

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
Venue Committee Meeting
July 22, 2016
9:00a.m. – Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

Committee Members Present: Chairman Cindy Creamer, Vice Chairman Jane Joseph (by phone), Karen Attaway, Gil Campbell, Dan Castro, Juliann Foster, Rex Garniewicz, Tim Ridge, Suzanne Thompson

Committee Members Absent: Lili Coleman, Florry Gibbes, Terry Herron, Bob Lee, Gregg Russell, Charlie Clark

Town Council Present: Kim Likins

Town Staff Present: Tom Fultz, Director of Administrative Services; Jill Foster, Deputy Director of Community Development; Teresa Haley, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

2. Freedom of Information Act 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 Agenda

Chairman Creamer asked the Committee that the agenda be amended to add Reggie Deas, member of Deas-Guyz, as a speaker under New Business. The Venue Committee **approved** the **amended** agenda by general consent.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes – July 7, 2016

The Venue Committee **approved** the minutes of the July 7, 2016 meeting as presented by general consent.

5. New Business

- a) Speaker: Presentation/Discussion – Mary Briggs, President & CEO, Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra

Chairman Creamer introduced the first speaker, Ms. Mary Briggs, President & CEO of Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Briggs thanked the Committee for their time and dedication on this important undertaking for the community. Ms. Briggs explained the vision and mission of the Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra (HHSO), which are the foundation of their active strategic plan. Ms. Briggs presented information regarding the organization, overall statistics, major areas of operation, and new initiatives and growing partnerships. Ms. Briggs then presented HHSO's current venue issues. Currently, HHSO holds all concerts at the First Presbyterian Church, which is limited in space, time, seating, stage size, and storage. The sale of alcoholic beverages is prohibited, which limits potential revenue. The church is limited in size (950 max.). Each concert generates 1500-1800 ticket buyers, which requires double

concerts and more expenses. Ms. Briggs stated that there is no other venue on the Island large enough to accommodate the needs of the HHSO. The HHSO fully supports a new venue. The HHSO Board of Directors Venue Committee is ready to advocate for a new facility and have an active role in a capital campaign for the facility and/or an endowment for the future operations of the facility. The HHSO venue needs include: a proper performance venue that seats 1,500 with auditorium seating and good visibility from all seats; a venue that can be modified or has a smaller auditorium for recitals or lectures; an orchestra pit, allowing semi-staged concerts with dance or opera; space for receptions and small events; large lobby that allows service of food and beverage. Ms. Briggs asked that additional considerations be given to space for an art gallery, dining facilities onsite or nearby, office space for HHSO staff, green room, loading dock, storage for large equipment, and outdoor performance area. The Committee asked how the HHSO current scheduling conflicts would be resolved with all the arts organizations competing to use a new venue. Ms. Briggs envisions a management company handle scheduling and that local organizations be given first priority. The Committee inquired as to how long the HHSO can exist without a venue to meet their needs. Ms. Briggs indicated that they can exist, but cannot grow. Councilwoman Likins inquired if a new facility was created with the HHSO ideal seating of 1,500 – would this eliminate the need to schedule two of the same concert and are you concerned for which concert (day and time) would be eliminated? Ms. Briggs indicated that some concerts sell more than 1,500 tickets, so in some cases two shows would still be needed. The church is unavailable for them to use for Saturday concerts so they would try to schedule Friday evening concerts and still appeal to the same crowd. Councilwoman Likins asked how many attendees come from the Island and Bluffton and Beaufort areas. Ms. Briggs said about fifty percent come from the Island and about forty percent come from Bluffton and Beaufort. The Committee asked if the HHSO has performed a study of the potential support of a community capital campaign. Ms. Briggs indicated that they haven't performed a study at this time.

b) Speaker: Presentation/Discussion – Carolyn Vanagel with the Concours d' Elegance

Ms. Carolyn Vanagel presented a promotional video of the 2016 Hilton Head Island Concours d'Elegance (Festival). Ms. Vanagel presented a background of the Festival and the events that are held over a ten day period in late October through early November. The Festival is now in their fifteenth year and the number three event of its kind in the country. A goal of this organization is to continue to build events within the Island to keep visitors here longer. The Festival has outgrown Honey Horn as a venue location and moved to Port Royal Golf Club. Parking is a huge challenge for the Festival. Multiple parking locations are used, including Honey Horn and Port Royal Golf Club. The Westin has been a tremendous supporter of the Festival, however, this location reaches full capacity quickly. The Festival's key venue needs are outdoor space and parking. The Festival has a car auction event. The Westin is the only location on the Island that has large enough doors to allow the cars to enter and exit the ballroom where the auction is held. The Committee inquired as to the number of people attending the auction. The auction sells out at the Westin's maximum ballroom capacity of 600 people. This auction is considered small in comparison to others and there's no venue location to accommodate future growth and meet all of the Festival's requirements. The Committee inquired as to the impact of the Town purchase of certain Port Royal property and the future of the Festival. Ms. Vanagel indicated that this is concerning and that they would like to stay in this location.

c) Speaker: Presentation/Discussion – Rex Garniewicz, President & CEO, Coastal Discovery Museum

Mr. Rex Garniewicz, President & CEO of the Coastal Discovery Museum (Museum), presented a background of the Museum including its mission, vision, and strategic plan. Mr. Garniewicz discussed figures involving costs and profits, advertising and marketing, increasing attendance and growth, and various other statistical reports. Mr. Garniewicz highlighted the Museum's accomplishments, including the Museum recently becoming a Smithsonian Affiliate. The Museum is listed number five in TripAdvisor's top things to do in Hilton Head. The Museum holds public programs and community events onsite and across the Island. Mr. Garniewicz identified the Museum's current and future needs. Due to the lack of seating accommodations, lectures held onsite are typically scheduled twice, as back-to-back showings, duplicating efforts and costs. The current exhibit space is approximately 1,500 sq. ft. Arts organizations typically recommended exhibit space being three, 3,000-4,000 sq. ft., totaling approximately 9,000-12,000 sq. ft. The lack of space limits the Museum from holding certain exhibits that would be profitable and successful. Councilwoman Likins inquired as to the possible location of the additional exhibit space. Mr. Garniewicz stated that it could be on or offsite, however, the key is visibility and marketing of the space. The Museum wouldn't fill the space year round, so other arts organizations would need to be allowed to use it. The Committee inquired as to the ideal size venue for lectures and whether it would be preferred to have onsite. Mr. Garniewicz stated that an onsite lecture hall auditorium to accommodate 150-200 people would be ideal. However, if offsite, the ease of use is preferred over onsite location. One member of the public asked the difference between the Coastal Discovery Museum and Honey Horn. Mr. Garniewicz explained that the historic name of the property is Honey Horn and the Coastal Discovery Museum moved to the property and opened in 2007. The property is Town owned and leased to the Museum. One member of the public asked who owns the buildings on the property. The physical buildings are Town owned and the personal property inside the buildings belongs to the Museum.

d) Speaker: Presentation/Discussion – Reggie Deas, member of Deas-Guyz

Mr. Reggie Deas, member of Deas-Guyz and personnel director of Beaufort County School District. Mr. Deas stated that his presentation is from the viewpoint of a musician and as a recruiter for teachers. As a recruiter, one of the most common question I receive from teachers is, "what is there to do on Hilton Head Island?" People are looking for more things to do than just going to the beaches, so they look to other areas, like Savannah. Mr. Deas stated that building a venue on the Island would be very beneficial, giving people more reasons to visit and live on the Island. Mr. Deas indicated that he has been in the process of recruiting African American educators to work on the Island with no success. The Island is a wonderful place to live, however, there is not a lot offered culturally for everybody. As a member of Deas-Guyz, the band provides quality music for all ages and genres. The band performs at benefits in various cities to raise money. The issue is space to accommodate larger crowds. The band performs to a sold out crowd at the Jazz Corner and the proceeds benefit the Junior Jazz Festival. Having a larger venue would provide the opportunity to sell more tickets and in turn increase money raised for numerous organizations. Chairman Creamer inquired as to the bandstand area provided when Deas-Guyz performed in the Shelter Cove area. Mr. Deas noted that the design of the bandstand creates unfavorable separation between the band and the audience. The Committee inquired as to attendance of indoor and outdoor events. Mr. Deas indicated that attendance is typically higher with outdoor events, as indoor events have a

maximum capacity. Councilwoman Likins asked what other things the Committee should be looking at to attract the African American culture to the Island. Mr. Deas suggested relatable music, concerts, activities and social events. One member of the public asked whether the local high school could be a possible location to perform. Mr. Deas indicated that the auditorium is used by the school and its lack of availability would be an issue. One member of the public asked whether Deas-Guyz would be interested in an outdoor stage that can be put up and taken down and that accommodates a large enough crowd. Mr. Deas expressed interested in outdoor events, but cautioned that unfavorable weather can cause event cancellations and have negative financial effects.

Chairman Creamer expressed appreciations to all of the speakers for their time and presentations today. Chairman Creamer asked all of the speakers if she could contact them via email should the Committee have any further questions. All of the speakers gladly agreed to Chairman Creamer's request.

6. Unfinished Business

a) Review any updated plan information from Task Teams

Team 1 sent a survey to approximately fifty-five individuals in the Arts Schools and related businesses. Team 1 is also in the process of scheduling approximately twenty-five in person interviews with the larger arts and cultural organizations in the area.

Team 2 is continuing to work with Dr. Salazar and plans to provide an update at the next meeting.

Team 3 has met with certain members of the Town's Finance Committee, outside bond counsel, and outside investment advisors to discuss possible financing structures for a new venue.

b) Update on progress on consultant RFQ

Chairman Creamer provided an update as to the RFQ non-mandatory pre-qualification meeting that occurred on July 12. Three consultants attended and ten consultants joined via conference call. Mr. Tom Fultz reviewed the rules and procedures of the meeting. Vice Chairman Joseph reviewed the mission and objectives set forth by the Committee. The consultants were permitted to ask questions regarding the RFQ. Town staff gathered those questions and answers to provide to all interested consultants. All responses are to be delivered by August 2, 2016.

Mr. Fultz provided an update regarding the survey work with Dr. Salazar. The Town provided Dr. Salazar with contact information that's available in the Town's business license database, and the Beaufort County vehicle property tax database. The Town is still working with Bluffton, the City of Beaufort, and Beaufort County to obtain business license contact information.

Mr. Daniel Brock, of Rawle Murdy, provided updates regarding communication development. The Town invites the public to *Arts & Coffee* at Java Burrito Company on August 4th at 8:30am to receive updates from Committee members and Town representatives regarding the arts on the Island and to share their ideas for cultivating arts, culture and history on the Island. An article will be featured in the next issue of Celebrate Hilton Head (CH2) regarding the

Town's support of the arts and the Committee's work. The Town's Facebook page for the arts is still in progress and close to being released.

7. Administrative Details

a) Schedule Review

Chairman Creamer stated that the next Committee meeting is schedule for August 3rd at 4:00pm. The Task Teams will provide updates as to their progress. Additional members of the arts and cultural community are scheduled to give presentations. Councilman Tom Lennox is scheduled to present information regarding the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina and a possible financial purchase by the Town.

8. Appearance by Citizens

Chairman Creamer asked for additional comments and questions from the public. One member of the public inquired as to Mr. Brock's position. Mr. Brock is a Senior Account Executive with Rawle Murdy, the Town's communications and public relations firm.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00a.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By: August 3, 2016

Teresa Haley
Administrative Assistant

Cindy Creamer
Chairman