



**Accommodations Task Force Meeting
9:00am, Thursday, March 31, 2022
1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC and
broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>**

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Present: Rusty Streetman, Sam Parris, Sarah Vega, Curtis Kay, Ray Burns, Katrina Limbach, Randy Walker

Absent: Melissa Simbana, Bret Jones

Staff Present: Treasurer Suggs

2. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes – March 17, 2022

MOTION: Mr. Kay made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 17, 2022 meeting, and Ms. Vega seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Presentation and discussion with the City of Folly Beach and Folly Beach Tourism & Visitor Promotion Committee (FBTVPC) – Tim Goodwin, Mayor of Folly Beach and Carl Hally, Chair of the FBTVPC

Mayor Goodwin gave a brief history of the formation of the Folly Beach Tourism & Visitor Promotion Committee which was started back in 2005 after the City Comptroller suggested it to the City Council. He encouraged the Task Force to have a good working relationship with the CVB moving forward. Mr. Hally added that the TVPC hired Little Dog Agency in Mt. Pleasant to “fill heads in beds” in the offseason and to focus more on families coming to Folly Beach. He also remarked that the CVB made a lot of contributions to that effort. He said the TVPC and the CVB have a good working relationship. They do pay some monies to the CVB who makes an annual presentation to the TVPC.

Mr. Hally shared that their advertising became more targeted to cities within a 10-hour driving distance and into more digital marketing. They dropped local advertising. He spoke briefly about their budgeting process which includes a presentation to the City Council. In addition to advertising, they also financially contribute to “visitor enhancement projects” that make for a better visitor experience at Folly Beach.

Mayor Goodwin added that the TVPC from the start was very scrutinized by TERC to make sure it was spending the monies properly. The City did not seek TERC approval prior to formation. He noted the Folly Beach's ATAX Committee is closely scrutinized by City Council. The City and other recipients of ATAX monies keep track of who attends their events so that they can

justify the use of tourism monies. He said the City of Folly Beach does take a “good portion” of the ATAX monies to support City services such as Public Safety and litter control. The City does not have a contract with the TVPC. They work as an independent committee who follows the State code. The City appoints the members to the TVPC.

Mr. Hally said that the TVPC does receive some negative feedback from residents who think they are bringing more traffic to the island. Mr. Hally pointed out that residents also benefit from the tourism enhancement projects around the island. Mayor Goodwin said he and the staff spend a lot of time educating the residents about the benefits of the tourism monies raised by ATAX.

Mr. Hally said the City Comptroller and the Accounts Payable clerk handle the TVPC monies. The tourism website is owned by the Folly Association of Businesses, but the TVPC manages it. Any “legitimate” Folly business can be on the website at no cost. Mayor Goodwin said he would send Mayor Pounds the TVPC budget for the Task Force to review.

4. Presentation of all IOP tourism-related revenues – Debbie Suggs, IOP Finance Director

Treasurer Suggs shared a compilation of the total revenues for the City of Isle of Palms from 2017-2021 including a detailed breakdown of all accommodations taxes including the State, County, and City Accommodation fees and the City’s Beach Preservation fee. She noted that the payment to the CVB is approximately 13% of total accommodations revenues. The monies sent to the CVB from the Isle of Palms represent 30% of the State ATAX funds collected.

She stated that different but similar laws govern the spending of State ATAX versus local ATAX monies. She said that most City departments provide tourism-related benefits, and that justification is used to fund the budget with ATAX monies. The bond related to the Marina Rehabilitation Project and the leases of two fire trucks are paid with ATAX monies.

She reviewed a summary of ATAX expenditures by City department and by type of expense from the FY22 budget. Some of the expenditures fund the garbage pickup at front beach, salaries of the seasonal BSOs, and the public restrooms.

Treasurer Suggs said that moving forward, TERC is requiring that the City send the CVB’s budget and then the CVB “is supposed to report on how the budget was actually attained, like an after action report.”

Mr. Kay said that it is important to educate the public on what ATAX monies actually pay for since they think it just brings traffic to the island. Council Member Streetman said he believed the Mayor’s messages on the City’s website and his “Coffee with the Mayor” are working towards that end. Mr. Parris noted that the City’s budget is heavily dependent on tourism monies.

5. Discussion of what additional data/research/information is needed

Mr. Kay would like to discuss what the City feels it is not getting from the CVB. Mr. Walker would like to see a brand developed for the City. Ms. Limbach said that the Chamber of Commerce is working on that now. Mr. Kay suggested speaking with Little Dog Agency about their suggestions for the City.

Council Member Streetman said he would speak with Administrator Fragoso about having a marketing agency at the next meeting. Branding and what the Task Force feels is needed for the City with regards to marketing will also be discussed at the next meeting.

6. Miscellaneous Business

The next regular meeting of the Accommodations Task Force will be on Thursday, April 14, 2022 at 9:00am.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Parris made a motion to adjourn, and Ms. Limbach seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:26am.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk