

Kiawah Island real estate investment firm to build golf course on 885-acre Johns Is. tract

- **By Warren L. Wise wwise@postandcourier.com**
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Members of the Kiawah Island Club will have access to a new 18-hole private golf course to be built on Johns Island. It will join Cassique (above) and the River Course. The nearly 800-acre Orange Hill tract between Bohicket and River roads on Johns Island is slated to become a new golf course developed by South Street Partners for Kiawah Island Club members.

A real estate investment firm that owns the developer of Kiawah Island plans to build a private golf course on Johns Island and invest in new and existing resort and residential projects locally and across the Southeast after raising \$225 million in a new fund.

South Street Partners plans to turn the nearly 900-acre Orange Hill tract into an 18-hole golf course community with homes. It will include a short course and a practice facility for members of Kiawah Island Club. The property between Bohicket and River roads is now used as an outdoor sporting site by the private club.

The land use allows for a golf course and associated amenities as well as residential development, said Chris Randolph, a South Street partner. He said plans are still evolving for the site, and it hasn't been determined how many homes will be part of the Orange Hill development.

The golf course will take up about 300 acres.

Part of the property is in a planned unit development through Charleston County that allows 181 home sites, a golf course, clubhouse, pro shop, amenity center and about 212 acres of preserved land.

"We are working with the county and other constituents on Johns Island for a plan that everyone is happy with," said Randolph, whose firm is headquartered in Charleston and Charlotte.

A representative of the Johns Island Community Association did not immediately respond to a request for comment about the proposed plan.

Randolph hopes to start development of the as-yet unnamed layout next year, followed by 12 to 18 months of construction. He also said it was too early to provide a cost estimate for the course, which will be one of the few to be built in South Carolina in recent years.

Randolph said the course would provide members with an additional golfing option and take some of the pressure off of the club's two existing layouts, Cassique and the River Course, where usage has increased sharply during the pandemic. The average member played 40 more rounds in 2021 than in 2019, according to South Street.

"We think there is a new market of people who have recently moved to Charleston who would have an interest in joining a golf club like this given its proximity to the city and especially since it offers members access to the rest of the Kiawah Island Club amenities," Randolph said.

The new course will be designed by Beau Welling of Greenville, who previously worked with River Course designer Tom Fazio. Welling also is a partner with Tiger Woods in the golfing great's golf course design business.

The vision for the new course is to create a playing experience that looks like it could have been crafted more than 100 years ago, according to South Street. It will be built around grand live oaks and feature "undulating fairways ... and Old World slopes and contours."

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The Cape Club on Kiawah Island is expected to break ground in August. It will be built on the island's south end next to the 78-unit, oceanfront Cape on Kiawah condominiums being developed by Colorado-based East West Partners. South Street Partners will develop the Cape Club for members of Kiawah Island Club. Renderings/South Street Partners

The company's future plans for Kiawah include additional residential development as well as the opening of the oceanfront Cape Club adjacent to The Cape on Kiawah, a condominium development on the sea island's western end. The Cape Club is expected to break ground in August.

South Street also recently acquired the 131-year-old Two Meeting Street Inn on the Charleston peninsula for nearly \$7.7 million. It will be refurbished and become an overnight accommodation for Kiawah Island Club members when it reopens in 2023.

Randolph said raising the money for the golf course and other developments was challenging during the pandemic but the effort attracted “outsized investor demand” because of “compelling opportunities.”

South Street Partners’ other investments from the fund include the acquisition and development of the 20,000-acre Palmetto Bluff community in Bluffton near Hilton Head Island.

The company also has its sights set on other resort properties across the Southeast from south of Washington, D.C., to Florida and west to Texas.

“We are continuing to look for opportunities,” Randolph said.

Those could include existing properties or new developments.

South Street also owns The Cliffs communities across the mountains of South Carolina and North Carolina as well as The Residences at Salamander in Virginia.