

**TOWN OF MOUNT PLEASANT, SOUTH CAROLINA  
ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Thursday, September 5, 2013, 12:00 P.M.**

**Municipal Complex  
Building A - Public Meeting Room 1  
100 Ann Edwards Lane, Mount Pleasant, SC**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Edward Riggs, Chairman; Monique Semper-Flynn, Jennifer Bagwell, Kenda Sweet, Cheryl Craven, Su McManus-Frost

**Also Present:** Elton Carrier, Council Liaison

**Staff Present:** Ashley Richardson, Nicole Harvey, Tracy Richter, Community Dev. & Tourism Office

**Call to Order:** Chairman Riggs called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

**1. Approval of Minutes from August 1, 2013 meeting**

*Ms. Bagwell moved to approve the minutes; motion seconded by Ms. Sweet. Motion carried unanimously.*

**2. Financial Statement for period ending August 31, 2013**

Ms. Richardson said they received the fourth quarter revenue payment totaling a little over \$360,000 which was very good. They closed the fiscal year at \$945,831.05. Compared to the prior year, that was about a 17% increase. She hoped that trend would continue for this current fiscal year.

Ms. Richardson said the committee would be voting today on eleven applications. The reserve for projects is currently \$63,768.00. She said this is the second quarter funding and they have two more funding cycles to go through. If the committee accepts staff's funding recommendations, it will leave \$27,768.00 remaining. She said this is a lower amount than for the last two quarters and compared with the same time last year, they are around \$15,000 short. She said she is expecting some new applications to come in. Patriots Point is trying to recruit a big event, so they are working with them on a possible application. She said staff has talked about bringing a budget adjustment to Council in the next few months to help with the shortfall. The actual amount has not been confirmed but it should be sufficient to cover what we funded last year and for some new events. She recommended that the committee award funds based on merit and not to be overly concerned about the fund balance because she thought they would be able to make up for any shortfall.

Ms. Richardson had a handout indicating the funding applications for the second quarter of FY2014 which should be easier to follow since it is all on one page. She noted that the Cooper River Bridge Run indicates a \$20M economic impact and that covers the Charleston area – not just Mount Pleasant.

Ms. Frost noticed that some of the applicants do not list the hotels utilized on the hotel check off sheet. Some are not filling it in, she noticed.

Chairman Riggs said it is not mandatory that they fill it out, but it is more helpful for the committee to make their decisions concerning hotel impacts. He said there is no law or statute that says the committee has to consider room nights, as such; however that is a key component to look at for the committee and the state. The committee has been urging applicants to recommend and list host hotels in Mount Pleasant.

### **3. FY 13/14 Funding Recommendations**

#### **a. Mount Pleasant Velo, Inc. – 2013 Hellhole Gravel Grind 2-Day Stage Road Race**

Chairman Riggs stated they requested \$3,000 and staff recommended \$1,500. He called for a motion.

*Ms. Frost moved to recommend to Town Council funding in the amount of \$1,000; motion seconded by Ms. Craven.*

Discussion followed the motion. Chairman Riggs asked Ms. Frost her reasoning for reducing the amount.

Ms. Frost said she went below staff's recommendation of \$1,500 because this is not a very big event compared to the others and they were awarded \$1,000 last year. She asked if the participants were staying in Mount Pleasant hotels.

Ms. Bagwell said that they usually use Comfort Suites and the KOA.

Chairman Riggs said Ms. Frost's comment was well taken and he noted that they have little impact on Mount Pleasant hotel rooms. It is a startup event.

In response to a question from Chairman Riggs, Ms. Richardson explained that the committee's guidelines are more supportive of newer events that are hoping and planning to grow. She believed that organizers of this new event would appreciate the support. She said they expect to grow each year. She said that staff did not recommend awarding the \$3,000 they requested because of their numbers, but they need support.

Ms. Sweet said she thought this event would grow because this particular type of biking is new. Chairman Riggs said he agreed with that.

Ms. Bagwell stated that the event will have more participation in the future and will draw more room nights in the future.

Mr. Riggs called for the vote to fund in the amount of \$1,000.

*The vote carried unanimously.*

#### **b. Scottish Society of Charleston, Inc. – 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Charleston Scottish Games and Highland Gathering**

Chairman Riggs said they requested \$2,500 and staff recommended \$2,500.

*Ms. Craven moved to recommend to Town Council funding in the amount of \$2,500; motion seconded by Ms. Semper-Flynn. Motion carried unanimously.*

**c. Wando High School Band Boosters - Lowcountry Invitational Marching Festival**

Chairman Riggs said they requested \$3,000 and staff recommended \$3,000. He called for a motion.

*Ms. Bagwell moved to recommend to Town Council funding in the amount of \$2,000; motion seconded by Ms. Sweet. Motion carried unanimously.*

Ms. Frost asked if they stay overnight in the hotels.

Mr. Riggs replied that they usually do not. It is a day trip and they get on the buses and return home. This year, they planned something at the beach for the following day to encourage them to stay overnight. Chairman Riggs called for the vote.

*The motion carried unanimously.*

**d. Wando High School – Wando Invitational Volleyball Tournament**

Chairman Riggs stated they requested \$2,000 and staff recommended \$1,500. He called for a motion.

*Ms. Semper-Flynn moved to recommend to Town Council funding in the amount of \$1,500; motion seconded by Ms. Bagwell. Motion carried unanimously.*

**e. SC United FC Mount Pleasant – Women’s Charleston Select Shootout**

Chairman Riggs stated they requested \$2,500 and staff recommended \$1,500. He called for a motion.

*Ms. Bagwell moved to recommend to Town Council funding in the amount of \$1,500; motion seconded by Ms. Craven. Motion carried unanimously.*

**f. SC United FC Mount Pleasant – Men’s Charleston Select Shootout**

Chairman Riggs stated they requested \$2,500 and staff recommended \$1,500. He called for a motion.

*Ms. Sweet moved to recommend to Town Council funding in the amount of \$1,500; motion seconded by Ms. Bagwell. Motion carried unanimously.*

**g. Confederate Heritage Trust, Inc. – Assault on Battery Wagner**

Chairman Riggs stated they requested \$2,000 and staff recommended \$2,000. He called for a motion.

*Ms. Frost moved to recommend to Town Council funding in the amount of \$2,000; motion seconded by Ms. Sweet. Motion carried unanimously.*

**h. Family Circle Tennis Center – Dunlop Junior Tennis Championships**

Chairman Riggs stated they requested \$2,500 and staff recommended \$2,000. He called for a motion.

*Ms. Craven moved to recommend to Town Council funding in the amount of \$2,000; motion seconded by Ms. Sweet. Motion carried unanimously.*

**i. BB&T Charleston Wine + Food Festival - BB&T Charleston Wine + Food Festival**

Chairman Riggs stated they requested \$7,500 and staff recommended \$6,000. He called for a motion.

*Ms. Semper-Flynn moved to recommend to Town Council funding in the amount of \$6,000; motion seconded by Ms. Bagwell.*

Ms. Sweet commented that they have grown this event greatly East of the Cooper.

Ms. Semper-Flynn said it is a 3 – 4 day event and brings a lot of people to town.

Chairman Riggs called for the vote.

*The motion carried unanimously.*

**j. Cooper River Bridge Run – 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Cooper River Bridge Run**

Chairman Riggs stated they requested \$25,000 and staff recommended \$6,000. He called for a motion.

*Ms. Bagwell moved to recommend to Town Council funding in the amount of \$6,000; motion seconded by Ms. Frost.*

Chairman Riggs asked Ms. Harvey to what extent the Town contributes to the event.

Ms. Harvey said that the Town has two staff members on the board. The Town provides considerable police and public service personnel for the event and the bridge run organizers do pay for those services. The police charges are around \$20 - \$25,000. Public Services was around the same amount, she believed. The costs for security will be considerably more next year [Boston Marathon]. The CIA and FBI will be involved, so those expenses will increase considerably.

Chairman Riggs called for the vote.

*The motion carried unanimously.*

**k. Charleston Restaurant Foundation – Lowcountry Oyster Festival**

Chairman Riggs stated they requested \$10,000 and staff recommended \$8,500. He called for a motion.

*Ms. Sweet moved to recommend to Town Council funding in the amount of \$8,500; motion seconded by Ms. Frost.*

Ms. Craven asked how the 3100 room nights are generated.

Ms. Semper-Flynn said statistical/survey studies are done by the College of Charleston (Bob Fresh) and they are quite accurate.

Ms. Bagwell noted that they are awarding \$6,000 for the Bridge Run and \$8,500 for the Oyster Festival, but she realized that the economic impact is different for the two events.

Ms. Frost noted that this event could never be in the position of an event like the Bridge Run which has a large contribution from Boeing and attracts 40,000 people.

Ms. Craven stated that Ms. Bagwell is correct in that the hotels do see some small increase in room nights, but not very much.

Ms. Semper-Flynn noted that for Restaurant Week they have two hotel groups offering discount packages during that weekend.

Ms. Sweet commented that everyone loves package deals. Perhaps they could do something like that.

Ms. Bagwell said that she loves the Oyster Festival, but her hotel does not get much of an impact from the event.

Ms. Frost stated the Bridge Run does not really need the ATAC funding support since they have big sponsors; but it is a way to show support for the event.

Ms. Craven asked how the hoteliers could work more closely with the Lowcountry Oyster Festival to get more room nights through a package or piggybacking on the advertising that is being done.

Ms. Sweet suggested that they put together packages because they are *the* key. A room night that is a little discounted, plus a ticket to the oyster festival and a shuttle service should be very helpful.

Chairman Riggs called for the vote.

*The motion carried unanimously.*

#### **4. Tourism Activity Report**

In Mr. McCant's absence, Ms. Richardson reported that the Visitor Center numbers are still up. She thought that signage is helping with the increase in the number of visitors.

#### **5. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:41 p.m.

Submitted by:

Patty Wallis

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