

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
Minutes of the Venue Committee Special Meeting
June 20, 2018 – 3:00 p.m.
Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

Committee Members Present: Chair Cindy Creamer, Vice Chair Jane Joseph, Karen Attaway (via phone), Dan Castro, Florry Gibbes, Terry Herron, Bob Lee, Tim Ridge, Gregg Russell, Suzanne Thompson

Committee Members Absent: Gil Campbell, Lili Coleman, Juliann Foster, Rex Garniewicz

Town Council Present: Kim Likins

Town Staff Present: Jayme Lopko, Senior Planner; Jenn McEwen, Culture & Arts Network Director; Teresa Haley, Senior Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

Chair Creamer called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

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

Chair Creamer requested a motion to approve the agenda as submitted.

Mr. Ridge moved to approve. Mr. Castro seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes – March 30, 2018 and April 16, 2018

Chair Creamer requested a motion to approve the minutes of the March 30, 2018 meeting. Ms. Gibbes moved to approve. Mr. Castro seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Creamer requested a motion to approve the minutes of the April 16, 2018 meeting. Vice Chair Joseph moved to approve. Mr. Castro seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

5. New Business

- a) Discussion on preparation for Town Council meeting regarding the Committee Recommendation that was presented to and approved by the Community Services Committee on June 11, 2018

Chair Creamer welcomed all those in attendance and presented a summary of events leading up to today. Chair Creamer indicated the purpose of today's meeting is to prepare for the Committee's presentation to the Town Council.

Chair Creamer presented statements about recent news on Yonder Field in Orangeburg County, Bowman, South Carolina and Daniel Island located close to Charleston, South Carolina.

Chair Creamer asked Mr. Castro to share the research he did on Yonder Field. Mr. Castro described the facility. The facility has a large stage and VIP box setting. The facility is husband and wife team owned. They were trying to attract rock concerts. The first concert was not successful. The next two concerts were canceled as they could not be supported financially. Now the owners are trying to rent the facility for weddings. The newspaper media indicated they did everything the wrong way. They did not reach out to the local government to gain its support. Public relations were poor. There was public discontent. Local residents complained about noise concerns with no specifics. The location is not ideal. It is situated in an isolated area with no restaurants or shopping. The owners did not have the financial support to maintain the facility nor did they embark on a cooperative venture in public and private funding. They did not have expertise in performance and marketing management.

The Committee discussed the factors that set this venue up for failure from the beginning and contributed to this venue's lack of success. The Committee wanted to let the public and Town Council know that they do not intend to repeat this scenario. There are failures in every business and industry, but this is an opportunity to draw lessons on what works and doesn't work.

The Committee discussed a recent trip that six of the Committee members and some other individuals went on to Jekyll Island Convention Center. The State paid for the building and a lot was done right when it was built. The management was local and lacked experience. They had a few bad years, so they hired a professional management company and now they are successful. The Committee has performed research on many facilities and learned it helps to have the right outside experts.

Vice Chair Joseph then presented statements she gathered from media sources regarding Daniel Island. Daniel Island seemed to do a lot of things correctly. The venue was planned to be a multi-purpose facility. An individual was planning to support the facility, but then backed out. A board of directors formed and received a lot of public support – their Mayor, performing arts and surrounding community. The idea started in 2014 with the plan to break ground in spring 2018, and first performing season in 2019-2020. The timeline appeared aggressive. They claimed they were going to be South Carolina's first League of Regional Theaters (LORT), but they are not an equity theater as required. A nearby symphony held a fundraiser to support the facility and soon after the groups involved announced it was coming to an end. The facility could not be built on donations alone. They are looking for a place to settle somewhere in the Lowcountry.

The Committee indicated it would like to know more about why it failed with so much community support and support from the Mayor. The Committee discussed the population and size of the island. Daniel Island is competing with Charleston and other larger locations.

The Committee has learned from these scenarios and through their research that there are a variety of funding options and misconceptions that come with them. They are prepared to explain these situations to the Town Council.

The Committee began discussions on their ideas for their presentation to Town Council. The

Town Council will have the Committee's recommendation package. The Town Council has already seen or will be provided with the Committee recommendations and Webb reports. The Committee shared ideas on the format of their presentation to Town Council. The Committee shared ideas on other documentation they should consider providing to Town Council. Some members shared ideas to provide information on the differences between venue types, sizes, uses, who they could serve perhaps by different revenue streams. Some members shared ideas to focus on the purpose of the meeting which is to receive funding for Phase 2. The Committee's recommendations were approved about a year ago and now the funding is being asked for.

The Committee generally agreed it would be best to provide Town Council with relevant documentation in advance of their presentation. The Committee discussed the need to have conversations with Ahmad Ward and Rex Garniewicz, as Mitchelville and the Coastal Discovery Museum (CDM) are a large part of this initiative. Those conversations should include general ideas on what the Committee and these organizations are trying to accomplish, and the relationship and roles they and the Town plays in this effort.

The Committee talked about how the presentation needs to be in comparison to the recommendations provided to Town Council. The Committee's recommendations were approved by the Community Services Committee and those recommendations will be before the Town Council. The Committee discussed questions and concerns they may be asked and should be prepared for.

Vice Chair Joseph suggested the Committee put together a background document that is bulleted to lay out what the Committee is trying to move forward with and achieve in Phase 2. Then give highlights in the actual presentation to Town Council, answer their questions, and provide examples as needed. Information about Mitchelville and CDM will be updated if needed.

The Committee shared thoughts on how to communicate their set of six recommendations to Town Council. It was noted that the Arts Center has withdrawn its facility for consideration and the issue remains unresolved. The Committee agreed to focus on whether Town Council will fund the Committee to move forward with their whole set of recommendations for Phase 2. The Committee talked about preparing to respond to questions and providing information about the community arts center portion that was previously authorized by Town Council.

The Committee discussed the consultant portion of the project and how much funding remains available. Funding was used for Webb's consulting and the communications firm. The Committee discussed drafting a general plan and timetable in connection with a consultant in Phase 2.

Chair Creamer and Vice Chair Joseph will work on the presentation and welcome additional comments from the Committee members. The Committee talked about having another public meeting to review the presentation prior to going to Town Council. Based on the timeline, the Committee could make the August Town Council meeting.

6. Appearance by Citizens – None

7. Adjournment

Chair Creamer requested a motion to adjourn. Ms. Gibbes moved to approve. Mr. Castro seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:22 p.m.

Submitted by: Teresa Haley, Senior Administrative Assistant

Approved: August 24, 2018

Cindy Creamer, Chair