

Following extensive community input, KICA established core goals to meet existing and future needs for member amenity expansion. Goals included substantial improvements to the pool, decking and food & beverage beach experience, enhancing the fitness/wellness program and providing more diverse space for growing participation in unique gathering opportunities. To fully evaluate these goals, the board conducted a detailed process of testing various alternatives in a balanced and responsible way. This has included sizing expansion to not only meet present and future needs but, equally important, enhancing the overall member experience for all our amenities.

The Kiawah Boat Landing Preservation Committee (“committee”) initiative to develop a “single campus” concept for the Sandcastle has been helpful to the board’s analysis. Their proposal is similar to one of many alternatives considered by the board and, despite best efforts, was found to reveal the same limitations and inability to meet the community’s goals. The Sandcastle site is insufficiently sized to provide suitable area for both an improved pool experience and an expanded fitness/wellness programming for the future.

While not proposed by the committee, some have suggested that the Town Hall site could be a viable option for amenity growth once vacated by the Town of Kiawah. KICA leases about 41% of the building from TOKI, and plans to remain in its space when the town leaves. What ultimately happens with the balance of available space is up to the town. Should KICA have the opportunity to own or lease additional Town Hall space, it potentially could provide some meeting space relief for the community. However, it wouldn’t be viable for fitness or pool expansion, and parking deficiencies that exist today would be exacerbated. The parking scheme at town hall is adequate for office use, but as most who’ve been to community meetings there know, parking is insufficient. This is one of the reasons TOKI is building a new municipal center on Betsy Kerrison Parkway. Further, 20+ spaces currently leased from the developer will be eliminated when the adjacent property sells.

### THE SINGLE CAMPUS PROPOSAL

The committee recently publicized an updated version of its “single campus” concept. It claims this plan is superior to KICA’s approach of using its property at both the Sandcastle and Rhett’s Bluff sites. The committee’s narrative explaining their plan is attached at the end of this analysis. As indicated in the April [Digest](#), KICA is finalizing communication of the details of its plan, related costs, and resultant proposed amenity assessment on which the membership will vote. KICA will publish this information later in April. At that time KICA also will publish the committee’s one-site schematic so members can compare.

As background, in the fall of 2014 the current spokesman for the committee provided the board with an earlier version of a single campus concept and the board reviewed that plan in detail. Further, long time Kiawah land planner and KICA consultant Mark Permar met twice with the engineering firm which developed the plan, to ensure KICA had a proper understanding of what was suggested. The board concluded the single campus concept had numerous qualitative deficiencies, but determined it wasn’t viable because it would require a multi-story parking garage to meet parking regulations.

We have several overall comments on the committee’s updated plan and will then compare the detailed program elements to KICA’s approach. First, since KICA has not yet finalized and published its plan, the

committee cannot make a valid comparison, yet they make several comments about the KICA plan which simply aren't accurate. Second, the committee agrees with KICA that the existing Sandcastle fitness space is inadequate. Third, the comparison of the program elements shown below support our belief that a single campus plan is not the best plan possible for the community; it is a plan the committee feels is best for keeping amenity development out of Rhett's Bluff.

The committee makes several objections to a dual campus solution for amenities improvement. They suggest a single destination at the west end of the island is preferable to a geographically diversified approach, and that two sites create "significant" added cost. As discussed below, KICA's approach is slightly more expensive, but not significantly more, as suggested. The committee also believes that KICA's approach violates community agreements. This is a claim with which KICA and its legal counsel simply disagree. The committee again mentions the possibility of legal expenses. These will occur only if the committee acts on its threat to sue KICA. There has been much written about this, so we will not repeat it here.

The committee says there will be "costly" street alterations. There will be no changes to streets in the Rhett's Bluff neighborhood. Based on the conclusions about safety in KICA's traffic study, the KICA board will pursue alterations to the intersection at Kiawah Island Parkway and Governors Drive regardless of any amenity consideration. The objectives of the changes will be to improve vehicular and bike safety and traffic flow. The committee faults the KICA plan for proposing a bike lane across Bass Pond. Based on the traffic study, it is apparent that KICA can add a bike path in a very cost effective manner, and intends to do so regardless of any amenity consideration. Finally the committee faults KICA's plan for "disruption of a serene setting." We ask members to reserve judgment until they see KICA's plan, with its beautifully architected center and extensive landscaping, and then decide what is most attractive for this site.

The committee's recently publicized revised single campus plan purports to meet all parking requirements without a parking garage or zoning variances. It does this by shrinking the size of the amenity components reflected in its previous iteration. Although the committee did not share their most recent plan with KICA, in the interest of due diligence one was obtained, and a thoughtful review conducted. Again, the board asked Mark Permar to analyze and compare it to KICA's proposed master plan. The comparison of program elements is articulated below, and will help members decide for themselves the relative merits of the different approaches. Let's compare the committee's plan to KICA's plan.

## **POOL AND DECK SPACE**

KICA and the committee agree on a two pool strategy. However, KICA believes a substantial increase in overall pool and deck space is needed. The Sandcastle's current pool and deck areas total 19,400 square feet. By comparison, the Kiawah Island Club's two pool/decking amenity totals over 31,000 square feet for its 1600+/- member households (KICA has over 4000 member households). The club facility is beautiful, but like the Sandcastle, it's overtaxed in the summer. The committee concept provides 23,405 square feet, a 20% increase over existing conditions, and KICA's plan provides 30,000 square feet, a 55% increase. KICA also adds 7,000 square feet of lawn areas, which contributes to an overall 94% increase.

The committee proposal claims "larger, resort style pools." However, its proposed family pool is 35% smaller than the current Sandcastle pool. It also proposes a four lane adult/fitness pool; the addition of the second

pool results in a minimal overall increase in pool space of 8% over today's cramped conditions. The KICA plan calls for increasing pool space by 23%.

The addition of deck space around the pools is critical in any plan for the Sandcastle. Sufficient space for lounge chairs and circulation is key to member enjoyment. The committee's plan does provide an increase in overall deck space. However, the deck area around the family pool is less than what the Sandcastle offers today. Further, a portion of it doubles as an outdoor dining area, effectively squeezing the space even more compared to today's conditions. If the committee's outdoor dining area is comparable to what exists at the Sandcastle today, deck space is effectively reduced by another 945 square feet, making it *10% smaller than the current pool deck*. Family use of the Sandcastle will continue to grow and we simply can't afford less space than we have today.

The committee achieves much of its net increase in deck space by what it adds at its adult pool, which is tucked behind the dunes, and a cabana building with no ocean view or breeze. It also eliminates the children's playground. This plan necessarily creates a suboptimal pool and deck experience in order to squeeze a fitness building on to the site.

In addition to larger pools and decks, KICA adds over 7,000 square feet of lawn areas, resulting in a 94% overall increase in deck and circulation space. KICA's plan keeps the playground, increases deck space by 70%, increases total pool space by 23%, and provides sweeping ocean views and breezes from *both pools* by elevating the deck. Additionally, KICA's plan provides spacious changing rooms and restrooms at the family pool, and an additional restroom facility at the adult pool.

## **FOOD AND BEVERAGE**

The committee proposes a 1,755 square foot pool cabana that includes restrooms, storage, snack bar, kitchen, and pool equipment. *This is 30% smaller than the same functionality at today's overcrowded Sandcastle*. This reduction would not enhance the member experience. On the other hand, KICA's plan increases this functionality by 102%, provides a covered dining pavilion, beach side bar, kitchen, and spacious locker rooms with showers.

## **FITNESS SPACE**

KICA's goals are to meet today's needs and anticipate future need for the memberships. The committee's plan houses a separate 7,500 square foot fitness facility at the Sandcastle site, though specifics were not provided as to the space allocation. Absent a detailed floor plan, one can assume space for group fitness, a traditional exercise equipment room, and some locker room facilities. KICA believes the committee plan is insufficient to meet program goals. Again, the Kiawah Island Club facilities are a helpful reference. At around 9,000 feet, club officials indicate their sports facility was undersized the day it opened for its 1600+/- member households.

KICA's plan houses fitness activities at a 12,000 square foot Rhett's Bluff community center. There are two group fitness studios, a traditional equipment room, and locker room facilities. The balance of the heated space is attributed to social gathering space as described below. The facility also includes new kayak and canoe storage opportunities to supplement KICA's Cinder Creek facility, which has operated with a waiting list since opening.

## **SOCIAL GATHERING SPACE**

Both plans contemplate converting the existing 1<sup>st</sup> floor at the Sandcastle into meeting space, though KICA's plan also incorporates a library/lounge, providing members a place to enjoy the ocean view, even when all meeting rooms are in use. KICA's plan also provides approximately 2,000 square feet of social gathering space at Rhett's Bluff, with two club meeting rooms and a small coffee/juice bar sitting area that doubles as a provisioning area ("ships store") for boaters. One of the meeting rooms in the community center would be a studio specifically designed to accommodate the garden club, art programs, and other activities. The community center will also provide outside deck space on which members can enjoy river views. In addition, new kayak/canoe storage will facilitate exploration of the Kiawah River, and relieve some of the years long wait for space at Cinder Creek.

## **PARKING**

The committee states that its revised plan provides surface parking for all required spaces with no zoning variance requests and without any tree removal. A careful analysis of its plan suggests that these claims cannot be achieved. The plan appears to be predicated on an incorrect northern boundary line for the Sandcastle site and a reconfiguration of the Shipwatch Road cul-de-sac to meet the parking requirements. Town of Kiawah Island Road Code technical standards do not allow this reconfiguration, as any roadway terminus must include a means in which vehicles can turn around without entering another property. Our planner believes that manipulating the roundabout is neither permissible nor prudent, and it appears that over 25 of the proposed parking spaces encroach on setback lines and would require variances. While it may be possible to achieve variances, one cannot assume approval. In addition, other considerations exist.

The committee's plan infringes on setback and access protections for owners in the Fairway Oaks and Seascape communities. Even if determined to be legally permissible, the board considers it wrong to violate the buffer between neighboring communities and a heavily used Sandcastle. When applying the correct boundary lines to the committee plan, cars would be parked just 5-10 feet from the required setback from the Fairway Oaks property line, and on top of an existing leisure trail which would have to be relocated closer to the property line. This would result in significant reduction of the natural vegetation and buffer. These issues suggest that a "single campus" approach may still necessitate a multi-story parking garage.

By contrast, the proposed Rhett's Bluff community center complies with all setbacks. Instead of seeking variances at the expense of neighboring properties, KICA self-imposes buffers that dramatically exceed what is required for the benefit of neighbors. Further, the proposed Rhett's Bluff center will result in more trees and habitat on site after construction than exist today.

## **SIZE AND GROWTH**

KICA's evaluation concludes that housing all program elements at the Sandcastle would be at the expense of the pool and beach experience, making it less desirable than what we have today. Based on the committee's current plan, the amenities would have to be reduced even more to meet parking requirements.

KICA believes we should be investing in facilities that not only satisfy current needs, but for the next decade. The committee's plan maximally taxes the Sandcastle site even for current needs because it is size constrained. To be fair, their plan may provide some short-term relief to the Sandcastle's inadequate fitness

facilities, but it has no room for growth as Kiawah grows. The committee's statement that its plan can be enlarged is not viable due to parking and other zoning restrictions.

The owners of the Kiawah Island Club often state that their Sports Pavilion was built too small for the day it opened, and that clearly would be the case with the committee's plan. Conversely, KICA's plan comfortably supports the amenity needs of the current membership over 10+ years while keeping flexibility for the future. This fact is particularly important as it relates to fitness, as all demographic trends highlight the growing importance of fitness facilities for future home buyers. The central location of KICA's Rhett's Bluff property is ideal to accommodate Kiawah's growth trends. Approximately one-third of the lots on Kiawah – those sold to individuals and those still planned – remain unimproved. As more homes are built, community facilities need to be positioned for growth.

## **COST**

The committee's single campus proposal would cost less to construct than KICA's dual campus proposal because it has a smaller fitness structure, fewer and smaller pool amenities and an inferior member experience. *It should cost less.* KICA estimates the cost savings attributable to the committee's plan would result in a lower assessment of around \$10 per month. These costs savings may be offset, however, by costs to build a multi-story parking garage if needed. Differences in costs to operate the two different plans are not significant, but under either plan will be somewhat higher than today's operating costs. Under either plan, there will be some incremental staffing and maintenance costs, insurance costs, etc. for a separate building and some higher costs for bigger pools and fitness spaces. Whether the new separate facility is on the Sandcastle or Rhett's Bluff cite isn't a big driver of operating costs. KICA estimates the cost for its two site plan to be less than \$45 per month, inclusive of construction and incremental operating costs.

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In summary, a thoughtful analysis of the committee's single campus concept clearly shows adverse comparisons to KICA's dual campus plan. The single campus plan results in a substantially subpar member experience while costing not substantially less. While inadequate even for today's needs, it allows no room to grow as Kiawah grows. Members should vote for the solution that achieves their objective of improving their current experience while wisely investing in Kiawah.

The board appreciates the effort the committee has made to identify a workable single campus approach; however, this plan confirms our earlier finding that the Sandcastle site is not appropriately sized to meet the needs of the community.

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# KIAWAH BOAT LANDING PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Durbin & Trux Emerson    Ginny & Frank Larence    Linda & Mike Mayhall    Darlene & Dick Murphy  
Mary Lou & John Barter    Capey & Lindsay Freeman    Leonard & Anne Long    Andy & Margaret McKenna    Whitlow & Linda Wyatt

TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2015

## A SINGLE CAMPUS SOLUTION just makes sense

Kiawah property owners should know that there is a Single Campus solution which meets all needs of our Community Association. It saves millions of owner expense while maintaining the integrity of the Boat Landing, its parkland areas, and the 1994 KICA Landing Use Covenant.

A Two Campus approach at Rhett's Bluff Landing causes many problems: significant added cost, violation of community agreements, having to make costly street alterations and new Bass Pond bike lane, disruption of a serene park setting by the river with a large parking lot and multi-purpose "Community Center."

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### **DETAILS** **of what works** { with a single campus solution }

\* A NEW 7,500 SQ. FT. FITNESS CENTER BUILT AT THE SANDCASTLE SITE  
with panoramic views of the Atlantic.

\* NEW AND IMPROVED FAMILY AND ADULT POOLS  
larger, resort style pools, ocean views and breezes, more deck space.

\* COMFORTABLE POOL CABANA - 1,755 SQ. FT.  
for ocean front dining between two new pools, including kitchen and restrooms.

\* LARGER MEN'S AND WOMEN'S LOCKER ROOMS  
each with a sauna.

\* OCEAN FRONT VERANDA  
with juice and coffee bar.

\* MUCH ADDED COMMUNITY, CLUB, AND MEETING SPACES AT THE SANDCASTLE  
3,200 square feet is freed up by moving the existing fitness areas from the Sandcastle building.

\* NO VARIANCES ARE REQUIRED

all setbacks are appropriate and lawful - improvements all well behind State setback line.

\* 'SINGLE DESTINATION' CONVENIENCE AND SAVINGS

for pools, beach cabana dining, fitness facilities, club, card, party, and community meetings.

\* PRESERVATION OF MARITIME FOREST AREA

this Plan retains vegetation seaward of new Fitness Center and adult pool.

\* 103' OF UNHINDERED VIEWS OF KIAWAH'S BEACH AND THE OCEAN

a unique aspect of this Plan's fitness facilities and exercise studios.

\* FUTURE FITNESS CENTER EXPANSION IS EASILY DONE

if desired later, to 11,000 square feet with no parking variances needed.

**A 'Single Campus' alternative offers a number of other advantages:**

Lower operating cost at one locale, not two;

No duplication of facilities, personnel, nor paving of parklands,

Far more convenience for owner families and guests as All facilities are located together.

This Plan may be accomplished with no legal or permitting requirements, parking for all, elevator, and handicap access. This will be a spectacularly improved Fitness Center, almost twice as large as current fitness areas, and maximizing of benefits from our ideal Sandcastle site.

In addition, another 3,500 square feet of space may be added later, if desired, in either the Sandcastle building or the new Fitness Center with no variances needed of any kind.

**DETAILS**

**of what can be avoided**

**{ with a single campus solution }**

\* A COST PROHIBITIVE

12,000 square foot KICA Community Center at Rhett's Bluff.

\* A DIVISIVE

process that forces homeowners to take sides in a battle which is utterly unnecessary.

\* LEGAL

issues, additional legal expense for litigation,

loss of significant time to have state-of-art amenities remain un-built.

\* VIOLATION

of the trust of our property owners.

**We encourage all to examine this schematic Plan and consider the many advantages of a Single Campus solution. "If" this is desired by a majority of owners, our point is IT FITS.**

**The Planners and Engineers at Thomas & Hutton, who have helped successfully guide Kiawah for 40 years, prepared this Plan.**

It meets the needs of our Community Association.

It enables prompt pursuit of a major upgrade of amenities.

Its size and cost are far more sensible and reasonable.

It does not destroy neighborly ties that help make Kiawah incredible.

The Sandcastle parking area will be re-landscaped,  
with an increase in parking spaces of 78% - totaling 168 spots,  
with no grand oak trees removed.

No alteration is made of the walking path to the beach on eastern property line.