



**Accommodations Task Force Meeting
9:00am, Thursday, April 21, 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, Bret Jones

Absent: Melissa Simbana, Randy Walker

Staff Present: Administrator Fragoso, Director Kerr

2. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes – March 31, 2022

MOTION: Mr. Kay made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 31, 2022 meeting, and Ms. Limbach seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Presentation and discussion with Soraya McKay from Little Dog Agency, marketing agency hired by the Folly Beach Tourism & Visitor Promotion Committee (FBTVPC)

Soraya McKay of Little Dog Agency explained the development of their annual budget for the marketing of Folly Beach as a tourist destination. She meets with the TVPC monthly to discuss the metrics. She reviewed their marketing expenses. She also shared the methods and analytics used to track the effectiveness of their marketing efforts and provided statistics attesting to that effectiveness.

They track the effectiveness of their program through the growth of Folly Beach's market share, the City's ATAX revenues, web traffic, the amount of activity with their digital messaging, and from conversations with local businesses about business activity.

She shared how they pivoted their marketing strategy during Covid from cities at a long distance to markets that were within a "two-tank drive" to Folly Beach. Their advertising focused on local educational opportunities and weddings.

Little Dog Agency charges a monthly retainer in addition to one-time set up fees.

They use information from the CVB to determine what large and medium-sized markets to advertise in as well as focusing on cities from which there is a direct flight into Charleston. They use their email marketing to notify recipients about festivals and other activities on Folly Beach. They work closely with the City administration on proper messaging regarding City ordinances.

Little Dog Agency submits their plans to the City, and the City submits that to TERC.

4. Brainstorming session to define success based on stated goal and discussion of ideas and recommendations for the management of the 30% for tourism promotion

Council Member Streetman asked the Task Force what they would like to see from a DMO. Ms. Limbach suggested the creation of a brand complete with colors and a logo before moving forward with a website.

Administrator Fragoso said the City is still waiting for the Attorney General's opinion on whether or not the law allows the City to form its own DMO. She said the biggest question is whether or not the City can create its own DMO if one is already available. The City would have to argue that what is available to them does not serve the City's needs and goals in order to justify moving in a different direction.

Mr. Burns added that a newly-form group to manage the 30% must be independent of the City and would be a committee of 7 people of a makeup designated by State law. They are separate of the ATAX Committee and are appointed by City Council.

Administrator Fragoso said it is important for the Task Force to be able to articulate what the City wants from a DMO that it is not currently receiving from the CVB. Council Member Streetman asked if the Task Force felt a contract with a DMO or a more clearly defined budget is needed.

Ms. Vega said she would like to see more line-item accountability, more locally focused marketing, more information about the IOP-centered website created by the CVB, and more flexibility on how the 30% is spent with regards to marketing.

Mr. Burns reminded the Task Force that the ATAX Committee recommended to City Council that the City form its own non-profit DMO. He believes the City and the residents deserve more say in how that 30% is being spent.

Mr. Parris would like to see a better relationship with the CVB in order to get some better metrics from them. He believes it is necessary to focus on what we need from the CVB and give them time to pivot in that direction. Ms. Limbach agreed the metrics are necessary and someone should be held accountable for them. She would like to have someone from the IOP Chamber of Commerce do a presentation on the Chamber's activities at the next Task Force meeting.

Council Member Streetman said that the island does not necessarily need to advertise for more people to come visit as much as we need to fine tune the off-season advertising to have people stay here longer and spend more money while they are here. Ms. Limbach added that it is necessary to keep the tourism management model in mind and to look at the quality of visitors and not the quantity.

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

Mr. Burns asked to see a breakdown of where the ATAX dollars are being generated on the island. He said 2019 figures showed 30% came from Wild Dunes and 70% came from short-term rentals. He would also like to see group sales data/metrics related to Wild Dunes from the CVB in order to measure the success of their advertising.

Ms. Vega would like to know the status of the CVB's IOP-dedicated website.

6. Miscellaneous Business

The next regular meeting of the Accommodations Task Force will be on Thursday, May 12, 2022 at 9:00am.

Council Member Streetman said a portion of the next meeting will be dedicated to Citizen's Comments and be structured as it is for City Council – people must sign up by 3pm the day before the meeting; individual comments will be limited to 3 minutes, and the entirety of Citizen's Comments will be 30 minutes of the meeting. Citizens can also submit written comments on the City's website.

Ms. Limbach suggested developing a short multiple-choice question survey for citizens to ask them what they expect about the use of the 30%. Administrator Fragoso said staff will develop some possible questions to bring to the next meeting. Ms. Limbach suggested each Task Force member bring one question to the next meeting.

7. Adjournment

Ms. Limbach made a motion to adjourn, and Mr. Parris seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:28am.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk