

The Town of James Island held its regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, December 19, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in person at the Town Hall, 1122 Dills Bluff Rd., James Island, SC. This meeting was also live streamed on the Town's website: [www.jamesislandsc.us/livestream-townmeetings](http://www.jamesislandsc.us/livestream-townmeetings) and was held in accordance with the SC Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of James Island.

The following members of Council were present: Dan Boles, Troy Mullinax, and Mayor Brook Lyon, who presided. Absent: Councilmembers Dodson and Mignano. Both provided notice of their absence. A quorum was established to conduct business. Also present: Brian Quisenberry, Town Attorney, Becky Heath, Finance Director, Kristen Crane, Planning Director, Lt. Shawn James, and Deputy Chris King, Island Sheriff's Patrol, and Frances Simmons, Town Clerk.

Opening Exercises: Mayor Lyon called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She then led Council in prayer and followed with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Hearing on Ordinance #2024-12: Proposed Zoning Map Amendment on Properties located at 1129 Hillman Road and 0 Dills Bluff Road from Low-density Suburban Residential (RSL) Zoning District to Residential Office (OR) Zoning District for Government Offices as an Accessory Use (TMS# 428-03-00-049 – 062): Mayor Lyon opened the Public Hearing for comments.

The following persons spoke in favor of the Rezoning:

Parker Richardson, 11 Forde Row (Town staff, spoke as a private citizen)

Kimberlee Lisicki Biernacki, 1182 Julian Clark Rd., (Former Town staff spoke as a private citizen)

Casimer Kowalski, 1108 Pauline Ave., stated the rezoning is a win-win for the citizens

Liz Barry, 1756 Crystal Lake Drive

The following person spoke in opposition to the Rezoning:

Louise Burns, 1244 Ft. Johnson Road is not in favor of the rezoning

The following person requested clarification about the Rezoning:

Harry Prioleau, 1116 Greenhill Road

Presentation of Charleston County Urban Entitlement (RDA) 2025-2026 Program Year: Gail Carson, Charleston County Urban Entitlement Program, presented to Council the Requests for Applications for the 2025-2026 Program Year. Proposals must identify specific goals and measurable outputs that the project will address and must specify whether the funding requested will come from Charleston County, City of North Charleston, or both jurisdictions. The application process opened November 25 and ends January 6 at 12:00 PM and must be completed on-line. Non-profits on James Island are encouraged to submit an application whether or not they are in the Town. Mike Hemmer, sits on the Board for the Town. A copy of the presentation is attached.

Public Comment: The following persons spoke:

Regina Ruopoli, 1434 Birthright Street: *(Attached)*

Parker Richardson, 11 Forde Row: *(Attached)*

Kimberlee Lisicki Biernacki, 1182 Julian Clark Rd. born and raised on Folly Beach; purchased her home on James Island in 2011. She quit her full-time job in 2022 to focus on her love of painting and started her own art business. The James Island Arts and Cultural Center was the first place where she showed her work and participated in a juried art exhibition. As a new artist it can be intimidating in trying to get into the established galleries downtown. Eventually, she was hired at the Arts and Cultural Center. The Town having

its own Arts and Cultural Center would keep the community together to share their love of the arts and we would have control in the design of the building and have parking.

Joe Walters, 792 Folly Road: Mr. Walters thanked the Council for their service and wished everyone a happy and safe holiday. He spoke about the raised medians on Folly Road. The commercial corridor is being looked at for raised medians that would stop left hand turns (as you come on to Folly Road into the Town). This sounds like a good idea... however, this would put traffic into Bayfront and Centerville because delivery trucks would not be able to go across the concrete. This means they would have to turn onto Patterson, go down Jordan, and come up on Eugene Gibbs in order to come back and make deliveries. He encouraged Council if they have opportunity to speak to SCDOT (SC Department of Transportation) or to other individuals, that it is 9/10 of a mile from Ellis Oaks to Eugene Gibbs and there is no stoplight in between. If a stoplight were installed in between that one mile distance, it would slow cars, decrease accidents, and make it safer for everyone on James Island and remove need for medians.

Coach Joseph Matthews, 6817 Moberry Road: Lil Trojans, is a youth football league on James Island. This is Mr. Matthew's 44th year as the coach. The mission of the league is to keep kids off of the streets by giving them positive things to do. He thanked the Town for its help in the past under Mayor Woolsey's administration. He said that he recently spoke with Mayor Lyon asking for the Town's continued financial support. There are approximately 80 cheerleaders, 120 football players, comprising (7-8; 9-10; and 11-12 yr. olds). A banquet is scheduled for January 11, 2025 at the JI High School to show appreciation and reward the kids for this past year. He is asking for help to purchase trophies for the league's banquet.

Edward Greene, 115 Seaside Lane: Mr. Greene said he has worked in the government for many years and does not like to see waste. He said prior and after to Mayor Lyon becoming Mayor, there were discussions about the Town trying to purchase the library building. He save to have a building so close to the Town Hall and not negotiate to purchase it concerns him. He understands that the Town paid a lot of money to repair the building but that building could be used and money spent elsewhere.

Liz Barry, 1756 Crystal Lake Drive (Attached)

Inez Brown-Crouch, 1149 Mariner Drive: Ms. Brown-Crouch stated she is one of the original founders of the Town and of the Arts and Cultural Center. She supports the Arts and Cultural Center because it has brought James Island together and would like to see the Town have its own Arts and Cultural Center. A lot of activity has been going on at the Arts and Cultural Center. She sees people that she hasn't seen in many years. The Arts and Cultural Center has brought wonders to James Island.

Bill Lyon, 669 Port Circle: Mr. Lyon spoke in favor of the Town's having its own Arts and Cultural Center building. He said a lot of people may not know that the Arts Center at the Library had no parking available and the Town was unable to have large events there. The new Arts Center will have ample parking and it is a great opportunity for the community to come together in promoting the arts.

Sara LaBissoniere, 703 Fort Johnson Road: (Attached)

Danielle Loveless, Music Director, Palmetto Youth Choir, and Palmetto Peace Choir (Adult Chor): Has called the James Island Arts and Cultural Center home for the past three years. She is a home-school parent and was able to experience much of what previous speakers shared about the programs and their experiences at the Center. From a homeschool standpoint, one thing that is shared is cross generational activities and it is inspired having those experiences. She hopes this will continue in a more organic way and that the building design will incorporate "green" building elements and be eco-friendly with a connection to local flora and fauna and also, the importance of the cultural side, not just where we are now, but where we came from.

Dr. George Tempel, 758 Sprague Street: Praised Council for their efforts in promoting the arts on James Island.

Dr. Carol Tempel, 758 Sprague Street: Is excited by what she heard tonight because this will enrich our community even more. She was excited this week to attend various student concerts. The Cultural Center will provide a continuum for interests and for family unity. What excited her years ago was when a Taco Bell came to James Island... .and this is more exciting than a Taco Bell.

Mayor Lyon said it is wonderful that so many people came out to speak and share their enthusiasm about the new Arts and Cultural Center and the Town Council is excited about this as well. Mayor Lyon stated for those who may not be aware, that when she became Mayor, that she inherited a lawsuit with the owner of the Camp Center and Charleston County. She explained that parking was only provided if the building remained as a library. After the Center's first major event, the owner of the shopping center sued the Town because other patrons to the shopping center had nowhere to park. The lawsuit was very costly and lasted several years. However, now, the lawsuit has been settled. Had the Town kept the library building, we would have to pay for parking spaces and would still not be able to accommodate large groups. Additionally, the Town has already made costly repairs to the building and it is not suitable to use as an Art Center. She said a new, state-of-the-art building will be constructed on property owned by the Town (the Hillman lot behind the Town Hall) that would provide parking and contain what is needed and required for an Art Center. She addressed comments that were made in opposition to the rezoning request and stated that the rezoning is not Industrial; it will be zoned Office Residential, (as is the Town Hall building) Groups have been moved to the Town Hall until the new Arts Center is up and running.

Consent Agenda:

Minutes: Town Council Regular Meeting of November 21, 2024: Motion to approve the November 21, 2024 minutes was made by Councilman Boles, seconded by Mayor Lyon and passed unanimously.

2025 Town Council Meeting Schedule: Motion to approve Town Council's meeting schedule for 2025 was made by Councilman Mullinax, seconded by Councilman Boles and passed unanimously.

2025 Town Holiday Schedule: Motion to approve Town Council's holiday schedule for 2025 was made by Councilman Boles, seconded by Councilman Mullinax. Mayor Lyon added that President's Day in February had been added to the list of holidays. Passed unanimously.

Information Reports:

Finance Reports: Finance Director, Becky Heath, presented the monthly budget report and it was accepted as information. She added that the mid-year budget review would be provided next month.

Island Sheriff's Patrol Report: Lt. James gave an update on recent crimes that occurred in the Town last month that included several vehicle break-ins.

Public Works Report: Mayor Lyon presented the Public Works Report in the absence of Keith LaDeaux (Public Works Coordinator) and it was accepted as information. Mayor Lyon also shared that Channel 2 News will be doing a story on the AmeriCorps group and the work they are doing with the Town.

Requests for Consideration by Staff: None.

Requests for Consideration by Council:

Request to Use Pinckney Park Pavilion: James Island Learning Co-op (Revised Dates): Mayor Lyon presented a request from the James Island Learning Co-op to use the Town Hall for their meetings in 2025.

This group's request was previously approved for Wednesdays and are now asking to meet on Thursdays instead. Motion in favor was made by Councilman Mullinax, seconded by Councilman Boles. Councilman Boles asked if the change in day would be a conflict for other groups and Mayor Lyon said no, it is not very busy during the week. The Co-op is appreciative and has offered to do community service work at the park. Motion passed unanimously.

Request to Use Council Chambers for Camelia Club for 2025: Motion to approve the request for the Camelia Club to meet in Council Chamber for their 2025 meetings was made by Councilman Mullinax, seconded by Councilman Boles and passed unanimously.

Request to Fund Trophies for Football Baquet: Mayor Lyon said in this past, this request was approved by staff and should require Council approval as the other grants are. Coach Matthews was unaware of the Town's grant process and last month Council approved grants at 75% of the requested amount. A total of \$45,000 was budgeted and \$43,500 was requested by non-profits. Total award made was \$32,625 so extra money is in the budget if Council chooses to authorize this request. The invoice presented by Coach Matthews has a balance of \$3,757.23 and he is requesting \$1,800 as he will be seeking funding from other places also towards that balance.

Motion to approve \$1,800 for trophies for the Lil Trojan Football Baquet was made by Councilman Mullinax, seconded by Councilman Boles. Councilman Boles spoke in favor of supporting this request and ask that Coach Matthews be informed of the Town's community assistance grants process to apply next year. Motion passed unanimously.

Repair Care @ 1135 Hillman Street for Floors/Foundation: Mayor Lyon moved to table this request to the January Town Council meeting, seconded by Councilman Mullinax and passed unanimously.

Repair/Replace Entrance Doors at the Town Hall and Council Chambers: Mayor Lyon reported that she is working with staff to obtain estimates for the repair or replacement of the entrance doors to Town Hall and the Council Chambers. Mayor Lyon called Chad Gates (Charles Blanchard Construction) forward to explain what is required to replace or repair the doors. Blanchard Construction was one of the builders of the Town Hall. Mr. Gates explained the problems with the doors and his recommendations. He said the doors were worked on several times and they are in bad shape. The mechanisms on the doors should not be used as much as they are. Better doors should've been installed but they were the doors that were spec'd and now have seen a lot of use. A price has been given to the Mayor to install higher quality doors with locking systems so we should not continue to have these problems. Mr. Gates said his professional opinion is there is no way to repair the doors and guarantee they would continue to work correctly. Mayor Lyon voiced frustration that the doors are not working properly. She said that we received several bids but they did not come in time for the packets and will be made a part of the permanent record. The bid from Charles Blanchard Construction (for the 3 sets) is \$60,776. Mayor Lyon said she reached out to three other companies, one did not reply, Charleston Glass, who has been called out several times only repairs doors, they do not replace them so their bid is \$25,000 for repair of what we have. It is her understanding from Chad Gates and our security company that if the "guts" are replaced you could still have problems. A bid was also received today for \$32,650 however the bid was missing information that requires the doors to be hurricane proof and will resubmit a bid with that information. She thanked Chad for coming to give Council an explanation of the problems that we are having and asked Council if they had questions.

Mayor Lyon said she would like to defer this request to January 16 because it would be prudent to see what the hurricane resistant costs from the other company would be. She said the Town's procurement policy requires us to obtain two to three bids. This is an emergency and we can handle it that way with our bid process as we need to be able to secure our building. Motion to defer this agenda item to obtain more information was made by Mayor Lyon, seconded by Councilman Boles and passed unanimously.

Flock Cameras Revised Contract: Mayor Lyon noted that there is a problem with our contract with Flock because they did not tell us that it was our responsibility to find the locations where the cameras would be installed. She said Lt. James has been working to find locations and called him forward to give Council an update. Lt. James said the Flock security does a tremendous in helping to resolve crime. He said the DOT does not want the cameras on their right-of-way and that most roadways in SC are a part of their right-of-way. He explained the original request was for six locations but people would have to sign a waiver. He shared receiving a call today from the church on Ft. Johnson Road that the pole was blocking their sign and has to address that. Lt. James said we are asking Flock for two mobile cameras that could be moved and placed in other areas. He will try to get answers after the holidays. Mayor Lyon said that Attorney Quisenberry could also assist if needed. Councilman Boles asked if the revised contract is for two mobile cameras and two stationary ones and Lt. James confirmed.

Councilman Boles asked to defer vote to obtain the information on costs. Motion to defer this request for additional information was made by Councilman Boles, seconded by Mayor Lyon and passed unanimously.

Committee Reports:

Land Use Committee: Mayor Lyon announced that no Planning Commission or Board of Zoning Appeals meetings were held this month.

Environment and Beautification Committee: No report.

Children's Committee: No report.

Neighborhood Council: Councilman Boles announced the holiday drop in on December 5 at 5:00 p.m. at the Town Hall. The next committee meeting will be held January 23 at 6:00 p.m.

Appointment of Bobbi Lyon: Councilman Boles moved for the appointment of Bobbi Lyon to serve on the Neighborhood Council to represent the Lynwood subdivision, seconded by Councilman Mullinax and passed unanimously.

History Committee: Mayor Lyon announced the successful launch of the driving tour and the upcoming History Workshop on January 10 at 9:30 a.m.

ReThink Folly Road: Mayor Lyon announced that a good meeting was held at the recent ReThink meeting on December 11. A lot of concerns were raised at the meeting at the raised medians on Folly Road and the DOT's safety audit. The committee also voted to apply for a no-match grant that would not cost municipalities any money for a consultant to help with further plans for Sections III and IV.

Drainage Committee: Councilman Mullinax announced that he hoped that a Drainage meeting will be held in the spring. The date will be determined.

Business Development Committee: No report.

Trees Advisory Committee: Mayor Lyon gave an update from the Town Market on the tree give-away and the tree brochure developed by Planning Director Kristen Crane and Tree Advisory member, Natalie Rumph and are available at the Town Hall.

James Island Intergovernmental Council: Mayor Lyon announced that the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 29 at 7:00 p.m.

Accommodations Tax Committee: Becky Heath, Finance Director, announced that the next meeting will be held on January 8 at 5 p.m. the committee will review applications that were received for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. The application and further information can be found on the Town's website at [www.jamesislandsc.us](http://www.jamesislandsc.us).

Proclamations and Resolutions:

Proclamation for Interfaith Harmony Month: Mayor Lyon proclaimed January 2025 as Interfaith Harmony month in the Town of James Island (*attached*).

Resolution 2024-06: Request to apply for SC Opioid Recovery Fund Grant: Mayor Lyon introduced the Resolution and stated that Grant writer, Wendy Shelton, will apply for this grant for the Town. A meeting is scheduled with Charleston County next month. Motion in favor of the Resolution was made by Councilman Mullinax, seconded by Councilman Boles and passed unanimously.

Resolution 2024-07: Request to apply for a Performing Arts Summer Grant: Mayor Lyon introduced the Resolution and stated that this is a matching grant and Ms. Shelton will also be applying for this grant on behalf of the Town. Motion in favor by Councilman Mullinax, seconded by Councilman Boles and passed unanimously.

Ordinances up for First Reading: None.

Ordinances up for Second/Final Reading:

Ordinance #2024:12: Proposed Zoning Map Amendment on Properties located at 1129 Hillman Road and 0 Dills Bluff Road from Low-density Suburban Residential (RSL) Zoning District to Residential Office (OR) Zoning District for Government Offices as an Accessory Use (TMS# 428-03-00-049 – 062): Mayor Lyon read the Ordinance by title and Councilman Boles made a motion to approve the ordinance seconded by Councilman Mullinax.

Vote:

Councilman Boles	Aye
Councilman Mullinax	Aye
Mayor Lyon	Aye
Passed Unanimously	

Old Business: Mayor Lyon shared that the driving tour has gotten 1,000 hits; a public meeting will be held on December to receive input on a new Arts and Cultural Center. She thanked Kenny Brinckman, Mike Hemmer and Parker Richardson for their hard work and encouraged the public to complete the survey that is on-line. She announced that the Town closed on the Mill Point property and hopes to open in the next several months. A public meeting will be held on January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. to for community input.

New Business: Mayor Lyon encouraged everyone to attend the upcoming Town Market on Friday, January 3, 6-8p.m. Vendors, food trucks, and live music will be available for everyone to enjoy.

Executive Session: Mayor Lyon announced that the Town Council may enter into an Executive Session in accordance with Code of Laws of South Carolina 30-4-70 (A) (2) regarding discussion of proposed contractual matters for the new Arts and Cultural Center, and the receipt of legal advice regarding litigation matters regarding KT Properties, LLC vs. Town of James Island. Upon returning to Open Session the Council may act on matters discussed in the Executive Session.

Interruption by Ronald Ladson, asking about the Hillman rezoning. Mayor Lyon explained that was out of order but we could address at closing comments or after the meeting.

Mayor Lyon asked for a motion to enter into the executive session. Councilman Boles moved to enter and Councilman Mullinax seconded. No discussion. Passed unanimously. Council entered at 8:28 p.m.

Return to Regular Session: Mayor Lyon announced that no votes were taken during the executive session and asked for a vote to return to open session. Councilman Boles moved, seconded by Councilman Mullinax and passed unanimously to return at 8:56 p.m.

Councilman Boles made a motion to authorize the Mayor to explore options for bond issuance to support the construction of the proposed new Arts and Cultural Center to present to Town Council for consideration, seconded by Councilman Mullinax. Passed unanimously.

Announcements/Closing Comments: PSD Commissioner Ronald Ladson was allowed to address Council as he was not present at the time of the public comments portion of the meeting.

Ronald Ladson, JI PSD Commissioner: Congratulated the Mayor and Council for doing a good job. He voiced concern about the Arts and Cultural Center and the major affect it will have on the community. Mayor Lyon agreed and asked him to stay and would update him about the earlier portion of the meeting and address his question.

Council wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the body, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Frances Simmons  
Town Clerk

## Frances Simmons

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**From:** Regina Ruopoli <regina.ruopoli@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 30, 2024 4:30 PM  
**To:** Frances Simmons  
**Subject:** Comments from Town Meeting

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the Town of James Island. Maintain caution when opening external links/attachments

I'm Regina Ruopoli, Managing Artistic Director for Palmetto Youth Choir and Palmetto Peace Choir (which is our adult choir.) Ours is the largest program that took place at the former Arts & Cultural Center. We're in our 3rd season.

We're thrilled that the town is looking to build a new center. It will be profoundly invaluable, and an enduring gift to the community. I've shared some design and buildout ideas with your staff.

I've been deeply involved with the performing arts for 50+ years. I know firsthand how it has the power to transform lives. To develop creativity, confidence and career paths for people of all ages. The arts are valuable - not just because they develop core skills and personal and professional growth - but also as cultural and historical touchstones that bring joy, connection, history, knowledge and a little magic to our lives.

And the arts are being cut from school budgets at an alarming rate.

About 90% of our members have been from the James Island area. We've reached hundreds of families, and we keep hearing how happy they are to have found us. How much this was missing, needed and wanted on James Island! And how life-



changing it has been for some of the kids (and adults). You can read some of these testimonials on our website, and we could send you dozens more. We also have scholarships, so that anyone who wants to sing with us is able to regardless of their ability to pay our monthly fees.

Our milestones include collaborative performances with Spoleto Festival USA and Piccolo Spoleto, Charleston Opera Theatre, touring folk rock artists Aoife O'Donovan at the Sottile and Judah & the Lion at the Refinery, Charleston Place Hotel, the renowned Taylor Festival Choir, Park Circle Pride Festival and Charleston Stage Company, The City of Charleston Mayor's Office, North Charleston Arts Festival and of course the Town of James Island. We also share our music with local retirement communities regularly at no charge. And much more!

And we are just getting started! We have many more plans ahead. But it all hinges on one thing – a place in which to do it. It's more difficult than one might think to find the perfect space for our activities. Choirs make a little noise by nature, and need a good-sized room on a tight budget, with easy parking.

We are incredibly grateful for the Town's enduring support. I'm so impressed that the town is mindfully and diligently looking to make the new space as flexible and multi-purpose as possible, to be able to be utilized for many different community needs. We look forward to seeing this all unfold, and to watching the local arts community flourish!

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Warm regards,  
Regina Ruopoli  
843-991-6369

## Frances Simmons

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**From:** Parker Richardson  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 18, 2024 11:05 AM  
**To:** Frances Simmons  
**Subject:** Council meeting Thursday Dec. 19th, 7pm

Hello, my name is Parker Richardson. I live in Rivers Point Plantation, so I am a local resident. I was a former employee at the James Island Arts and Cultural Center, and I am an artist, as well as the new and upcoming art director for the Town. I want to say that us in the arts community were happy to have a space at the old library, but it really did not accommodate all the areas of the arts like we needed it to. The facility did not have sufficient amenities to allow the members of our community to reach their full potential artistically. Speaking for myself and many other community members, I am excited to start a new chapter and a new beginning in having our own local art center built right beside town hall... where there will actually be parking and enough amenities to incorporate fine arts, performing arts, educational lectures and much more. The James Island community would be one of the only places locally to offer all of these the extraordinary services that we are planning to provide with this new state of the art, arts center. This new facility will allow for economic regeneration for the town, community togetherness, publicity and foot traffic for our small town, and many more positive opportunities to benefit us all as a community and municipality.

Liz Barry, 1756 Crystal Lake Drive: (Read into the Record): As someone who has called James Island home for a decade I have had the joy of watching our vibrant community grow and evolve. Over 15 years I've dedicated my life to art education working with students from toddlers to adults helping them to discover their creative voices. Currently I've been teaching kids art classes at the James Island Arts and Cultural Center and now at the Town Hall to which I am very grateful for. But my artistic journey extends beyond teaching. When I'm not in the classroom you might find me behind the camera lens as a professional photographer or working on my other artistic projects. In fact, I recently fulfilled a long held dream of publishing my first children's book called *Waffles with a Whale*, which I wrote and illustrated. Art has this remarkable ability to bring people together to spark conversations and help us see the world through a different lens. Here on James Island we have such a rich tapestry of talented individuals but we are missing something crucial, a dedicated space where creativity can really flourish. A new art space would be more than just a building. It would be hub where children can discover their artistic passions, where adults can reconnect with their creative side and where our community can gather to share, learn and grow together. Think about it... a place where after school programs can inspire the next generation, where workshops can bring families together, and where local artists can showcase their work. This isn't just about art, its about building connections, fostering innovation and strengthening the fabric of our James Island community.

Sara LaBissoniere, 703 Fort Johnson Road: *(Read into the Record)*: I've lived on James Island for all but one year out of the last 14 years. I love James Island and can't imagine living anywhere else. So here is a quick back story. I was an ICU Nurse at MUSC for 10 years and then COVID hit. I made it through some of COVID but then the stress of nursing in general and the extra stress of COVID I decided to take a break from my nursing career. That was a hard decision to make because I felt that I had abandoned my coworkers and patients and lost my sense of purpose. To try to distract myself from these negative feelings I focused on creating art. I was never a formal artist but had always enjoyed it as a hobby. I created to the point that I had too much stuff in my house. My husband saw there was an Arts and Cultural Center open up on James Island and suggested that I display some of my art there. I finally summoned up enough nerve to send an email with pictures to the director. She was intrigued by my pieces and asked me to bring some of them in. The next thing I know, she agreed to showcase some of my work at the Center and asked if I could create more. How exciting was that! Now that I have some direction with my art I was challenging myself to create new pieces and also volunteered at a couple of events at the Center. I even convinced my carpenter husband to make some pedestals to display other works of art. Then one day the director asked me if I would be interested in working part-time as an assistant at the Center. I interviewed for the job and got hired right away. I was super excited. Being an artist was fun but I needed something more fulfilling. How was working there fulfilling. Not only were we able to display local artists work but were able to hold groups of artists, like myself who never dreamed of having their work in a gallery. We were able to give people a beautiful, safe space to use for all sorts of reasons: knitting groups, watercolors, children and adult art classes, princess parties, book signing, dance, yoga, jazz night, neighborhood committee meetings, business classes, summer, camps, special exhibitions, Spoleto, Moja, and a beautiful garden that attracted local pollinators. Everything that I listed was in the seven months that I worked there. I ultimately went back to nursing because that is where my heart is wired to do but the time that I spent at the Center was entirely rewarding and gave me a chance for a much needed mental health care and I was able to give back to our local community. It helped me gain confidence and experience as an artist. In closing the James Island Arts and Cultural Center is vital to our community in more ways than one could possibly imagine.