



Town of Hilton Head Island  
PUBLIC PLANNING COMMITTEE  
MEETING  
Thursday, July 11, 2024, 10:00 AM  
Minutes

Call to Order

Chair Ames called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Committee Members present: David Ames, Chair, Ward 3; Tammy Becker, Ward 4; Patsy Brison, Ward 2, Glenn Stanford, Ward 6

Adoption of the Agenda

**Mr. Ames moved to amend the agenda as presented to allow for public comment to be heard after the approval of the minutes. Mr. Stanford seconded. Motion carried 4-0.**

Approval of the Minutes

Regular Meeting Minutes of May 9, 2024

**Mr. Stanford moved to approve. Ms. Becker seconded. Motion carried 4-0.**

Public Comment - Non-Agenda Items

DJ Delong Mr. Delong addressed the Committee regarding his thoughts on the William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor discussions. He stated that he feels that there will not be a cure for traffic for at least another 5 years. He asked what the Town will be doing to help with the current traffic on the Island and commuters. Mr. Delong stated that he feels that Palmetto Breeze would be the solution to help do that.

New Business

Report on Palmetto Breeze Annual Service Plan – Mary Lou Franzoni, Executive Director

- i. Trolley Service
- ii. Beach Shuttle Service

Mary Lou Franzoni presented the following information: a 2023 Trolley Season Summary, insights on Enhancing the Island Brand and Experience, a 2024 Trolley Season Update, and a Coligny Beach Parking Shuttle Update.

During the 2023 trolley season, Palmetto Breeze recorded approximately 34,500 passenger trips, which is a decrease compared to the 2022 and 2021 seasons, largely

attributed to lower occupancy rates and adverse afternoon weather for beachgoers. The Committee requested that in the future, the data be broken down further to account the beach shuttles separate from regular ridership. Despite the decrease, the 2023 season saw a reduction of over 12,000 vehicles on the road, contributing to an estimated \$1.3 million in economic return on investment. Ms. Franzoni stated that they have increased their social media presence by over 300% in the past two years.

During discussion regarding social media, Mr. Stanford asked how Palmetto Breeze markets their services. Brian Sullivan, Director of Marketing & Communications stated that there were many ways, including online presence, word of mouth and partners of the community. Palmetto Breeze has partnered with the University of South Carolina Beaufort's Hospitality Program (USCB) each season to utilize their Island Ambassador program, which helps in training and refreshing the skills of their drivers.

Ms. Franzoni stated that enhancing the Island brand and experience is a priority for Palmetto Breeze, which is achieved by offering safe and courteous operators who serve as Island Ambassadors, using video monitors to promote the Town's Culture HHI events and historical sites, actively participating in Island community events, hosting the popular annual "Breeze Trolley Rocks" campaign, and implementing green vehicle technologies, including a solar-powered trolley stop light that is turtle friendly.

The Breeze Trolley Rocks campaign is an annual event held on the last weekend of Labor Day that involves a rock scavenger hunt where tourists hide painted rocks at bus stops for others to find. This family-friendly activity is designed to encourage ridership and engagement with the community.

Ms. Franzoni was asked of Ms. Brison if she felt that more parking was needed for the shuttles going back and forth. Her response was that the overflow parking used at the University of South Carolina Beaufort (Hilton Head Island location) is typically never full. There was also discussion regarding afternoon gridlocks in the Coligny area, where the biggest demand for services is currently and if there are areas that are not being serviced that could be serviced. Ms. Franzoni stated that the North End of the Island is an area of interest that could be implemented.

To conclude the presentation, Ms. Franzoli stated that the 2024 Breeze Trolley service began on April 13th and will run through Labor Day, maintaining the same routes and service hours as in 2023, while continuing to offer fare-free service. This year, passengers will enjoy enhanced tracking capabilities through the CatchtheBreeze mobile app, which provides real-time updates on vehicle locations and arrival times, improving convenience and accessibility for all riders.

The Coligny Beach Shuttle Service agreement includes shuttling passengers between the University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB) and Coligny Beach Park on weekends and holidays—Memorial Day through Labor Day. This season, there have been 2,122 passengers recorded through June 30. The strong ridership numbers reflect the community's continued reliance on and appreciation for this service, which plays a crucial role in alleviating traffic and providing easy access to one of the Island's most

popular destinations.

Final comments by the Committee included a review of the overall costs associated with the trolley service, exploring the feasibility of establishing a potential park-and-ride system both on Hilton Head Island and in Bluffton, and a request for data related to ridership demographics, particularly concerning the Island's workforce. The Committee expressed interest in understanding how the service supports local employees and the broader community.

Chair Ames asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

**Mr. Ames made a motion to request the Town Manger investigate alternate strategies to address transportation challenges and opportunities for regional and Island services with a goal of increasing ridership by decreasing vehicles on the road and implementing a survey to allow for base data to assist in accomplishing a solution. Mr. Stanford seconded. Motion carried 4-0.**

Adjournment

Chair Ames adjourned the meeting at 11:19 a.m.

**Approved: September 12, 2024**

**The recording of this Meeting can be found on the Town's website at [www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov](http://www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov)**