their camera to determine how many LSV's transit through the gate. Chairman Kortvelesy stated he would ask Maryanne Connelly for access to their camera. He closed by saying he wanted all the data they could possibly get before making a recommendation to the town council.

Mr. Cronin recommended that if the committee wanted to pursue data, they collect data in each of the four seasons, rather than collecting data over a one-week period in October.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Chairman Kortvelesy declared the meeting adjourned at 11:08 am.

Peter D. Wiggins II, MPA
Clerk/Treasurer