



Environmental Advisory Committee

4:00pm, Thursday, June 11, 2026

City Hall

Council Chambers

1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC

Public Comment:

All citizens who wish to speak during the meeting must email their first and last name, address, and topic to Nicole DeNeane at nicoled@iop.net no later than **3:00 p.m. the business day before the meeting**. Citizens may also provide public comment here:

<https://www.iop.net/public-comment-form>

Agenda

1. **Call to Order** and acknowledgement that the press and public were duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.
2. **Approval of previous meeting's minutes – May 14, 2026**
3. **Citizen's Comments**
4. **Presentation – none**
5. **Old Business**
 - a. Discussion of setting a date for Resilience 101 Training with SC Department of Resilience (10 minutes)
 - b. Discussion of suggested resources for matrix recommendations (15 minutes)
6. **New Business**
 - a. Discussion of IOP Tree Bank Proposal (15 minutes)
 - b. Discussion of Native Gardens and Landscaping Initiatives (15 minutes)
 - c. Discussion of EAC table at IOP Farmer's Market (5 minutes)
7. **Miscellaneous**

Next meeting: Thursday, July 9, 2026, 4:00pm
8. **Adjournment**



ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

4:00pm, Thursday, May 14, 2026

1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC

and broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>

MINUTES

1. Call to order

Present: Laura Lovins, Sean Popson, Britton Foy, Susan Smith (via Zoom), Charlotte Webster

Staff Present: Administrator Kerr, Deputy Administrator Kuester, Council Member Miars

Absent: Todd Murphy, Eric Cicora, Cindy Marrs

2. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

MOTION: Ms. Popson made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2026 meeting, and Mr. Foy seconded the motion.

VOTE: The amended minutes passed unanimously.

3. Citizen's Comments -- none

4. Presentation – none

5. Old Business

A. Discussion of Sea Rise sign project

After a brief discussion, sea rise signs will be placed at 19th and Myrtle, 25th Avenue beach access path, Palm Blvd. & 38th Avenue, and someplace between 31st & 32nd avenues and 39th and 41st avenues.

B. Update from Native Tree subcommittee

Ms. Lovins asked if Public Information Officer Uys could take up the drone to gather pictures of the island's tree canopy. Administrator Kerr said there are up-to-date aerial pictures of the island on charlestoncounty.org. He will send the link to the members of the subcommittee. He said that some of the island's trees could be identified by zooming in on these pictures.

Ms. Lovins said the subcommittee will use these pictures to evaluate the canopy and identify places for improvement by the planting of native trees in safe places as well as make recommendations for changes to the current tree ordinance.

C. Discussion of Palm Path brochure draft

Discussion of the brochure will be on the June agenda when Ms. Marrs and Mr. Murphy are in attendance. Suggestions for changes should be emailed to them ahead of the meeting.

D. Review and update of EAC-related matrix recommendations

Ms. Lovins reported that she shared the EAC portion of the matrix recommendations with Catherine Minn of the SC Office of Resilience. Ms. Minn provided Ms. Lovins with contact information of people and organizations that could help with many of the recommendations.

Ms. Smith will share the link to the original environmentally-related recommendations from the Community Enrichment Task Force with the Committee to provide further clarity.

Discussion ensued as to how the posters created for the Hurricane Expo can be further used to educate the public. PIO Uys will post them on the EAC webpage on iop.net. The Farmer's Markets and the Recreation Department were discussed as other options for posting those materials.

6. New Business

A. Discussion of Resilience 101 Training with SC Office of Resilience

Ms. Lovins said that Ms. Minn offers a 90-minute Resilience 101 Training and recommends it for the Environmental Advisory Committee as well as City Council. Administrator Kerr said such training could be the sole focus of an upcoming meeting of the Committee, and City Council could be invited to attend.

B. Discussion of EAC Recommendation for City Recognition of a resident's private investment in the community – Fisher Glass contract renewal

Administration Kerr stated that the donor wished for his participation in the Fisher Glass contract renewal to remain anonymous.

7. Miscellaneous

The next meeting of the Environmental Advisory Committee will be Thursday, June 11, 2026 at 4pm.

8. Adjournment

Ms. Popson made a motion to adjourn, and Mr. Foy seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 5:02pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk

Resources for IOP

Hi Douglas and Laura – I hope this list of resources is helpful! Please feel free to disregard the resources that you already know about or those that do not appear helpful in meeting your goals. Please let me know if you have any questions or want to discuss anything in greater detail.

IOP Recommendation	Resource from Catherine
<p>Develop a public education program on resilient strategies.</p> <p><i>Working on this now ✓</i></p>	<p>I am working with other jurisdictions with similar goals to provide resilience training for homeowners. I am connecting these jurisdictions with Preservation Society Charleston (PSC), who may be able to host an in-person training session based on their resilience guidance for Charleston.</p> <p>https://www.preservationsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/GuidanceFullReduced-2.pdf</p> <p>Please let me know if this is something you would like to explore, and I can connect you with folks at PSC.</p>
<p>Educate the owners of septic systems in the proper maintenance and encourage owners to have their septic systems checked and serviced according to established standards</p>	<p>Consider looking into resources from Clemson’s <i>Be Septic Safe</i> program, if applicable.</p> <p>https://www.clemson.edu/extension/water/resources/be-septic-safe.html</p> <p>You can also reach out to their team for specific assistance:</p> <p>https://www.clemson.edu/extension/water/team.html</p>
<p>Encourage and provide incentives for residents, businesses, developers, Wild Dunes Resort and Homeowner Associations (HOA’s) to increase native plants on residential and commercial properties.</p>	<p>Kiawah Island has done a lot of work related to encouraging use of native plants on the island and has a native plant database with detailed information on growing conditions, salt tolerance, etc. to help homeowners and landscapers decide what is most appropriate.</p> <p>https://www.kiawahisland.gov/wildlife/top_initiatives/grow_native/index.php</p> <p>Consider reaching out to folks at Kiawah to learn more about strategies they have pursued and their effectiveness. Let Catherine know if you’d like a connection to them.</p>

<p>Create a guide – available electronically and in print form – for residents, developers, contractors and property managers to promote IOP native plants, trees, eco-friendly landscaping and lighting practices.</p>	<p>See a great example of a Native Plant Guide for Kiawah, Seabrook, and John’s Island from the Kiawah Conservancy: https://kiawahconservancy.org/plant-native/</p> <p>✓ <i>working on this already</i></p> <p>See also how Folly Beach provides information about native plants here: https://cityoffollybeach.com/plant-native.</p>
<p>Involve public in South Carolina Aquarium’s SeaRise sign project.</p> <p><i>done</i></p>	<p>Catherine has a close working relationship with Aubrey Anthony, who runs this program for the South Carolina Aquarium. Please let me know if you’d like an introduction to him – he would love to get you set up with this program if you are not already or give you more information about it.</p>
<p>The City should continue to support tree-planting programs along streets and develop a long-term plan which prioritizes streets and identifies the types of trees to be used</p> <p><i>working on this now</i></p>	<p>If you are not already connected with the South Carolina Forestry Commission, strongly consider joining their email list. SCFC typically opens an application for technical assistance opportunities in the fourth quarter of each year that can support tree-planting goals. Technical assistance can involve: tree canopy mapping, tree inventory (tree health, species, diversity), urban forest management plan, tree storm mitigation plan (tree risk assessment, debris removal), or a tree codes audit.</p> <p>https://www.scfc.gov/management/urban-forestry/</p> <p>Many of your neighboring jurisdictions (Sullivan’s Island, McClellanville, Summerville, Goose Creek, etc) are taking advantage of this technical assistance.</p> <p>Consider reaching out to Cara Specht (cspecht@scfc.gov (839) 201-2722) for more information– she is the Coastal Region Urban Forester who serves Charleston County.</p>
<p>Evaluate and modify the city’s tree ordinances to elevate conservation of native tree species such as palmetto, live oak, pine and wax myrtle.</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>See above – one form of Technical Assistance that SCFC offers is a tree codes audit. They may be able to help you meet this goal. They also have many other resources related to tree ordinances and policy for you and staff members to look into:</p> <p>https://www.scfc.gov/management/urban-forestry/</p> <p><i>working on this now</i></p>
<p>Consider location of at-risk palmettos – important to our community’s identity &</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>See above – tree inventory through SCFC technical assistance can look at tree health by location across IOP.</p> <p><i>working on this now</i></p>

resiliency – and other significant native trees in setting priorities.	
Partner with neighboring coastal communities, especially Mount Pleasant & Sullivan’s Island.	<p>If you are not already connected and would like introductions or connections to Mount Pleasant and Sullivan’s Island’s resilience-related staff members, please let Catherine know!</p> <p>There is also a Charleston Sustainability & Resilience coming up that will be hosted by Charleston County on November 19th. This all-day event would be a great time to make further connections with neighboring jurisdictions about resilience and sustainability goals. This event is not open to the public but is aimed at local government staff, non-profit organizations, and academia. I will forward the invitation to Douglas to distribute to staff as desired.</p>
Inspect septic systems upon transfer of ownership to create an inventory of existing systems, collect data on system failures and educate new owners.	Folly Beach is doing something similar. I have introduced you to Jenna Stephens at Folly Beach who would be a great person to talk to about this.
Pursue promising “natural defense” strategies.	<p>Learn more about the implementation of nature-based solutions in South Carolina through the Nature-Based Exchange. https://www.naturebasedexchange.org/</p> <p>They have a Nature-Based Exchange Compendium (https://www.naturebasedexchange.org/compendium) that is very detailed and helpful. They also have a living document that shares specific case studies of nature-based solutions across the state (https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/5268240f457b4571a4106d87ed9f2030).</p> <p>The Nature-Based Exchange has an upcoming Symposium on November 5, 2025 where you can learn about completed and on-going nature-based projects across the state and hear about lessons learned for project managers/local governments. https://www.naturebasedexchange.org/eventcalendar/nature-based-exchange-symposium</p>
Initiate Pilot Projects including: Living shorelines	See resources above for more information about these nature-based solutions.

<p>Bioswales and rain gardens.</p>	
<p>Target city properties at risk of flooding for adding examples of “rain gardens” and dry ponds.</p>	<p>Folly Beach has installed rain gardens that also serve as demonstration sites for their residents to see benefits of rain gardens. Consider talking with Jenna Stephens about this if you are interested.</p> <p>If you have staff members interested in in-depth training on this topic, consider looking into Clemson Extension’s Master Rain Gardener course: https://www.clemson.edu/extension/raingarden/mrg/ or their Guide to Rain Gardens in South Carolina: https://www.clemson.edu/extension/raingarden/files/clemson_rain_garden_manual_2016.pdf</p> <p>In the ‘Bioretention’ section of the StoryMap shared above (https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/5268240f457b4571a4106d87ed9f2030) you can also see examples of rain gardens installed across the state.</p>
<p>Purchase flood-prone property to preserve and or demonstrate conservation practices.</p>	<p>Consider reaching out to Tyler Spires at SC EMD to discuss how the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program may be able to support your goals related to voluntary housing buyouts. These funds are available in the wake of presidentially declared disasters. I believe IOP has worked with Tyler before, but please let me know if you would like an introduction.</p>
<p>Model, map & monitor areas most susceptible to sea level rise, flooding & storm surges.</p>	<p>As a preliminary step, consider taking a look at SCOR’s Resilience Atlas – specifically, look at the First Street Foundation Flood Model layer. This nationwide flood model allows us to determine potential flood risk from rain, streamflow, sea level rise, tide, and storm surge at a 3-meter spatial resolution. It provides data for both 2025 and 2055. Let Catherine know if you’d like a tutorial on how to use the Resilience Atlas. https://scor.sc.gov/Atlas</p>

IOP “Get Rooted” Tree Bank Proposal

- **Isle of Palms would set aside \$100,000 from the annual tree mitigation funds that would go towards a community “cost share” grant for the planting of native trees that will enhance the existing IOP tree canopy. Residents, civic clubs, and other community groups would be able to access this grant money**
- **Isle of Palms will provide 50% of the costs for the planting of trees. It would be a reimbursement model -the resident(s) or community group(s) would pay up front for the cost of the tree, and the City would then reimburse 50% of the cost**
- **The cost share grant will be for amounts up to \$1000**
- **Trees could be planted in an appropriate space on private property within 10 feet of a public right-of-way - i.e. near public streets. The resident would be responsible for maintaining/caring for the tree**
- **Trees could also be planted in publicly accessible spaces like parks, and churches**
- **Development companies may not apply, nor will applications be accepted from persons or businesses for the purpose of fulfilling green space/landscape requirements**
- **IOP Town Staff are eligible to submit project recommendations**
- **A 4” caliper Native tree size would be the minimum size tree to be considered, and we would encourage the planting of canopy trees, like Live Oaks, as often as possible and appropriate**
- **Designated members of the IOP Environmental Advisory Committee would help vet the proposals using the “Right Tree/Right Place” philosophy**
- **Bigger planting projects over \$1000 could be set up on a phased program. 1st phase of the project gets 50% matching; 2nd phase of the project gets 50% matching, etc.**
- **IOP City Council will need to approved the program**

Native Landscaping Contest

- IOP Public Information Officer Josh Uys already inserted an entry form on [this city web page](#), which otherwise includes info about the native garden and descriptions of the plants featured in the garden.
 - The landscaping questions listed in the form are also provided below.
 - The form gives people a chance to provide photos.
 - **The deadline currently listed is Sept. 15.**
- The native plant sign that was done for the Hurricane & Resilience Expo mentioned the contest with a QR code to the page. Unsure how many visitors keyed in on it.
- Susan can work with Josh to publicize the contest more fully on social media and local publications.
- Depending on the number of entries, suggest selecting up to 3 residents and 3 businesses as winners.
- City staff worked with Acme this spring on an Arbor Day contest, asking residents to share their favorite native tree on the island, and awarded the winner an Acme gift card. It worked well - We could try to work with Acme and potentially other businesses to obtain more gift cards for this contest.

Thoughts on judging? A panel of 2-3 would be ideal. Possibly someone from the Native Plant Society or the Charleston Horticultural Society; possibly Gerald (Jerry) Benoit – Mt. Pleasant Arborist who is helping with the Native Tree Guide; David Quick from the Mount Pleasant Green Commission could be a good candidate. He's involved in native plant initiatives for MtP and is well-versed, though not an expert.

2026 Native Landscaping Contest

Landscaping Information

Residents and businesses, please share how your property supports native plants and trees.

The contest deadline is Sept. 15.

Tell us about the native plants and trees on your property.

Do you have a favorite feature?

Describe steps you've taken to add or support native plants and trees in your landscaping.

Is there a season or specific time when your landscaping looks best?

Please share photos of your native landscaping.

Upload