Thanks
The contributions of the Town, our staff and our venues to the success of the Arts Council were noted above. The Council also wishes to recognize two other contributors. Diana Mezzanotte served as Chairperson of the Arts Council for the two years ending in January of this year, when she retired from the Town Council. Diana’s hard work, leadership and good cheer had much to do with the success of our 2018-2019 season and we are grateful.

Bob Hill served as a member of the Arts Council for nine years until his retirement at the end of this season. Throughout his service Bob could be counted on for good advice, tireless effort and tremendous enthusiasm for great music. He will be missed.

Our Partners

Members
Gary Rice, Chair
David Wohl, Vice Chair
Bill Blizard
Becky Hilstad
Bob Hill
Joan Collar
Jodi Rush
Judy Chitwood
Van McCollum

Steep Canyon Rangers
Letter from the Council

As mandated by our charter, the Arts and Cultural Events Council of the Town of Kiawah Island is pleased to provide this annual report regarding our events and accomplishments for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. Our charter tasks us to “strive to ensure that Kiawah is recognized as an arts and culturally minded community” and to “work to enhance community, visitor and tourist appreciation of arts and cultural events within the Town and environs.” During the 2018-2019 season the Arts Council sponsored 24 musical performances, six piano bars, four art films, a dance band, and a theater. The musical performances included bluegrass, blues, chamber music, symphony, choral, jazz, and rock and roll. Approximately 8,582 tickets were distributed to these events, many of which were sold out.

In a season with so many highlights, it is difficult to single out a few. There was the night that Cecil MacLaren Savant and Sullivan Fortner, barely a week after winning a Grammy for best jazz album of the year, enraptured a sold-out audience at Turtle Point Clubhouse. There was the afternoon that the progressive bluegrass of Steep Canyon Rangers brought the house down at East Beach. And the glorious classical performances from chamber groups and the Charleston Symphony Orchestra. It is truly remarkable that performances of this caliber, mostly for free or at a nominal price, are available just a few minutes from our homes.

We are grateful to all those that make our program possible: to Mayor Craig Weaver and the Town Council of the Town of Kiawah, for their financial and administrative support; to the Kiawah Island Resort, Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Church of Our Savior, Seabrook Island and the Sandcastle, for providing us with venues; and to our extraordinary staff, Town Communications Manager Stephanie Braswell Edgerton and Communications Specialist Keely Laughlin.

The software is currently used by other Charleston area arts programs, as well as programs across the country.

With Vendini, the Arts Council can conduct all ticket sales and distribution online, automating the ticketing process. The Arts Council purchased four electronic ticket scanners, to accurately and quickly check-in guests without the assistance of Town staff.

With the previous system, the Arts Council was unable to offer Kiawah property owners online access to their three-day lead time tickets. The new software enables Kiawah property owners to order tickets whether on or off the island within their lead time window. Kiawah property owners who wish to access advance tickets register once online by providing their name, property address, and email address. Once their property owner status has been verified, they are issued an early-access code for the season.

Dominick Farinacci

Hard Days Night
The primary goal of the Arts Council is to bring performing the arts to as many people on Kiawah Island as possible. When the Arts Council began in 2004, complimentary tickets served the community and the Arts Council mission well. The popularity of Arts Council performances has grown, and with that growth came unexpected challenges. The number of sold-out performances in 2018-2019 prompted Arts Council members to re-think how to make events accessible.

The Arts Council observed that sold-out complimentary events resulted in as many as one third of the audience absent. Paid events, however, resulted in little to zero no-shows. Based on this observation, the Council decided events with high prospects of selling out will carry a $10 ticket charge, excluding events at the area churches. The intent of this change is not to fundraise, but rather to ensure each seat is occupied at performances. The number of $25 ticket events will remain consistent with years prior and ticket revenues for those events will continue to go to the artist.

The decision to charge for more events affects more than just Arts Council attendees, it also affects the staff at the Town whose workload greatly increased with paid events. Staff was required to sell physical tickets at the Municpal Center and also collect online tickets through a cumbersome check-in process at each event. As a way to reduce the burden imposed by additional paid events, the Arts Council adopted a new ticketing software, Vendini.

Our planning for the 2019-2020 season is complete. We look forward, with the help of the Town, our venues, and our staff, to another extraordinary year.

Sincerely,
The Arts & Cultural Events Council

Julian Gargiulo

Andy Offit Irwin

The Work of the Arts Council

The Arts Council carefully plans and executes events start to finish! Below is a timeline of the process.

1. Members research potential performers, negotiate the terms of performances, and prepare a proposal for consideration by the Council as a whole during its winter planning sessions.

2. During the planning sessions, members review and vote on proposals. The Council is mindful of the preferences of our patrons, as expressed in comments received, the popularity of various types of events, and the formal survey that the Arts Council conducts periodically.

3. Once the calendar is agreed upon, members work with Town staff to execute contracts, book accommodations, secure sound and lighting, and schedule additional vendors like piano rentals, piano tuning and backline.

4. Ahead of an event, the member in charge of the event decides on a seating plan and how many tickets to make available, and recruits other members to assist. The member in charge also collects information for the printed program (if any), and works with staff on a variety of marketing materials.

5. On the day of the event, the member in charge arrives at the venue for sound check to ensure all details are taken care of. They serve as event coordinator during the event, making sure the performance runs on schedule and that any guest issues are addressed.

For many years Arts Council member Bill Blizard staged the lighting for the majority of events with the help of other members. During the 2018/2019 season, the Council decided that it would outsource lighting for future seasons with guidance from Bill.
In 2018 Mayor Craig Weaver asked the Arts Council to address sustainability issues that he identified concerning our governance structure, our members, and our venues. A Sustainability Committee was formed to address those issues. The Arts Council charter required a Town Council member chair the Arts Council. As the Arts Council budget and the number of events grew, the role of the Chair became more involved and time-consuming. Following a turnover in Town Council, the new Arts Council chair had a significant learning curve. Chairing the Arts Council, on top of fulfilling their duties as Town Council members, required a great deal of dedication. Although the Arts Council has been fortunate Town Council members were willing to take on the role of chairing the Arts Council, Mayor Weaver was concerned that this might not always be the case.

The Sustainability Committee decided upon a new structure, which was approved by the Town Council and implemented in January 2018. Under the updated charter, a newly created Arts Council Board provides oversight of the Arts Council. The Board is composed of a Town Council member (currently Dan Prickett) serving as the liaison between the Board and Town Council, the Town Administrator, the Town Communications Manager, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Arts Council. The Chair and Vice Vice-Chair are selected from the volunteer Arts Council members. The Arts Council Board meets quarterly to provide oversight. The work of planning and putting on events remains with the Arts Council committee.

Other issues identified relate to the work burden on members and succession. The Council has begun taking steps to reduce the workload of its members by outsourcing lighting and other physical labor for all events and making changes to our ticketing policies. The Council will focus on succession and mentoring in the coming season.

Mayor Weaver also expressed concern that without a performing arts center of our own, the Arts Council is dependent on the continued availability of venues provided by the Kiawah Island Resort, Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Church of Our Savior, Seabrook Island, and the Sandcastle. The Arts Council has reached out to our venues, and we believe that we will continue to have adequate spaces available for the foreseeable future. We will continue to make every effort to express our appreciation to the providers of our venues and to identify and address any concerns that might arise on their part.

### Budget

**2005/2006 SEASON - 1ST SEASON**
10 Events | $25,000 Budget Provided by the Town

**2018/2019 SEASON**
36 Events | $300,000 Budget Provided by the Town

<table>
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<th>Revenue</th>
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<td>Cultural Event Fund</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts Event Fund</td>
<td>$118,000</td>
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The CEF is funded by local accommodations taxes and as such Cultural Events are intended to drive more tourism.

Arts events are funded by the Town’s general fund and can be spent on events that would be enjoyed by our patrons but not necessarily drive tourism to the island.

The Council put over $4,000 of the 2018/2019 season revenue toward implementation of the Vendini ticket system.