

**TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND  
ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Date:** October 17, 2013 **Time:** 9:00 a.m.

**Members Present:** Mike Alsko, *Vice-Chairman*; Frank Soule, Trish Heichel, Stewart Brown, Rob Bender, Bob Spear

**Members Absent:** Robert Stenhammer, *Chairman*

**Staff Present:** Susan Simmons, *Director of Finance*; Bret Martin, *Deputy Director of Finance*; Brian Hulbert; *Staff Attorney*, Erica Madhere; *Finance Assistant*

**Council Present:** Kim Likins

**Others Present:** Mary Briggs, Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra; Steve Maglione, The Sandbox; Susan Thomas, Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce; Tami Bream, Hilton Head Wine and Food, Inc.; Peach Morrison, SC Lowcountry & Resort Islands Tourism Commission; Julie Musselman, Hilton Head Wine and Food, Inc., John De Cecco, Italian American Club of Hilton Head; Jamie Gall, Art League of Hilton Head; Carolyn Vanagel, Hilton Head Concours d'Elegance; Lindsay Harrell, Hilton Head Concours d'Elegance; Kathleen Bateson, Art Center of Coastal Carolina; and various representatives from organizations that applied for Accommodations Tax Grants.

**Media:** None

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**1. Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

**2. FOIA Compliance:**

Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

**3. Approval of Minutes:**

Ms. Heichel moved to approve the Minutes of August 27, 2013. Mr. Soule seconded the motion. The Motion passed unanimously.

**4. Chairman's Report:**

Chairman Robert Stenhammer was unable to attend the meeting; therefore, Vice Chairman Mike Alsko gave an overview of the 2014 Accommodations Tax (ATAX) Grant Application season. Twenty nine organizations submitted thirty applications for 2014 ATAX Grants, with the grant requests totaling slightly more than \$3.5 million. The total amount of ATAX funds that will be available for the 2014 grants has not been finalized as of yet, but a slight increase is expected due to the correction of a previous misallocation of funds that was owed to the Town of Hilton Head Island. A significant change in the process this year is the full elimination of Forward Funded grants, meaning all organizations will be applying together for the first time. Lastly, Mr. Alsko reminded everyone the ATAX Committee's role as an Advisory board is to make recommendations to the Town regarding funding levels and restrictions based on the applicant's presentations, applications, and all of the data submitted.

**5. Unfinished Business:**

None

**6. New Business:**

**a. Preliminary Review of Applications:**

Mr. Alsko noted that each year some organizations do not submit all of the requested documentation to the Town, and the case remains the same this year. He acknowledged the large amount of information that is requested from applicants, and would like to reach out to those with incomplete application packages after this meeting and allow them one more opportunity. Mr. Alsko encouraged all organizations to adhere to the established deadlines in the future in an effort to save time during this arduous process.

Mr. Brown expressed the importance for all organizations to make their tourist numbers very clear to the Committee, and if the data was not stated in the application, then the data should be a part of the presentation. Not only should the tourist attendance be clear, but so should the total amount of attendees to allow the Committee to get a feel for whether the organization is a tourism driver or server. He encouraged applicants to include this data in future applications and to present the data in a noticeable manner.

**b. Review and approval of individual dates and times for Applicant Hearings:**

The individual hearings will take place on Wednesday, October 30 and Thursday, November 7, 2013. Most organizations are scheduled for 20 minute hearings, except the Chamber of Commerce and the Town of Hilton Head Island are each allotted 30 minutes, and the three July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks organizations are allotted 10 minutes each. Ms. Heichel moved to accept the individual dates and times for the Applicant Hearings and Mr. Soule seconded the motion. The motion was approved 6-0.

**c. Approval of 2014 Proposed Meeting Dates:**

Ms. Heichel moved to approve the 2014 Proposed Meeting Dates and Mr. Soule seconded the motion. Carolyn Vanagel with the Concours d'Elegance made the Committee aware that its 2014 event will take place after the conclusion of the hearings; therefore the organization will not have complete data available to present. The Committee understood and thanked her for her communication. The Committee held a vote and unanimously approved the 2014 Proposed Meeting Dates.

**7. Adjournment:**

Ms. Heichel moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Soule seconded the Motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 a.m.

**Approved:**

**Respectfully submitted:**

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**Robert Stenhammer, Chairman**

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**Erica Madhere, Secretary**