Kiawah Municipal Center Project

Background
Faced with a growing community, increased services and limited office space and parking, Council investigated municipal center expansion options. After trying to work within the confines of the existing building and parking lot, it was determined that onsite building modifications would be limited and would exacerbate the parking problem. Council then began a search for property both on and off island that would accommodate a larger municipal facility.

After investigating available property resources on Kiawah, which all proved too expensive, Council identified a large parcel on Betsy Kerrison Parkway. It proved to be a viable option and solution both economically and in location. Over the next six months Council negotiated the acquisition with the sellers and resolved numerous contingencies to the purchase. In November 2014, the Town acquired 27.7 acres of property, of which 18 acres are high ground, along Betsy Kerrison Parkway at a cost of $2 million. This property was annexed into the corporate limits of the Town for the purposes of constructing a new Municipal Center.

In February, with a new Town Council in place preparations began on this strategic project. The Mayor formed a Municipal Center Committee (MCC) to spearhead the project. The Committee is chaired by Councilman John Labriola and includes Councilwoman Mary Johnson, Roger Warren, Mark Permar and Dan Prickett. The MCC will coordinate and advise Town Council on the design, planning, and construction of the new Municipal Complex. Committee meetings will be held biweekly on Thursdays at 3pm and all meetings are open to the public. Labriola adds that “this project provides an exciting opportunity for the entire community to participate in its design and development.”

We are targeting to have the new municipal center completed and ready for occupancy by the end of 2016. Labriola comments that “the MCC is developing a detailed design and construction schedule.” A Request for Proposal (RFP) for architectural services was published on March 23rd. It invites architectural firms to propose building and site designs. We expect the winning firm to be selected in early June.

Communication
As the project progresses, the Town will keep the community informed and engaged using the Town website, quarterly Town Notes newsletter and email blasts along with other project related information. Starting on April 1st, the Town website, www.kiawahisland.org can be visited to access a dedicated page titled the Municipal Center Project under the Popular Links menu. The page will feature the project background, schedule, updates, photographs of the facility design and meeting times. There will also be an opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions about the municipal facility from this page by sending an email to municipalcenter@kiawahisland.org.

The Town’s biweekly updates in its e-blasts will feature the latest news on the project. Council also plans to hold timely public meetings as well to review plans and progress and further solicit community feedback on the project.

Municipal Center Vision
The Town’s Vision for the new Municipal Center and site is to create a “Gateway” to the Town of Kiawah Island. The facility will feature a high quality Town entrance commensurate with The Sanctuary Hotel, River Course Clubhouse and Cassique Clubhouse. The new Municipal Center will complement these facilities and project the Kiawah Island image.

The new municipal center facility will house the Town’s current departments and Town provided services and allow for growth. The building is expected to provide space to accommodate up to 30 employees based on a ten year look ahead. In addition; the municipal center will include Council Chambers, Municipal Court, Visitors Bureau space, generous public meeting space and customer service areas for the public. Preliminary estimates indicate a building size of about 18,000 sq. ft.

The total Municipal Center project, inclusive of architectural design, construction, site development, and landscaping, is projected to cost about $10 million. The Town anticipates contributing $4 million from its cash reserves and financing the $6 million balance over 25-30 years.

Existing Municipal Center
The Kiawah Island Community Association has advised the Town they will remain in the existing Municipal Center. Their current lease expires in 2017 and they have written their intention to exercise the first of two 15 year lease extension options. It is not clear at this time how they would utilize space now occupied by the Town.
Discussion of the PSSI Emergency Services Report
Received a detailed presentation on the findings of the PSSI Emergency Services Report. The Public Safety Committee will provide direction as they begin working on initiatives and proposals to upgrade and improve public safety on the Island. A copy of the full report and recommendations can be found on the Town website at www.kiawahisland.org.

Ordinance 2015-01 - An Ordinance to Clarify that the Municipal Court has Subject Matter Jurisdiction Over Ordinance Violations and the Appropriate Penalties for Such Violations – 2nd Reading, approved unanimously.

Ordinance 2015-02 - An Ordinance to Amend Article 2, General Government; to allow members to attend meetings via telephone or other electronic means and vote, require written questions be submitted prior to Council meetings; and ensure timely responses to oral questions submitted to Council - 1st Reading, approved unanimously.

Ordinance 2015-03 - An Ordinance to Pro Forma for Amendments, Deletions and Additions to Article 14, (Flood Ordinance) Article 7, and Article 15. 2nd Reading, approved unanimously.

Ordinance 2015-04 - An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 12, Land Use Planning and Zoning; To clarify any inconsistencies in interpretation between the ordinance and the ARB requirements for lot coverage, setbacks and definitions – 1st Reading, approved unanimously.

2015 Charitable Contributions
Council reviewed the Charitable Contributions applications for distribution. Of 15 application requests totaling $261,350 Council approved funding for 14 applications totaling $200,000 which was budgeted. A detailed listing may be found on the Town website at www.kiawahisland.org.

- Coastal Science & Engineering – Beach Re-nourishment See Page 5.

Infrastructure Proposal
Contracted with Jacob’s Engineering in an amount not to exceed $20,000, to complete an evaluation of the Town’s existing infrastructure on Beachwalker Drive and Kiawah Island Parkway.

Concealed Weapons Signage Discussion
Council voted unanimously not to place signage on the front of the Municipal Center referencing Concealed Weapons.

Ordinance 2015-05 - An Ordinance to amend the Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Budget, 1st Reading, adopted unanimously. A Public Hearing for the Budget Amendment will be held on April 14th at 1:30.

Kiawah Island Utility – During the Strategic Planning Meeting, Council prioritized pending projects. With the beach renourishment and the new Municipal Center taking priority, and the negotiations for the Utility, being complicated by the construction of the second water line, Council voted unanimously to withdraw the Town from negotiations for the purchase of the Utility.

Building Permitting Recommendation
Approved resolution from the Planning Commission to amend the building ordinance; Council voted to increase the permitting threshold amount for repair work requiring permitting from $200 to $1,000.

Beach Services Franchise Amendments
Extended the Island Beach Services and Night Heron franchise agreements from April 1st to April 30th with an additional one-month fee of $750 and $500 respectively.

SATAx Committee Confirmation
Approved the slate of members for the State Accommodations Tax Committee with an additional member serving in a non-voting capacity.

Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT) Radios
Approved Radio Standard Operating Guidelines.

Diamondback Terrapin Proclamation
Mayor Lipuma proclaimed April 2015 “Diamondback Terrapin Month.”
On January 26, 2015 the newly elected Town Council met in Special Session to develop Strategic Objectives for the next 2 years.

Significant challenges addressed were:
- Purchasing the Kiawah Island Utility
- Building a new Town Municipal Center at the recently purchased Betsy Kerrison Parkway site
- Repairing severe beach erosion at Kiawah’s East End
- Developing a new ten year Comprehensive Plan
- Acting on PSSI’s report on Kiawah’s Fire, EMS and Police Services.

It became readily apparent that the Town had neither the financial resources nor sufficient staff to effectively handle all these matters at this time. In subsequent discussions Town Council unanimously agreed to withdraw our offer to purchase Kiawah Island Utility and proceed expeditiously with the other key items. Significant factors were the additional cost and completion requirements for the utility’s second water line.

On February 12, John Labriola and I met with Kiawah Partners’ Patrick Melton and Townsend Clarkson. We updated them on Town Council’s deliberations and priorities and advised we were withdrawing our offer to purchase Kiawah Island Utility. They took no issue with our decision and advised they would complete the water line and continue to operate a viable and dependable utility. We advised that a future Town Council might choose to reopen discussions and negotiate a new price.

The Town is expediting Kiawah’s East End Beach repair and renourishment. Originally scheduled for October, the work will be advanced to May given the accelerated pace of the erosion. We are pressing the Army Corp of Engineers for the final permit so contracting for the project can get underway.

A committee has been formed to guide the design and construction of the new Municipal Center. John Labriola has been named Chairman. Other members are Councilwoman Mary Johnson, Planning Consultant Mark Permar, Kiawah Island Golf Resort President Roger Warren and Planning Commission Vice Chairman Dan Prickett. A request for Proposal (RFP) for Architectural Firms has been prepared and will be issued in March. Municipal Center Committee meetings are open to the public with meeting dates and agendas issued prior to the meetings.

Work is also underway on the Comprehensive Plan and on PSSI’s Emergency Services Recommendations. Progress on all the Strategic Objectives will be reviewed in future issues of Town Notes and in the biweekly eblast.

Another subject discussed at the January 26, 2015 Strategic Planning meeting was the Community Association locating amenities at Rhett’s Bluff Landing. Town Council does not have an official position given that this is a KICA matter. Should KICA submit a zoning approval application for an amenities facility at the Rhett’s Bluff site, the Town’s Planning Commission will render a decision.
As we embark upon the second quarter of 2015, the Town is required to update its Comprehensive Plan which is the “essential first step” in any community’s planning process. As such all zoning ordinances and amendments in the Town must conform to the comprehensive plan. Last reviewed in 2010 the Comprehensive Plan represents the Planning Commission’s recommendation to Town Council regarding wise and efficient use of public funds, future growth, development, redevelopment and the fiscal impact to the community.

The Town’s Planning Commission, chaired by Mr. Fred Peterson, is charged with the responsibility of adopting, reviewing and updating the Comprehensive Plan. This year, the Commission is faced with the important task of completing the required ten-year update of the plan. Given this very detailed process, the Planning Commission formed a Subcommittee that will shepherd the update process. The Subcommittee is chaired by Dan Prickett. Other committee members include Bill Dowdy, Planning Commission; Tumiko Rucker, Town Administrator; Dan Pennick, Planning Director; Joel Evans and Jenny Werking of Planning Staff and Stewart Thomas, Planning Intern.

The group began work on the plan update on March 18th and anticipates a thorough review with the Planning Commission and the community prior to the approval process. The Planning Commission will host a series of public review meetings to receive feedback and input from the public. In addition, a public hearing will be held prior to the Plan’s adoption which is anticipated in October 2015.

The scope of the Comprehensive Plan update includes an inventory of existing conditions; redefining a statement of needs and goals; and developing implementation strategies to accomplish specific objectives for each planning element. As part of the Plan update, both the Town’s Zoning and Land Use maps will also be updated. The various required elements of the Plan will be rewritten to reflect the changes in the community since the last review in 2010. Over this upcoming eight month period, the subcommittee will interview key community stake holders including the Kiawah Island Community Association, Kiawah Island Golf Resort and Kiawah Partners to gather information relative to each element and update data points that are critical to the plan. The committee will also gather information from a variety of other sources including the Census, Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments, County Assessors Office and Charleston Area Visitors Bureau to name a few.

The elements of the Plan to be updated include:

- Population
- Economic Development
- Natural Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Community Facilities
- Housing
- Land Use
- Transportation

The Subcommittee’s meeting schedule can be found on the Town’s website at www.kiawahisland.org in the Agendas and Minutes section. All meetings are open to the public. Future public input meetings and public hearings will be advertised well in advance to ensure that the community has an opportunity to take part in this vital planning process. Information about these events will be shared on the Town website, biweekly email blasts and Town Notes.
Recent Erosion

The beach erosion adjacent to the Ocean Course driving range increased dramatically during January and February 2015 and approximately 155 feet of land was lost during January alone. In response to the increased erosion and at the request of the Kiawah Island Golf Resort (KIGR), the Town worked with OCRM to issue an emergency sand bagging and sand scraping order on February 19. KIGR began placing 2,000 pound sand bags on the beach immediately. There are now approximately 2,300 sand bags in place. KIGR also conducted sand scraping activities on February 26 and 27. OCRM contacted the Town on February 27 and asked that all sand scraping activities stop because of potential adverse effects on Federal Critical Habitat areas. The Town issued an amendment to the emergency order on February 27 and officially stopped all sand scraping activities. The sand bags have effectively slowed the erosion rate in the area over the last 2 weeks. Tides have also been lower than normal which has helped to minimize the erosion. The current emergency order will expire on March 31, 2015 and OCRM would need to approve any additional emergency orders.

Project Timeline

The East End Beach project is scheduled to begin May 15. Final construction plans were finalized and the project was put out for bid in mid-March. The project will close the existing tidal inlet responsible for the erosion along the Ocean Course and excavate a new inlet further to the east. A total of 100,000 cubic yards of sand will be used to close the inlet and to renourish eroded sections of beach. Work will be conducted via land-based equipment, including bulldozers, excavators, and off-road dump trucks. The project area will be closed to public access during the project, which is expected to last 3 weeks.

KEEPING TABS ON KIAWAH’S DEER POPULATION

White-tailed deer are very adaptable creatures, equally at home in forests and fields as well as suburban neighborhoods. Deer populations in suburban areas can become overabundant, increasing the risk of deer-vehicle collisions, zoonotic diseases, and damage to the surrounding environment. It is important to monitor trends in deer numbers so that management programs can be initiated if necessary. The most commonly used deer survey technique is the spotlight survey. Town Biologists have been conducting biannual spotlight surveys for deer since 1997. The survey route is 18.2 miles long and covers most of Kiawah Island. In order to calculate the density of deer on the island, biologists periodically conduct visibility estimates (how far one can see a deer) along the route. This provides the width of the survey transect and by multiplying by the length of the route, the number of acres surveyed is calculated. This allows biologists to determine the deer density, expressed in deer per square mile.

Kiawah’s deer population has remained relatively stable over the last 10 years (see graph) and is controlled by natural predators, primarily bobcats. Bobcats take a large percentage of fawns born each summer which helps to keep the deer population in check. Kiawah is fortunate to have natural control of deer numbers and there is no hunting or culling of deer on the island.
The Town of Kiawah Island, in partnership with the Kiawah Conservancy, initiated a Bobcat GPS study in 2007. The study is ongoing and a total of 64 bobcats have been captured and fitted with GPS collars (5 in 2007, 8 in 2008, 10 in 2009, 6 in 2010, 8 in 2011, 9 in 2012, 6 in 2013, 6 in 2014, and 6 in 2015).

Collars are programmed to obtain a specific number of locations per day allowing biologists to identify habitat use patterns during day and nighttime hours, denning sites, travel corridors, and more. This information is used to pinpoint specific areas or habitat types on the island that are of vital importance to bobcats and to update the Bobcat Management Guidelines for the island. This plan provides suggestions and recommendations to all island entities regarding creation, preservation, and improvement of habitat to benefit bobcats. Trapping for 2015 began on March 2 and 9 different bobcats have been captured so far. Six of these bobcats received GPS collars. Meet all of our 2015 collared bobcats below.

**Bobcat 350**
This juvenile female (13 lbs, 8 oz) was captured near Parkside Villas on March 12. She was originally tagged as a kitten along Sora Rail Road on May 28, 2014 and is the offspring of Bobcat 350 from 2014.

**Bobcat 600**
This adult female (13 lbs, 5 oz) was captured in Ocean Park on March 17. She was also collared during 2012 as Bobcat 400 and featured on the local news during the 2012 PGA Championship.

**Sea Turtle Nesting Season**
Sea Turtle nesting season begins on Kiawah’s beaches in May. Almost all of the nests laid on Kiawah’s beach are by loggerhead sea turtles, though on rare occasions we have had both green and leatherback nests. The loggerhead sea turtle (Caretta caretta) was listed as a threatened species in 1978 under the Endangered Species Act and the State Nongame Act. They are residents of the open ocean and make their way onto the Kiawah beaches during the nighttime hours to dig a nest and lay their eggs. In coastal waters, loggerheads eat primarily whelks, crabs, fish, sponges and jellyfish. Nesting activity typically begins in mid-May and will continue into early August. Nests normally contain between 100 and 150 eggs. The eggs hatch in approximately 2 months and the hatchlings make their way down the beach and into the surf. Female loggerheads are quite wary when they come ashore to nest and can be easily frightened or disoriented by lights or loud noises. Please do not approach or disturb nesting turtles and abstain from shining lights at them.

Nesting efforts are monitored on our beach by a group of resident volunteers each year. The Turtle Program has been in existence since 1973 and the Town of Kiawah Island has provided funding and logistical support to the program since 1990. During the nesting season, volunteers patrol the entire beach by truck each morning to locate nests laid the previous night. An attempt is made to locate the actual nest and mark it with a numbered post. Nests that are located too low on the beach are moved landward in order to protect them from being washed over by high tides. When nests begin to hatch, numerous groups of volunteers patrol sections of beach daily to check for emergence of hatchlings. After hatching, each nest is excavated and an inventory is taken of the nest contents. Detailed records are kept of all activities and a report is prepared annually for the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.
The Town of Kiawah Island Arts Council works to enhance community appreciation and involvement in the visual and performing arts within the Town of Kiawah Island and its environs by providing a diversity of planned programs. All events are open to public and complimentary tickets for most events are available at the Visitors Center at Kiawah Island Town Hall and online on a come first serve basis. Ticket release dates are two weeks prior to the event date. Kiawah Island property owners have a 3 day lead time prior to the public release date. For more information on events call 843-768-9166 or email Stephanie Braswell at sbraswell@kiawahisland.org.

**APRIL**

**11th Annual Blues by the Sea**  
Sunday, April 12, 2015 - 3pm to 7 pm  
Freshfields Village  
No Tickets Required  
Family-friendly free event, bring your own lawn chair/blanket. There will be food & drinks for sale but you can bring your own coolers. Rain or shine (we are tented). Featuring the Legendary EDDIE SHAW & THE WOLF GANG www.eddieshawsax.com  
Bandleader/saxophonist for the great Howlin’ Wolf...probably the last classic blues band left in Chicago!  
Opening act: VANESSA COLLIER BLUES BAND www.vanessacollier.com  
Enchanting new jazz/blues saxophonist and her band - hailing from Philadelphia - jazzy blues & more!  
Brought to you by the Town of Kiawah Island Cultural Events Fund.

**MAY**

**Piccolo Spoleto Festival Preview**  
Sunday, May 3, 2015 - 4pm  
Holy Spirit Catholic Church  
Ticket Release Kiawah 4/14 Public 4/17  
Brought to you by the Town of Kiawah Island Cultural Events Fund.

**Piccolo Spoleto Comes to Kiawah**  
Thursday, May 28, 2015 - 7:30pm  
Turtle Point Clubhouse  
Tickets $10 beginning May 4th via www.piccolospoleto.com or call 866-811-4111  
Brought to you by the Town of Kiawah Island Cultural Events Fund.

**E-TICKETS VIA**  
www.kiawahisland.org/special-events

Over the last couple of months, the Town introduced online ticketing for Arts and Cultural Events via the Town’s Special Events page. Below is a general overview of how this process works.

- Next to each event description, there will be a link “Click here to print tickets” taking you the registration page. Enter your name and email address. To add a guest you will enter your guests name by clicking “Add Guest.” Finish by clicking the “Register” button. Each registrant is allowed two tickets unless the event is at Holy Spirit Catholic Church where you may have four tickets.
- Upon completing your registration, the system will show a pop up screen that will display your tickets to print. If you have pop up blocker on your computer you will need to disable that function to allow the ticket screen to generate. In addition, a confirmation email is sent that will contain a link where you can reprint your tickets in the event you misplace them or if you did not receive the pop up ticket screen.
- If you accidently delete or do not receive your email confirmation, please call Stephanie or Jan at 843-768-9166 as they have the availability to resend ticket links. The Arts and Cultural Events programs are becoming increasingly popular each year so make sure you have a season planner and take notice of ticket release dates. As always, please call Jan at 843-768-9166 if you are unable to attend an event you have tickets for. Those on the waiting list will be notified as tickets become available.
April 3 (6:00 to 9:00 pm) – Music on the Green
Join us for the spring edition of Music on the Green with a free, live performance by Rubberband! Guests are encouraged to bring a beach chair or blanket.

April 4 (11:00 am to 3:00 pm) – Easter Festival
The Easter Festival is free and features activities for the entire family. Kids can enjoy activities including jump castle, inflatable games, mechanical bull, face painting, and Easter crafts. Interactive performer John Cusatis will take the stage during the event and form a band with members of the audience. Bring a camera to snap a photo with the Easter Bunny who will be roaming the Village. There will be food and beverage vendors throughout the afternoon. While the kids play, browse artwork from the Kiawah & Seabrook Artists Guilds during their art show and sale.

April 5 (9:30 am) – Easter Service on the Green
Join us for a casual, non-denominational Easter Service led by Cavalry of the Sea Islands Church on the Village Green at 9:30 am. Guests are encouraged to bring a beach chair or blanket.

April 18 (9:00 – 11:00 am) – Cars & Coffee
(11:00 am to 3:00 pm) – Spring into Fire Safety with St. Johns Fire Department
The St. Johns Fire Department will host an appreciation day on the Village Green with activities for the entire family. Kids can tour the fire trucks, participate in fire safety activities, and play on the inflatable fire truck slide. Guests can also watch fire safety demonstrations. The fire department will provide complimentary lunch during the event.

April 19 (12:00 to 4:00 pm) – Food Truck Rodeo benefiting Back Pack Buddies & Kiawah Cares
Enjoy food and beverages from local food trucks including: Charleston Choo, Coastal Crust, Roadside Seafood, Korkies, Cookie Chick, Sweet Lulu’s Bakery, Bac’n me Crazy, and Kays Southern Kitchen. Live Music by Soul Fish throughout the afternoon.

May 2 (3:00 to 7:00 pm) – Gullah Celebration to Fight Island Hunger
The celebration will include Gullah cuisine, beer, wine, art show, silent auction, and live performances by the Sea Islands Male Mass Choir, Storyteller Gullah Joe, and WoSe Drum and Dance. Plus, a featured performance with Ann Caldwell and the Magnolia Singers. Tickets are $10 in advance and $15 at the event and all proceeds benefit Sea Islands Hunger Awareness Foundation.

May 16 (9:00 – 11:00 am) – Cars & Coffee

May 22 (6:00 to 9:00 pm) – Memorial Day Weekend Concert
Join us as we kickoff the summer with a free, live performance by Hot Sauce! This energetic variety band will have you dancing to the sounds of rock, oldies, soul, funk, and Top 40. Guests are encouraged to bring a beach chair or blanket.

May 23 (6:00 to 9:00 pm) – Memorial Day Weekend Concert
Join us as we kickoff the summer with a free, live performance by CoastRunner! This Carolina beach band will have you dancing to the sounds of oldies, soul, beach music, and more. Guests are encouraged to bring a beach chair or blanket.

Fridays beginning May 29 (6:00 9:00 pm) – Music on the Green
Enjoy the sweet sounds of summer during the Music on the Green Concert Series. This free, family friendly outdoor concert series takes place every Friday evening and features top acts from around the Southeast of all genres. Food and beverages are available from local vendors or guests can bring their own picnics. Visit the Freshfields website for band listings and dates.

Mondays beginning June 1 (4:00 to 8:00 pm) – Farmer’s Market
Pick from the freshest produce and local crafts all summer long at the weekly Farmer’s Market. The market features local certified organic produce, fresh local seafood, packaged and prepared food including jams, jellies, pecans, olive oils, sweets, handmade pasta, and more as well as Lowcountry crafts including Gullah rag dolls and Sweetgrass Baskets.

June 20 (9:00 – 11:00 am) – Cars & Coffee

July 18 (9:00 – 11:00 am) – Cars & Coffee