

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

11:00 a.m., Wednesday, January 9, 2013

The regular meeting of the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee was held at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 9, 2013 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Malcolm Burgis, Jim Covington, Sandy Ferencz, Mary Alice Kruesi, David Nelson and Franny Russell, Administrator Tucker, Treasurer Suggs and City Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business. The absence of Margaret Miller was excused.

1. Past Chair Ferencz called the meeting to order and acknowledged that the press and public had been duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Mr. Burgis nominated Sandy Ferencz for the position of Chair; Mr. Covington seconded and the vote was unanimous for Ms. Ferencz as Chair.

Ms. Ferencz nominated Mr. Burgis for Vice Chair; Mr. Covington seconded, and Mr. Burgis was unanimously elected Vice Chair.

3. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes

MOTION: Mr. Nelson moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of November 7, 2012 as submitted; Mr. Burgis seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Citizen's Comments – None

5. Quarterly Financial Statement – Treasurer Suggs

Cash on hand at the end of December was one million four hundred sixty-five thousand dollars (\$1,465,000); over one million dollars (\$1,000,000) is invested with the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) where the interest rate is nearly one quarter of a percent.

Mr. Covington asked whether the City shopped interest rates. Treasurer Suggs responded that the City has state-imposed restrictions regarding municipal investments, and another factor involved with City funds is that they must be collateralized. The Treasurer added that the LGIP is a good alternative in that it provides security, reasonable liquidity and pool investments without high risks.

The Treasurer reported that, in addition to interest, the Ford Ranger pickup truck used by the Beach Services Officers was sold at auction, netting forty-one hundred fifteen dollars (\$4,115.00) of revenue.

From the expense statement, Treasurer Suggs reviewed the expenses related to the Holiday Street Festival; in addition to the five thousand dollars (\$5,000) budgeted for the annual tree lighting, fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) budgeted for a potential off-season event was transferred to cover the expenses of the expanded tree lighting event.

At this point in the meeting, Chair Ferencz asked Assistant Director Ferrell to report on the obvious success of the event. As the Assistant Ferrell walked to the microphone, Chair Ferencz praised the entire Recreation Department staff of the overwhelmingly positive response to this year's event stating that the event was well-run, well-organized, wonderful, etc. Assistant Ferrell reported that the Recreation staff estimates that between two and three thousand (2,000-3,000) people participated in the street festival, and more than three hundred (300) children visited with Santa Claus. Assistant Ferrell remarked that she thought the large turnout was due to the change in day and time; the event has previously been on a Thursday night, which is a school night for children. In addition, the weather certainly contributed to the attendance. As for the vendors, several ran out of food before the event ended, but many people went into the restaurants after the tree lighting for dinner.

Administrator Tucker noted that the City's large parking lot was full at one point in the afternoon; this is an interesting point because the lot fills in the season only a few times, particularly summer holidays.

Ms. Kruesi asked what plans had been made for the 2013 event; the Assistant indicated that the staff was looking to incorporate Sullivan's Island businesses and restaurants and adding more carnival rides geared for younger children. Discussions continued about did the City want to advertise the event not only locally, but nationwide via the Charleston Visitors Bureau (CVB). Was the City's Holiday Street Festival the event that the City wanted to push in its advertisement in the Spoleto program book? Ms. Kruesi suggested additional lighting venues for the event; she stated that she had posted the Windjammer's Santa sleigh being pulled by a turtle on her Facebook page and got more hits than she could remember from a single posting. Administrator Tucker commented that she had proposed beach-themed lighting displays for City-owned properties, but it was cut before the budget was approved. Ms. Russell asked if ATAX funds could be used for lighting displays; both the Administrator and Treasurer thought that would be an acceptable use of ATAX funds. Mr. Covington noted that the displays at the James Island County Park were all corporate sponsored and queried that the same could be done here; Administrator Tucker responded that typically public property is not leased. The possible expansion of the holiday festival would be a good project for the *ad hoc* committee to pursue with the Recreation Department.

Administrator Tucker commented that another draw for this event was the people who follow local bands who joined in the festivities and enjoyed the amenities the event had to offer.

Ms. Kruesi asked what plans had been made for the summer arts event; Chair Ferencz recalled that the 2012 event had been a family-oriented comedian. Assistant Ferrell stated that the Recreation Department had considered the event a success because the room was full; she indicated that the 2013 date has not been set.

In concluding the discussion of expenses, Chair Ferencz commented that the three thousand dollars (\$3,000) approved for Spoleto advertising and three thousand dollars (\$3,000) for camera-ready art need to be added. Although not in the expense report, it does appear on the revenue and expense projection for 2013.

Administrator Tucker reported that the rescue sleds that had been purchased earlier in the fiscal year with ATAX funds were put to the test during the training exercise for water rescues over the weekend involving state and local volunteers.

6. Old Business

Update on 2013 Spoleto Advertising

Chair Ferencz confirmed for the Committee that City Council had approved the use of ATAX funds for a full page advertisement in the Spoleto program book and for camera-ready art, and Administrator Tucker stated that the City has contracted with Spoleto for the advertising. The City has not found a vendor to assist the City with the camera-ready art that Spoleto needs by April 5, 2013; staff would be happy for any assistance the Committee can provide.

Ms. Kruesi stated that the City needs to find a freelance graphic artist who has experience in advertising; she suggested that the ad show have information for the reader about what Isle of Palms has to offer. Administrator Tucker stated that she understood the message in the ad was to bring people to the island in the off-season.

Ms. Russell and Ms. Kruesi agreed that the ad should have a box at the bottom or top into which ad copy can be added to fit the target group. Ms. Russell thought that the ad could invite people to the island for the 2013 holiday festival in December.

Mr. Covington asked Perrin Lawson of the CVB if they could assist the City with this advertising endeavor; Mr. Lawson said his staff was taxed to its limits. He did suggest that the City might be lucky enough to find a graphic artist who understands the City's vision and with whom it could develop a long-term relationship.

Chair Ferencz volunteered Ms. Russell and Ms. Kruesi to assist the Administrator with finding a graphic artist for this task.

7. New Business – None

8. Miscellaneous

Next Meeting Date: 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, March 6, 2013

Chair Ferencz asked that the *ad hoc* committee meet before the next ATAX meeting.

9. Adjourn

MOTION: Mr. Burgis moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:43 a.m.; Mr. Nelson seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:
Marie Copeland
City Clerk