



Town of Hilton Head Island

Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday, November 7, 2024, 9:00 AM
1 Town Center Court, Hilton Head Island, SC
Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

The meeting can be viewed on the [Town's YouTube Channel](#), the [Beaufort County Channel](#), and Spectrum Channel 1304.

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Adoption of the Agenda**
3. **Approval of the Minutes**
 - a. Regular Meeting Minutes of Monday, October 7, 2024
 - b. Regular Meeting Minutes of Thursday, October 17, 2024
 - c. Regular Meeting Minutes of Thursday, October 24, 2024
4. **New Business**
 - a. Consideration of the Proposed Calendar Year 2025 Meeting Dates - Shena Smith, Finance Assistant
 - b. Review & Recommendation for the 2025 Accommodations Tax Grants - Adriana Burnett, Director of Finance
5. **Public Comment - Non Agenda items**
6. **Adjournment**

FOIA Compliance: Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Hilton Head Island.

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), the Town of Hilton Head Island will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or

activities. Auditory accommodations are available. Any person requiring further accommodation should contact the Town of Hilton Head Island ADA Coordinator as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) Civility Pledge:

“I pledge to build a stronger and more prosperous community by advocating for civil engagement, respecting others and their viewpoints, and finding solutions for the betterment of my city or town.”



Town of Hilton Head Island
Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee

Monday, October 7, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

MEETING MINUTES

Present from the Committee: Stephen Arnold, *Chairman*; John Farrell, *Vice-Chairman*; Cecile Eck, Martin Lesch, Keith Schlegel, Adriaan Radder, and Thomas Dowling

Absent from the Committee: None

Present from Town Council: None

Present from Town Staff: Shena Smith, *Finance Assistant*; and Michele Bunce, *Senior Grants Administrator*

Present from the Media: None

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Chairman Arnold called for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Schlegel made the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Dowling. The motion was approved by a unanimous show of hands, with a vote of 7-0-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular Meeting – August 15, 2024

Chairman Arnold called for a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes from August 15, 2024. Mr. Radder made the motion, which was seconded by Ms. Eck. The motion was approved by a unanimous show of hands, with a vote of 7-0-0.

4. New Business

a. Consideration of the Proposed Dates and Times for Applicant Hearings

Chairman Arnold invited audience members to discuss any potential conflicts with the proposed hearing dates of October 17th and October 24th. Receiving no responses, he then called for a motion to approve the schedule for applicant hearings. Mr. Lesch moved to approve, and Mr. Dowling seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous show of hands, with a vote of 7-0-0.

b. Preliminary Review of the 2025 Accommodations Tax Grant Applications

Chairman Arnold began by thanking the applicants for submitting their applications on time. He announced that there were 33 applicants, with each presentation scheduled for 20 minutes—allowing time for each organization's presentation and questions from committee members. Chairman Arnold requested that applicants arrive 10-20 minutes early. He noted

that if presentations run shorter than 20 minutes, the committee would use the extra time to stay on or ahead of schedule.

Ms. Eck informed the committee that she would not be able to attend the October 17 meeting. She asked Town Staff if she could submit questions in advance for a committee member to ask on her behalf. Ms. Smith, the Committee Secretary, confirmed that Ms. Eck could submit her questions to her in advance, and Ms. Smith would ensure they were provided to the Chairman. Ms. Eck noted she would watch the meeting remotely via livestream.

Mr. Lesch confirmed that the Rotary Club of Hilton Head Island was the only new applicant this year. Chairman Arnold invited any attendees from the Rotary Club to speak or ask questions; however, there was no response. Mr. Lesch then confirmed that the total funding requested by all applicants this year amounted to \$4.2 million. Chairman Arnold added that the final amount of available funding had not yet been confirmed by the state, but they hoped to have this information by the November 7 meeting.

Committee Member Schlegel asked Town Staff if committee members could contact them for clarification on application details or to request additional information. Ms. Smith assured him that any questions or requests could be sent to her, and she would contact the applicants for the necessary information.

Ms. Smith also addressed the applicants, stating that any further changes to the hearing schedule would need to be coordinated among themselves. Staff only required notification of any schedule adjustments prior to the agenda's publication for the October 17 and October 24 hearing dates.

5. Public Comment – Non Agenda items None.

6. Chairman's Report

Chairman Arnold concluded the meeting by reflecting on his five years of experience with the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee, noting that each year has shown steady improvement. He offered a reminder to all applicants to arrive a bit early for their presentations and encouraged anyone using PowerPoint presentations to submit their files to Town Staff as far in advance as possible. This allows the staff time to troubleshoot any technical issues and ensures presentations run smoothly. Following these reminders, Chairman Arnold opened the floor for any final questions from those in attendance, though there were none.

7. Adjournment

At 9:09 a.m. Mr. Arnold adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by: Shena Smith, Secretary

Approved:



Town of Hilton Head Island
Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee

Thursday, October 17, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

MEETING MINUTES

Present from the Committee: Stephen Arnold, *Chairman*; John Farrell, *Vice-Chairman*; Martin Lesch, Keith Schlegel, Adriaan Radder, and Thomas Dowling

Absent from the Committee: Cecile Eck

Present from Town Council: None

Present from Town Staff: Erica Madhere, *Budget Analyst*; Shena Smith, *Finance Assistant*; and Jacob Schreib, *IT Analyst*

Present from the Media: None

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Chairman Arnold requested a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Schlegel moved to approve the agenda as submitted and Mr. Farrell seconded. By show of hands, the motion was carried by a vote of 6-0-1.

3. New Business

a. Hearing of Applicants – Shena Smith, Finance Assistant

The following applicants made presentations to the Committee during the morning session:

1. Lowcountry Gullah
2. Hilton Head Concours d'Elegance
3. The Heritage Library Foundation
4. Gullah Museum of HHI
5. Mitchelville Preservation Project
6. The Sandbox
7. The Outside Foundation
8. Hilton Head MLK Committee for Justice

The Committee broke for lunch at 12:10 p.m. and resumed the meeting at 1:12 p.m. During the afternoon session, the following applicants made presentations to the Committee:

9. David M. Carmines Memorial Foundation
10. HHI St. Patrick's Day Parade
11. Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra
12. Hilton Head Audubon Society
13. Hilton Head Choral Society

- 14. Lowcountry Golf Course Owners Association
- 15. Hilton Head Recreation Association
- 16. Art League of Hilton Head
- 17. The First Tee of the Lowcountry

During the presentation of the First Tee of the Lowcountry and the Lowcountry Golf Course Owners Association, Mr. Farrell disclosed that, while he has no conflict of interest, he serves as a board member for the organization and therefore thought it best to recuse himself from participating. The necessary disclosure forms are on file.

4. Public Comment – Non Agenda items None.

5. Adjournment

At 3:40 p.m. Mr. Arnold adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by: Shena Smith, Secretary

Approved:



Town of Hilton Head Island
Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee

Thursday, October 24, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

MEETING MINUTES

Present from the Committee: Stephen Arnold, *Chairman*; John Farrell, *Vice-Chairman*; Cecile Eck, Martin Lesch, Keith Schlegel, Adriaan Radder, and Thomas Dowling

Absent from the Committee: None

Present from Town Council: Alan Perry

Present from Town Staff: Adriana Burnett, *Director of Finance*; Erica Madhere, *Budget Analyst*; Bob Bromage, *Director of Public Safety*; Shena Smith, *Finance Assistant*; and Jacob Schreib, *IT Analyst*

Present from the Media: None

1. Call to Order

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

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Chairman Arnold called for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Schlegel moved to approve the agenda as submitted, and Mr. Farrell seconded. The motion was carried unanimously by a show of hands, with a vote of 7-0-0.

3. New Business

a. Hearing of Applicants – Shena Smith, Finance Assistant

The following applicants made presentations to the Committee during the morning session:

1. Lean Ensemble Theater
2. Arts Center of Coastal Carolina
3. Long Cove Club
4. The Coastal Discovery Museum
5. Hilton Head Wine & Food
6. The Boys & Girls Club of HHI
7. Hilton Head Island Airport
8. Hilton Head Rhythm & Brews
9. Native Island Business Community Affairs Assoc.

The Committee broke for lunch at 12:10 p.m. and resumed the meeting at 1:11 p.m. During the afternoon session, the following applicants made presentations to the Committee:

10. Hilton Head Dance Theatre
11. Sea Turtle Patrol HHI
12. HHI Bridge Association

- 13. Rotary Club of Hilton Head
- 14. TEDx Hilton Head
- 15. HHI Land Trust
- 16. Shelter Cove Harbour Company
- 17. Harbour Town Merchants Association

During the presentation of the Boys & Girls Club, Mr. Dowling disclosed that, although he has no conflict of interest, he serves as a board member for the organization and therefore chose to recuse himself from participating. Similarly, during the presentation of the Harbour Town Merchants Association, Mr. Farrell disclosed what could be perceived of a potential conflict of interest and, in the interest of full transparency, opted to recuse himself from further discussion. The required disclosure forms are on file.

4. Public Comment – Non Agenda items None.

5. Adjournment

At 3:39 p.m. Mr. Arnold adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by: Shena Smith, Secretary

Approved:



TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Staff Report Memo

TO: Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee
FROM: Shena Smith, Finance Assistant
VIA: Adriana Burnett, Finance Director
DATE: November 1, 2024
SUBJECT: Proposed Calendar Year 2025 Meeting Dates

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee (ATAC) review and approve the proposed meeting schedule for 2025. This schedule is designed to ensure the availability of committee members for attendance and to facilitate an efficient and thorough review process for applicants seeking funds from the Accommodations Tax Grant Award.

BACKGROUND:

The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee plays a crucial role in evaluating applications for the Accommodations Tax Grant throughout the year. The committee's meetings are structured around an annual cycle that aligns with the ATAX funding process and its key milestones.

The 2025 ATAX funding cycle will commence in April with the presentation of the Town's Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) Budget & Marketing Plan. This initial meeting will set the foundation for the strategic allocation of funds aimed at supporting tourism-related activities and events throughout the year. The cycle will culminate in November, when the committee will conduct its final review and present funding recommendations to Town Council on a date to be determined.

To facilitate an organized and effective review process, the following timeline has been proposed:

- **April:** Presentation of DMO Budget & Marketing Plan
- **July:** Welcome New Committee Members and Election of Officers
- **August - September:** Launch of the ATAX Grant Application process, including an in-person workshop for applicants to receive guidance and ask questions
- **October:** Preliminary review of applications and presentations from submitting organizations
- **November:** Final review and recommendation of ATAX funding allocations to be submitted for Town Council consideration on a later date

SUMMARY:

Approval of the proposed meeting schedule will enable the ATAC to maintain an organized and consistent review process for the 2025 funding cycle. The structured timeline will ensure that committee members have adequate preparation for each phase of review, allowing for timely and well-informed recommendations to the Town Council.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee 2025 Schedule

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2025 SCHEDULE

Thursday	April 3	9:00 a.m. – DMO Budget & Marketing Plan Presentation	Council Chambers
Thursday	July 10	2:00 p.m. – Welcome New Members & Election of Officers	Council Chambers
Monday	August 4	8:00 a.m. – Grant Application Available for Electronic Filing	www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov
Thursday	August 7	9:00 a.m. – ATAX Applicant Workshop	Council Chambers
Friday	September 5	4:00 p.m. – Application Deadline	www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov
Thursday	September 25	9:00 a.m. – Preliminary Review of Applications	Council Chambers
Thursday	October 16	9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Applicant Hearings	Council Chambers
Thursday	October 23	9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Applicant Hearings	Council Chambers
Thursday	November 6	9:00 a.m. – Review and Recommendations	Council Chambers

Note:

- Town Council will meet to award the Accommodations Tax Grant, date TBD.
- Meeting dates are considered “tentative” until the Town Council approves the 2025 Meeting Dates, which will take place on December 3, 2024

APPROVED:



TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Staff Report Memo

TO: Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee
FROM: Adriana Burnett, Finance Director
VIA: Shena Smith, Finance Assistant
DATE: November 1, 2024
SUBJECT: Final Review & Recommendation of 2025 Accommodations Tax Grant Recipients

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee (ATAC) review the applications for the 2025 Accommodations Tax Grant to finalize their recommendations to Town Council. This review should include summarizing the evaluation results, allocating award funding, and engaging in discussions to ensure that the recommendations reflect a comprehensive assessment of each project's potential benefits to the community and the tourism sector.

BACKGROUND:

The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee is charged with the responsibility of reviewing applications for the Accommodations Tax Grant and making funding recommendations to the Town Council. Each year, local organizations and initiatives submit proposals designed to promote tourism and bolster the local economy through these sought-after ATAX Grant awards.

For the 2025 funding cycle, the ATAC has received a diverse array of applications from various entities, each proposing initiatives that align with the goals of the Accommodations Tax Fund. These proposals are being assessed against established criteria, including:

- Potential impact on local tourism
- Community benefits
- Overall alignment with the Town's strategic goals

To facilitate a thorough review, the committee has undertaken the following steps:

1. **Initial Application Screening:** Staff conducted a review of all applications for completeness and adherence to submission guidelines.
2. **Evaluation of Proposals:** Committee members assessed each application based on key criteria, including:
 - Project feasibility and sustainability

- Expected economic impact on local tourism
 - Alignment with the mission of the accommodations tax program
3. **Presentations by Applicants:** Applicants were invited to present their proposals to the ATAC, allowing committee members to ask questions and gain deeper insight into the proposed projects.

SUMMARY:

The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee is now tasked with conducting a final review of the applications to finalize their recommendations for Town Council. The recommended recipients should have demonstrated a strong commitment to enhancing the local community and promoting tourism through their proposed projects. These initiatives should also contribute significantly to the economic vitality of the area and enhance the overall visitor experience.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Calendar Year 2025 Grant Requests

Calendar Year 2025 Accommodations Tax Advisory Grant Requests

	2024 GRANTS			2025 GRANTS		
	2024 Applicant Request	ATAC Recommendation	Town Council Award	2025 Applicant Request	ATAC Recommendation	Town Council Award
Art League of Hilton Head	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 80,000		
Arts Center of Coastal Carolina	\$ 430,000	\$ 430,000	\$ 430,000	\$ 447,000		
David M. Carmines Memorial Fnd	\$ 181,000	\$ 181,000	\$ 181,000	\$ 185,000		
Gullah Museum of Hilton Head Island	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 180,000		
Gullah Roots Historical Foundation	\$ 200,000	\$ -	\$ -	Did not apply for 2025 ATAX Grant		
Habitat for Humanity of the Lowcountry	\$ 150,000	\$ -	\$ -	Did not apply for 2025 ATAX Grant		
Harbour Town Merchants 4th of July	\$ 29,000	\$ 29,000	\$ 29,000	\$ 29,000		
Hilton Head Audubon Society	\$ 20,100	\$ 20,100	\$ 20,100	\$ 21,400		
Hilton Head Choral Society	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 20,000		
Hilton Head Concourse d'Elegance	\$ 362,000	\$ 362,000	\$ 362,000	\$ 350,000		
Hilton Head Dance Theatre	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 23,000		
Hilton Head Island Airport	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000		
Hilton Head Island Bridge Association	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 21,000		
Hilton Head Island Land Trust	\$ 37,300	\$ 36,632	36,632	\$ 47,000		
Hilton Head Island Rec Association	\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 75,000		
Hilton Head St. Patrick's Day Parade	\$ 86,000	\$ 74,065	\$ 74,065	\$ 80,000		
HH MLK Committee for Justice	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,513	\$ 4,513	\$ 5,000		
Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra	\$ 330,000	\$ 330,000	\$ 330,000	\$ 350,000		
Lean Ensemble Theatre	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 55,000		
LGCOA Lowcountry Golf Course	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 200,000		
Long Cove Club	\$ 59,240	\$ 56,653	\$ 56,653	\$ 65,450		
Lowcountry Gullah	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000		
Mitchelville Preservation Project	\$ 190,000	\$ 190,000	\$ 190,000	\$ 190,000		
Native Island Business & Community	\$ 225,000	\$ 225,000	\$ 225,000	\$ 225,000		
Palmetto Quilt Guild	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	Did not apply for 2025 ATAX Grant		
Paul Miller Fund	\$ 50,000	\$ 16,500	\$ 16,500	Did not apply for 2025 ATAX Grant		
Rotary Club of Hilton Head	Did not apply for 2024 ATAX Grant			\$ 40,000		
Sea Pines Forest Preserve Foundation	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	Did not apply for 2025 ATAX Grant		
Sea Turtle Patrol HHI	\$ 70,000	55,040	70,000	\$ 70,000		
Shelter Cove Harbour Company	\$ 244,600	\$ 244,600	\$ 244,600	\$ 293,800		
TEDx Hilton Head	\$ 45,000	45,000	45,000	\$ 10,000		
The Boys & Girls Club of Hilton Head	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000		
The Coastal Discovery Museum	375,000	375,000	375,000	400,000		
The Coastal Discovery Museum (Honey Horn)	\$ 300,000	\$ 300,000	\$ 300,000	Did not apply for 2025 ATAX Grant		
The First Tee of the Lowcountry	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 50,000		
The Heritage Library	\$ 135,000	\$ 135,000	\$ 135,000	\$ 143,000		
The Outside Foundation	\$ 72,000	\$ 72,000	\$ 72,000	\$ 72,000		
The Sandbox	\$ 60,765	\$ 60,765	\$ 60,765	\$ 64,000		
University of South Carolina	\$ 83,188	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	Did not apply for 2025 ATAX Grant		
Wine & Food Inc. (Rhythm & Brews)	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000		
Wine & Food Inc. (Wine & Food Fest)	\$ 130,000	\$ 130,000	\$ 130,000	\$ 130,000		
World Affairs Council of HH	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ -	Did not apply for 2025 ATAX Grant		
Total	\$ 4,767,693	\$ 4,267,368	\$ 4,282,328	\$ 4,241,650	\$ -	\$ -