



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: November 7, 2024