Town of Hilton Head Island
Public Planning Committee Meeting

Thursday, March 3, 2016
3:00p.m. -- Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

AGENDA

As a Courtesy to Others Please Turn Off All Cell Phones and Pagers during the Meeting.

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Freedom of Information Act Compliance**
   Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

3. **Approval of Agenda**

4. **Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes-** November 12, 2015

5. **Approval of Special Meeting Minutes-** February 10, 2016

6. **Approval of Special Meeting Minutes-** February 11, 2016

7. **Approval of Special Meeting Minutes-** February 12, 2016

8. **New Business**
   a) Discussion of Steven Ames Memo on Visioning Process

9. **Committee Business**

10. **Adjournment**

Please note that a quorum of Town Council may result if four or more of their members attend this meeting.

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
Public Planning Committee Meeting DRAFT
November 12, 2015
3:00p.m. – Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

Committee Members Present: Chairman Tom Lennox, Kim Likins, and John McCann

Committee Members Absent: None

Town Council Present: Mayor Pro Tem Bill Harkins

Town Staff Present: Jill Foster Deputy Director of Community Development
Kathleen Carlin, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

2. Freedom of Information Act Compliance
Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

3. Approval of the Minutes
The minutes of the Special Public Planning Committee Meeting held on October 8, 2015 were **approved** as submitted by general consent.

4. New Business
Continue discussion on the Vision and Master Plan for the Island:
Chairman Lennox welcomed those in attendance and stated that the committee will continue their discussion on development of a Vision Statement and Master Plan for the town. Chairman Lennox reviewed what had occurred at their previous meeting. At the October 8, 2015 meeting the committee began their discussion by defining a vision statement. The committee discussed why a vision is important for the island. It is important to engage the population and instill civic pride. The committee received public statements on October 8th and concluded by determining what the appropriate next steps should be.

At the October 8th meeting the committee went into some detail regarding the visioning process for the island. The committee reviewed the definition of a Vision Statement and a Master Plan as they relate to the following town documents:

1) Comprehensive Plan, updated July 3, 2012
2) Mayor's Task Force for the Island's Future – Vision 2025
3) Hilton Head Island Vision 2030

At the conclusion of the previous meeting the committee discussed the options available to them and agreed that the best course of action would be to assimilate the existing data and

existing input with updated information and new data that will be generated as they move forward. The committee stated that a facilitator may be needed to assist them in accomplishing their goals. The committee will decide how to proceed with the analysis of data currently available to them and what the recommended course of action should be. Chairman Lennox stated that public input will be strongly encouraged throughout the process.

Chairman Lennox and the committee then reviewed an overhead side-by-side comparison of the Vision Statement taken from the Comprehensive Plan, the Mayor's Task Force Vision Plan, and the Strategic Planning Session. The third item, the Strategic Planning Session, is a product of last year's Town Council workshop.

Chairman Lennox then invited today's guest speaker, Mr. John Lundean, to make a presentation to the committee on Technology Infrastructure. Mr. Lundean discussed the existing state of technology infrastructure on the island as well as the future state of technology infrastructure on the island. Mr. Lundean discussed technology as it is seen now and how it will look in the future. Mr. Lundean discussed the concept of a 'Connected Island'. The committee discussed the concept of a "Connected Island" and agreed that technology will connect the island. Chairman Lennox thanked Mr. Lundean for his presentation.

The committee discussed the island's greatest assets and agreed that the protection of Natural Resources is paramount in continuing to make Hilton Head Island unique and relevant. The committee agreed that Wi-Fi and other technology infrastructure will be very important when talking about the island's future. The committee agreed that we need to be willing to make the changes necessary to stay relevant. The committee agreed that what has defined the island in the past will continue define the island in the future. The committee also agreed that sustainability is important. Chairman Lennox then invited public comments and the following were received:

1) Chet Williams, Esq., presented comments regarding the definition of a Vision Statement.
2) Mr. John Lunden presented statements regarding the elements of a Vision Statement.
3) Ms. Gail Quick presented statements regarding the importance of supporting education on the island.

The committee presented statements regarding the need to engage the millennial generation. The committee stated that their challenge will be to adequately define a Vision for the island. Technology, infrastructure, road, traffic, and waterways are goals and perhaps strategies to be dealt with underneath the umbrella of a Vision. The committee agreed that it will be important to involve the public and the community in crafting the Vision Statement.

The committee also discussed the need for a professional consultant to help create and craft the Vision Statement. The professional consultant should be a leader who is objective in developing the Vision Statement. The committee stated the need to create something that will be relevant 50 years from now.

The committee then discussed the need for a Focus Group to assist them in the process. The committee presented comments regarding who they would like to see serve on the Focus

Group. The committee stated that the consultant needs to really understand how to take a selective group through the process. The committee stated the need for someone with experience in doing this with other communities. The committee stated that they would like to solicit a targeted group of individuals to supplement the public input that has already been received. At the completion of final comments, Chairman Lennox requested that a motion be made.

Mrs. Likins made a **motion** to recommend to Town Council that the committee seek professional assistance to help them define how to best move forward with the Visioning process. Mrs. Like stated that input from the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry will be important. Mr. McCann **seconded** the motion and the motion **passed** with a vote of 3-0-0.

5. Committee Business

None

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15p.m.

Submitted By:	Approved By:
_____	_____
Kathleen Carlin	Tom Lennox
Administrative Assistant	Chairman

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TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

PUBLIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Wednesday, February 10, 2016
Special Meeting

Members Present:	Thomas W. Lennox, *Chairman*, John McCann and Kim Likins, *Council Members*
Also Present:	David Bennett, *Mayor*; Bill Harkins, *Council Member & Mayor Pro Tem*
Others Present:	Eleanor O'Key, *Lowcountry Inside Track;* and other members of the public
Staff Present:	Jill Foster, *Deputy Director of Community Development;* Jayme Lopko, *Senior Planner*; and Lynn Buchman, *Senior Administrative Assistant*
Media Present:	Don McLoud, *The Island Packet*

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1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 AM by Chairman Lennox.

2. Freedom of Information Act Compliance

Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

3. New Business

a. Discussion of Visioning Process with Steven Ames, Consultant

Chairman Lennox announced the schedule for the Public Planning Committee meetings to be held Thursday and Friday, February 11 and 12, and the meetings for Mr. Ames over the next 3 days. He briefly reviewed the history of the visioning and master planning goals, and what is expected to be accomplished with the assistance of Mr. Ames, who he introduced to the Committee and those present.

Mr. Ames thanked the Committee and those attending and briefly described his background in working with communities to plan for the future. He outlined the complex process of visioning and presented examples of other communities he has assisted.

Questions, comments and discussion followed among the Committee members, Mayor Bennett, Mr. Harkins, Mr. Ames, and members of the public present concerning the visioning process and the challenges involved.

4. Adjournment

Chairman Lennox called the meeting adjourned at 10:06 AM.

Respectfully submitted:

_____
Lynn W. Buchman
Senior Administrative Assistant

Approved on _____, 2016

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Thomas W. Lennox, Chairman

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TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
Public Planning Committee
Special Meeting
Thursday, February 11, 2016
4:00p.m. – Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

Committee Members Present: Chairman Tom Lennox, Kim Likins, Lee Edwards, John McCann

Committee Members Absent: None

Town Council Present: Mayor David Bennett; Bill Harkins, Mayor Pro-Tem

Town Staff Present: Greg DeLoach, Brian Hulbert, Jill Foster, Susan Simmons, Melissa Cope

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1. Call to Order

2. Freedom of Information Act Compliance
Public notification of this meeting has been published and posted in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

3. New Business
Presentation by Steven Ames, Consultant, on Visioning Process

Chairman Lennox announced that this special meeting is to discuss visioning and master planning. He thanked the following Town staff for facilitating and arranging over 12 meetings for 2.5 days involving nearly 60 people: Jill Foster, Tom Fultz, and Lynn Buchman.

Chairman Lennox explained the history of this effort by referring to one of the 2016 Town Council priorities: Create and establish a method by which the Town can vision and master plan for the Island. He indicated that in the last 7 years, the Town revised and updated the Comprehensive Plan; created Vision 2025 (completed by the Mayor's Task Force), and created Hilton Head Vision 2030, which is a document produced by the Mayor and Town Council two years ago. The goals of each of these documents and efforts were somewhat different. The Comprehensive Plan's goal was to create a guide tool for community leaders to strengthen and preserve the Town structure, culture, image and unique sense of place for residents and visitors. The goal of Vision 2025 was to develop core values, vision and key strategies using public input. The goal for Vision 2030 was to create a vision and its guiding principles. The process or methodologies in these past efforts differed somewhat. In the Comprehensive Plan, it critically examined the Island's environment, assets, capabilities, economic engines, images and values. The process for Vision 2025 was to distill hundreds of ideas offered by Island residents, community leaders, workshop participants, and task force members and the many ideas included in the Comprehensive Plan into a short list of priority recommendations having the biggest impact. In Vision 2030, the Mayor and Town Council discussed and defined the long term direction for the Town.

Chairman Lennox explained that it is this Committee's task to determine the answer to one of three questions:

- Should we take what we have and use it or move forward and do nothing?
- Should we abandon what I called a mountain of data and start over anew?
- Should we do some of both?

Meetings held in October and November, 2015, focused on discussions of this Committee and public input and it was decided that the input, discussions, conclusions of the data previously compiled was too valuable to abandon. It was concluded that the Committee needed assistance, as there is a disconnect between those 3 visions and the execution of the strategies and tactics. Someone with experience in municipal planning was identified to assist in formulating a path forward to ensure any visioning done in the future never disconnects from the execution.

Chairman Lennox introduced Mr. Steven Ames, of Steven Ames Consulting. He is described as an architect of public process and is nationally recognized for his work in community planning. His assignment is to define the process and make recommendations going forward. Chairman Lennox emphasized that the Town is not engaging in visioning this week, but rather, in defining what the Town can do going forward in the effort of visioning. By using the discussions and input from selected community leaders over the past two days, Mr. Ames will draw a conclusion and make a recommendation. Specifically we want to answer the questions: How do we get it right? Can we define the purpose? Can we clearly define our objectives? How do we involve the community? How do we gather input? Is all input created equal? How is our existing work to be used? What facilitation method should we use? How are the results and finished product communicated to the community? How do we define the process setting goals, objectives, strategies and tactics, to include and determine accountability and the appropriate method of measurement?

Mr. Steven Ames reiterated that he is to assess options for going forward for planning in a visionary way. He indicated that every community has to decide how it wants to think about and plan for the future, and that a good Vision will reflect our values. During the week, he covered the following three topics:

- Change in vision – be more visionary
- Visioning case study
- Lessons learned.

Mr. Ames indicated that visioning brings communities together, and can promote partnerships and foster new leadership. He stated that he will concentrate on five driving questions:

- Where are we now? – community profile
- Where are we going? – trends analysis, driving forces
- Where do we want to be? – vision statement
- How do we get there? – strategic action plan
- How do we know we are getting there? – targets, measures

At 5:00 p.m. Mr. Lennox opened the meeting for public comment.

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Questions, comments, and concerns to Mr. Steven Ames were:

- An unfriendly culture from drivers toward bicycles and pedestrians.
- Residents behind plantation gates typically do not concern themselves with what is happening outside their gates and they need to get involved and active in issues.
- We should leave a legacy.
- The vision should have lasting power.
- Our government must have more transparency, accountability and full communication.
- Golf courses are a diminishing force; Hilton Head Island has outgrown what it was.
- We need a transportation system that can handle the traffic.
- The Island is a great family place.
- We need to have a full time government, not a manager-council form.
- There is a tremendous amount of heritage on the Island that should be marketed and preserved.
- We should identify our economic engine that will drive this community besides tourism.
- We are a group of neighborhoods disconnected from each other; we need a community spirit.
- Tourism and its effect on the Town should be taken into consideration in the plan.
- Arts and culture should be included in the vision.
- The visioning process must reach out to the various demographics and have a plan that is truly encompassing of the community, including a way to connect with young families.
- The process should include the Chamber of Commerce Junior Leadership class and get their vision of what they want to see in the future.
- We need to find ways to encourage graduating students to stay on the Island.
- Ensure the vision is fluid enough to take in changing attitudes over the years.

Mr. Steven Ames' final comments included endorsing a broad community conversation to connect with people where they live and to figure out how to connect all these different communities across boundaries, and design a process to fit our community. The Vision and Plan should attach strategic actions to be a living plan that gets renewed and refreshed, evolving over time.

Mr. Lennox thanked everyone for their participation. He indicated that Mr. Ames will submit a memo with his findings and that it will be put on the March 3, 2016 Public Planning Committee agenda for discussion.

4. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

Submitted By: Approved By:

_____ _____

Eileen Wilson, Sr. Administrative Assistant Tom Lennox, Chairman

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TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
Public Planning Committee
Special Meeting

Friday, February 12, 2016
10:00a.m. – Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

Committee Members Present: Chairman Tom Lennox, Kim Likins, John McCann, Lee Edwards

Committee Members Absent: None

Town Council Present: Mayor David Bennett, Mayor Pro Tem Bill Harkins

Town Staff Present: Jill Foster, Deputy CD Director; Eileen Wilson, Administrative Assistant

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Freedom of Information Act Compliance**
   Public notification of this meeting has been published and posted in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

3. **New Business**
   a. **<u>Wrap Up by Steven Ames, Consultant, on Visioning Process</u>**

   Mr. Steven Ames, of Steven Ames Consulting, described the past 2 ½ days, which included 14 meetings and over 60 people for interviews. Many of the people he interviewed stated that Hilton Head Island is very unique because of its people, and he agreed with that finding. Mr. Ames emphasized that we are living in a time of change, so we need to plan for it, and preserve what we have. The challenge is change to accommodate what we don't have and preserve what we want to keep. He emphasized we need to look long term in this effort, but include both long term and short term strategies.

   Mr. Ames supports the process of community planning by engaging all groups in the community to participate in order to capture broad-based input. To do this, he suggests meeting with them in their own neighborhoods. The Town should take stock of changes since our original development and look at the larger context (mainland relationship, economic impact of Jasper County Port, needs of our work force, lack of affordable housing). The Town should make a decision to either building on what we have done for visioning; start over with a new visioning process; or take an assessment phase with all stakeholders. Then the Town can determine how to do the process. Mr. Ames recommended the first: build on what has been done for visioning.

   He indicated he will draft a memo for Town Council that details his findings.

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Council members asked questions of Mr. Ames:

- Should the Town stop major projects until the Visioning process is completed? Mr. Ames suggested the Council consider holding off on some projects, such as the Comprehensive Plan Update, to allow Council to provide more specific decisions based on the Visioning process. He indicated that all essential functions should continue. He emphasized the need to seek public priorities in the Visioning process, and capture input from the younger generations and non-vocal residents. He mentioned technology and social media should be used for input (Facebook, etc.), and we should discuss how it currently is being used as well as how to plan for future technology that has not been invented, released or made widely available.
- What are the next steps? Mr. Ames indicated his forthcoming memo will touch on that, but emphasized the need to touch base with all stakeholders. Our branding, or marketing of the process, should be considered to encourage people to participate. He also described ways to involve middle school children in the Visioning process.
- What are the pitfalls? Mr. Ames said the biggest mistake other communities do is regress back to the way it was always done after the Visioning process is completed. The Town has to make the effort meaningful to the public to ensure their continued participation and interest.

Public comment included the need to go back to previous efforts to utilize them; include religious institutions in the Visioning process; the need to change public's attitudes; our ability and need to promote our educational system as a positive reason why people live here; find ways to encourage our graduating students to stay on the Island; and the need to encourage PUD residents to take interest in what is happening outside their gated communities.

Mr. Ames concluded the discussion by stating his goal is to finish the memo for the March 3rd Town Council meeting.

4. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Submitted By:	Approved By:
_____	_____
Jill Foster Deputy Director	Tom Lennox Chairman

DRAFT

Steven Ames Planning

MEMORANDUM

To: **Tom Lennox, Chair, Public Planning Committee,**
Town of Hilton Head Island, Beaufort County, South Carolina

Cc: **Kim Likens, John McCann, Public Planning Committee; David Bennett, Mayor;**
Steve Riley, Town Manager, Town of Hilton Head Island, Beaufort County, South Carolina

From: **Steven Ames, Principal, Steven Ames Planning, Portland|Bend, Oregon**

Re: **Findings & Recommendation, Hilton Head Island Visioning Project**

Date: **March 1, 2016**

Overview

This memorandum is being submitted by Steven Ames of Steven Ames Planning ("Consultant") to the Public Planning Committee ("Committee") of the Town of Hilton Head Island regarding the Town's expressed intent to conduct a community-based long-range planning ("visioning") process to create a vision and plan for the Island. It offers a series of findings on this subject, as well as recommendations as to how the Town might proceed. Specifically, this memo includes:

- Brief background information as context;
- A summary of Town's charge to the Consultant;
- A summary of conversations and meetings conducted as part of the Consultant's site visit;
- Key messages received from Town leadership about a visioning process;
- An assessment of more recent long-range planning initiatives and the platform they may provide for a visioning process;
- A set of recommended guiding principals for a Town visioning process; and
- Options the Town may consider in designing and staging such a process, including its "ownership" of the process and engagement of the wider public.

Also, included in an addendum to this memo are the Consultant's responses to 12 more specific questions posed by the Committee regarding some of the details of conducting a visioning process.

The Consultant would like to thank the Mayor and Committee for their invitation to advise the Island on its long-range planning options, as well as Town staff and residents of the Island for their warm reception, thoughtful comments, and shared appreciation of this place they call home.

Background

Led by Mayor David Bennett, the Town of Hilton Head Island is exploring sponsorship of a community-based visioning process. The purpose of the process would be to engage the community in articulating a long-term direction for the Town to help guide its policies, plans and decisions, including future growth, development and preservation of the Island, as well as to inform other public, private, and civic partners whose decisions and actions may influence the Island's future.

Before committing to such a process, the Town resolved to take stock of recent efforts to set long-term directions for the Island's future. These include the most recent iteration of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, "Charting the Island Future's 2030," as well as two other long-range planning exercises: the Mayor's Task Force for the Island's Future (Vision 2025), a blue-ribbon commission formed to distill key recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan released in 2010, and Hilton Head Island (Vision 2030), a summary of a visioning exercise conducted for Town leadership and staff in 2014. It is important to note that other groups have also studied or made recommendations on various aspects of planning for the island's future in recent years. In short, there has been no lack of thinking ahead.

At the same time, the Town's Public Planning Committee has concluded that the sheer volume of directives emerging from all these efforts has resulted in a large and rather unwieldy compendium of potential recommendations. Sorting through all of these directives to discern a unified sense of direction for the Town is no small task. Ironically, they may have made it more challenging for the Town to proceed with its policy development, planning and decision-making, especially regarding decisions that are more time-sensitive.

Faced with such a task, Town leaders and the Committee have identified three possible options:

1. Continue using all these existing efforts as a kind of collective guide to the Town's future;
2. Setting these efforts aside in order to conduct a completely new, clean-slate planning or visioning exercise; or
3. Using these efforts as a foundation for a comprehensive visioning process that builds on their outputs, but also develops fresh information, insights and community consensus on future directions for the Town.

It is their determination that "Option Three" above is the preferred course. How to actually design and deliver such a process is no small order – and the question on the table.

Consultant's Charge

The Town engaged Consultant Steven Ames, an expert in long-range planning community planning, to visit the community, meet with the Public Planning Committee, community leaders, and others stakeholders from public, private, civic and community-based organizations, consider the Town's past planning efforts and its preferred option going forward, establish preliminary findings, and recommend potential next steps for the Town's consideration. The final outcome is a series of options for a visioning process offered at the conclusion of this memorandum.

Consultant's Site Visit, Conversations and Meetings

Between Feb. 9 and 11, 2016, the Consultant visited the Town of Hilton Head Island. His site visit included conversations with Mayor David Bennett and individual members of the Public Planning Committee (Councilors Tom Lennox, Kim Larkins and John McCann), three public meetings with the full membership of the Committee in attendance, as well as conversations with other Councilors (Bill Harkins and Lee Edwards), Town Manager Steve Riley, and other members of the Town's professional staff. The Consultant was also afforded the opportunity to literally take in the "big picture" of Hilton Head with a short but revealing flyover of the Island.

During his visit, the Consultant also conducted in-depth, focus group-style meetings with representatives of key Island stakeholder groups, including (in the order of their meetings):

- Managers of the Island's Planned Urban Developments (PUDs);
- Island arts and cultural leaders;
- Board and staff members of the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce;
- Board and staff members of the Hilton Head Island Economic Development Corporation;
- Representatives of the Island's young professionals network; and
- Representatives of Hilton Head Island's Native Islander leadership, including Town Councilor Marc Grant and Planning Commission Chairman Alex Brown.

Additionally, the Consultant conducted a longer focus group session with a group of at-large community stakeholders, including representatives of:

- Island developers and realtors;
- Resort and restaurant owners and managers;
- Business and community development organizations;
- Hilton Head Island Hospital;
- Principal and staff of Hilton Head Island High School; and
- Presidents of the Technical College of the Lowcountry and University of South Carolina Beaufort.

In all, nearly 60 influential community members participated in these sessions providing a rich array of information from many perspectives and areas of expertise. Factoring in citizen comments offered at three Committee meetings, some 75 people were able to share their thoughts, suggestions and concerns. Additionally, some Islanders subsequently contacted or provided additional information to the Consultant, adding their voices to the dialogue.

Collectively, these comments offered a wealth of insights into the Island's history and culture, its formative growth and development during the latter half of the 20th century, more recent changes and developments on the Island (and mainland) that present both challenges *and* opportunities for the Island, and emerging trends and issues that may challenge the Island's population, diverse lifestyles, economy, environment, development and *re*development in years to come. The Consultant also engaged most of these discussion groups in an ad hoc visioning exercise to see how community aspirations for the future may be evolving, providing a range of personal visions for the future of the Island.

Key Messages About Planning for the Future

In the initial meeting with the Public Planning Committee and other community leaders on Wednesday, February 10, many ideas surfaced as to how to plan for the future of Hilton Head

Island. Considered together, these comments offer a compelling narrative, including the impacts of rapid change on the Island, a concern about relying solely on past planning initiatives in planning for the future, and a need to rethink the Island's long-range planning going forward. Below is a composite of some of the participants more telling comments:

- "We have been lazy as a community. We have relied on the original vision of the Island."
- "We have accomplished much of our past planning, but we haven't tracked or acknowledged our accomplishments."
- "We are evolving into something very different from what we were."
- "The Island is changing fast. We are losing some of our signature qualities."
- "We are losing commerce to the mainland."
- "We are losing our young adults to the mainland and beyond."
- "We are losing our opportunities to have families here on the Island."
- "The sheer magnitude of our recent planning recommendations is almost unmanageable."
- "Looking back is fine, but we have to think forward."
- "We are drifting along without a set course. This is a critical time to set a new course."
- "We have tremendous assets, especially in our people. Let's put those resources to work."
- "We have not engaged the public very effectively in our past planning efforts."
- "We are looking for the right framework to provide a direction and inform our decisions."
- "A meaningful vision for the future is a top Town priority."

Collectively, these comments can be viewed as very consistent with the Committee's recommendation to pursue Option 3. They also suggest a kind of consensus that as the Town determines how it will proceed with its planning, something more visionary, proactive and inclusive is being called forth.

Assessing Past Town Visioning Efforts and Their Continue Use

It was in this light that the Consultant looked more closely at the previously mentioned planning efforts completed in recent years, to assess how they might inform Option 3. Here is an overview of Consultant findings:

- The Town's **Comprehensive Plan** (2012) is a detailed planning document that provides a comprehensive guide to growth and development decisions on the Island. As required by State statute, it stands as the official policy on the growth of the Town. Updated every 10 years by law, the plan is roughly mid-stream in its current iteration and remains in force until its next formal update. In short, it is not going away any time soon. Informed by a fairly extensive community engagement process, including a community survey, stakeholder interviews, and neighborhood meetings and workshops, the plan includes a one-paragraph vision statement and accompanying set of 20 high-level strategies intended to inform the more detailed contents of the plan's major elements.

  While the plan's vision statement emphasizes building on the Island's unique assets to create "one community" – a compelling and visionary notion – it could also be viewed as less than responsive to some of the forces of change facing the Island at the time of its development, including major economic, environmental and demographic trends. Considering how some of the same trends have accelerated since the plan's release – and subsequent changes in Island lifestyles, values and aspirations – the vision statement today seems to lag behind the real rate of change now occurring.

While the plan's 20 strategies incorporate a number of visionary ideas for Island growth and development that do address emerging challenges and opportunities, it is not clear how successful the plan (or Town) has been in tracking or communicating their successful implementation. Additionally, as a growth and development-focused plan, there are aspects of the Island's wider future that it does not address in detail (e.g., health, safety, civic engagement, diversity and inclusion), even though these things are alluded to in the vision.

- The **Mayor's Task Force on the Island's Future – Vision 2025**, (2010), is a detailed study built on the foundation of the Town's updated Comprehensive Plan. It employed a more proactive inquiry into the Island's future growth, development and preservation – an approach not really possible in the comprehensive plan, given its statutory purpose and structure. Guided by a "blue ribbon"-style panel appointed by the Mayor, Vision 2025's charge was to distill the essence of the comprehensive plan, including a list of priority recommendations for the Island's growth and development for immediate attention. The Task Force chose to focus on the Island's distinguishing qualities as well as its most prominent economic sectors (hospitality, retirement, local business). Its deliberations were clearly influenced by the impacts on the Island of the Great Recession.

  The Task Force's approach produced a more focused set of outcomes: a unique "Civic Pledge" – a kind of statement of commitment; a set of core values for the Island; a one-paragraph vision statement and five accompanying vision elements that flesh out more detailed strategic themes, including tactics and first steps. Significantly, there are also 11 Key Action Steps consisting of major "game changer"-type projects for advocacy and action. The latter projects included call for creation of an Island Masterplan, formation of an institute dedicated to enhancing the Island community, establishment of an economic development commission, improvements the Island's technology infrastructure, and more.

  With its emphasis on action, Vision 2025 was clearly a more strategic in its orientation than the comprehensive plan. At the same time, it was also largely an expertise-driven process that was more representational than participatory in its inquiry. Consistent with its focus on the economy, growth and the character of the Island, it did not fully address some topics that are very relevant to the Island's future, including demographic, social and cultural concerns. Despite the fact that the Town's newly elected Mayor (not the same Mayor who commissioned the study) never fully embraced the report, a number of its Key Action Steps have made substantial progress since its release, significantly advancing the Island's movement toward a better-planned future.

- The third planning effort examined by the Public Planning Committee is the most recent, **Hilton Head Island Vision 2030**. Vision 2030 is the summary report of a 2014 strategic planning session conducted with the Town's newly elected Mayor, Council, and Town staff. As a planning session, the meeting's purpose was to elevate and expand the thinking of the Town's new leadership as it considered its goals for the coming year. While the session was very successful in generating ideas, as a one-off workshop it is not comparable in breadth or depth to the two previous efforts, which were months even years in the making.

  The Vision 2030 report includes a one-page vision statement comprised of 10 key elements and six Guiding Principles to promote vision achievement, each principle backed by a detailed list of "means" that roughly match the strategies or tactics of the other two efforts. While reflecting many of the same aspirations of the Comprehensive Plan and Vision 2025 report,

Vision 2030's vision also integrates some of wider demographic, social and cultural concerns for the Island's future (e.g., schools and education, generational inclusion, community engagement). At the same time, Vision 2030's list of means are fairly high-level concepts that lack details, instructions or an accountability mechanism to promote or track their achievement. In short, Vision 2030 is a catalogue of ideas that could help seed future conversations, but was not really designed to foster their implementation. It's not a plan, but it is a good resource.

Recommendations: Acknowledging the wealth of work and content in these three reports, the Consultant recommends that the Town compile them, along with any other studies deemed relevant, as part of the "knowledge base" to inform its future long-range planning. This would include making the documents readily available to the public through Town offices, libraries, websites, etc.

The Consultant also recommends that the Town conduct a simple "gap analysis" of their key elements (visions, goals, strategies, tactics, means, etc.), and identify where these directives align, overlap, and/or potentially conflict, as well as their current status and/or completion. The results would be arrayed in a user-friendly, matrix-style format that provides quick access to content as a platform for future research or discussion. This activity could be undertaken immediately, so as to be useful in the design and rollout of a future planning process, as well as ongoing Town decisions and actions.

Guiding Principles, Key Design Elements, Options and Consultant Recommendations

Given the Public Planning Committee's recommendation to exercise Option 3 in proceeding with a visioning process for the Island – with which the Consultant concurs – and taking into consideration the Town's most recent planning initiatives, as well as the perspectives and advice shared by numerous community stakeholders, the Consultant offers below thoughts on how the Town might proceed in considering and launching such a planning process.

Implicit is the assumption that the Town is seeking an approach that builds on the significant work already completed. At the same time, based on the above findings, it is also recommended that such a process would be based on the following guiding principles:

- Employ a **comprehensive** perspective (focused on more than just issues of growth and development),
- Be **responsive** to emerging trends and issues that are will drive the Island's future (including some kind of trends analysis),
- Be **participatory**, engaging the entire community at key junctures in the process
- Be **strategic** in developing directives that can be acted upon, and
- Assign ongoing **accountability** in vision plan development, monitoring, and measurement.

The Consultant had used these criteria to consider what type of community-based visioning process might work best for the Town. Rather than simply recommending one design, the Consultant is offering a broader framework for the Town's consideration, covering a number of design elements for the process and providing a range of options for each element. Below are those elements and options along with the Consultant's recommended option for each.

- **Project Ownership. What entity/entities should own/lead the planning process?**
  Options:
  - A town-led/owned process;
  - A town-led/community-owned process (partnering with other public/private/civic sponsors);
  - A process led/owned by a public/private/civic consortium, of which the Town is one of several partners.

  Recommended Option: Town-led/community-owned process (partnering with other public/private/civic sponsors).
  Rationale: These days, more and more local governments are seeking to form partnerships in addressing local challenges. The same is true for community-based planning. The Consultant recommends a Town-led/community-owned process where the Town is the lead entity but other organizations sign on as partners in the process. This would allow the Town to shape and guide the process, but also provide a broader base of ownership, stronger platform for sponsoring and funding the process, and partners who are more likely to share in the eventual plan implementation activities that might come out of the process. Potential partners might include, for example, the Greater Island Council, the Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry, the University of South Carolina Beaufort, and others.

- **Project Funding: What entity/entities should fund the planning process?**
  Options:
  - A Town-only funded process;
  - A Town and other public-private-civic organization-funded process.

  Recommended Option: Town and other public-private-civic organization-funded process.
  Rationale: Depending on its design, a comprehensive community visioning process can represent a significant investment; those costs will be lessened if shared by several funders from the public, private and/or civic sectors. Whether the process is led/owned exclusively by the Town or through a partnership with other entities, it makes sense to seek funding from other public and private sources. If the ownership of the process is shared as recommended above, it's likely that key partner organizations would support it financially. Sponsorship could be "pay-to-play," where project sponsors are required to contribute to the budget; but that's not necessary. In terms of undue influence on process outcomes, as long as the process is designed to be open, transparent and participatory, it should not matter which organizations choose to sponsor the process. Sponsors could also support the process through "in-kind" contributions, such as office space, venues for meetings, etc. Funding might also be sought from County and State sources, as well as private foundations.

- **Project Consulting Assistance**: **What type of arrangement should be used to secure professional/technical assistance for the planning process?**
  Options:
  - Staff-driven/no outside consulting assistance;
  - Targeted consulting assistance;
  - Comprehensive consulting assistance (turnkey project).

  Recommended Option: targeted consulting assistance.
  Rationale: A project driven entirely by Town/sponsor staff is not recommended; staff is unlikely to have the combination of various types of expertise necessary to successfully stage

a comprehensive visioning process. At the other end of the spectrum, a turnkey-style, consultant-driven visioning project is not recommended. Such efforts tend to be more generic in their approach, less connected to the community as a result, and typically more costly due to the overhead of large consulting firms. An approach where professional/technical assistance is targeted and retained as required is a more flexible, cost-efficient approach that also helps build local ownership and capacity (e.g., use of volunteers for certain tasks, for example). This approach may involve more than one type of consultant (e.g., planning, branding and marketing, survey research, etc.). A quid pro quo of targeted consulting assistance is that there must be an on-the-ground project coordinator who is managing the process on a day-to-day basis and working closely with any consultants.

- **Project Staffing: How should the project be managed on a day-to-day basis?**
  Options:
  - Town staff;
  - Contract project coordinator working closely with the Town;
  - Outside contract project coordinator working on their own.

  Recommended Option: contract project coordinator working closely with the Town.
  Rationale: A 0.5-1.0 FTE project coordinator who manages the project in close cooperation with the Town is recommended for the duration of the project. This implies someone with excellent project coordination skills (e.g., logistics, scheduling, meeting support, communications, public relations and media skills, Internet and social media skills, trouble-shooting, problem-solving, etc.). Skills in project management, meeting facilitation and volunteer coordination would also be recommended. Staffing a project like this with Town personnel is not recommended; Town staff are presumably already over-allocated in their duties and would likely not have the right mix of project coordinator skills. Hiring a freestanding contract coordinator is also not recommended. The best option is a project coordinator whose is lodged at the Town or who works closely with a Town liaison to ensure the coordination of the project with its ongoing activities and scheduling. A contract project coordinator could be lodged within a partner organization, but should still be in close contact with the Town on a daily basis.

- **Type of Engagement: Should the process rely more on "representational" or "participatory" forms of public engagement?**
  Options:
  - Representational approach to generating content (e.g., steering committee, expert panel or technical advisory committee);
  - Combined representational and participatory emphasis (steering committee and community-based based engagement);
  - Participatory emphasis (entirely community-based engagement).

  Recommended Option: combined representational and participatory emphasis (steering committee and community-based engagement).
  Rationale: A balance of representational and participatory forms of citizen engagement is strongly recommended for this project. Representational engagement, through a project steering committee or technical advisory group, for example, along with broadly participatory forms of engagement that reach out to and engage the entire community through a variety of participatory mechanisms, will take advantage of both the deep knowledge base, skills and expertise that exist on the Island (e.g., retired executives, knowledge and information professionals, etc.) as well as community-based contributions

that build on the knowledge, direct experiences and participation of citizens-at-large. Both types of engagement are critical to the quality of process outcomes as well as the development of ownership of its outcomes by the public.

- **Type of Project Steering Committee: Should a project steering committee be involved in guiding the process only, in the generation of content, or both?**
  Options:
  - Process-oriented steering committee;
  - Process and content-oriented steering committee**;**
  - Content-oriented steering committee.

  Recommended Option: process and content-oriented steering committee.
  Rationale: The best, most efficient use of a project steering committee is to give them a role both in guiding the process itself (how it is managed, delivered, communicated, adheres to guiding principles, etc.), including overseeing the work of its project coordinator and consultants, as well as in serving as a facilitator, compiler and shepherd of the ultimate content that the process is designed to generate. This dual role implies a carefully selected steering committee, one that is committed both to the success of the process as a major planning endeavor, as well as to playing an unbiased, objective role in shepherding the content it produces. The work of a steering committee could be augmented with special task groups that are formed to provide certain functions for the process, such as an event planning committee, technical work group, etc.

- **Level of Civic Engagement: How deeply should the project engage the public-at-large in the process?**
  Options:
  - Streamlined public engagement process (shorter timeframe, limited engagement activities);
  - Targeted public engagement process (medium timeframe, selected but complementary range of engagement activities);
  - Comprehensive public engagement process (longer timeframe, full range of engagement activities)

  Recommended Option: targeted public engagement process (medium timeframe, selected but complementary range of engagement activities).
  Rationale: The Town has previously utilized public engagement, especially for the last iteration of its comprehensive plan. At the same time, it could be argued that most of those activities were either limited in the scope of their content focus (not "whole-of-community" conversations that deal the full range of issues facing the future of the Island) or limited in the degree to which the public was effectively engaged in the dialogue (i.e., more representational than participatory). While there may be a degree of "engagement fatigue" at the Town or in the wider community, it would be difficult to undertake a community visioning process without truly engaging the community to a significant degree. At the same time, rather than a scatter shot approach to engagement, such activities can be carefully targeted to reach the entire community in the most efficient way possible. Based on his experience, the Consultant is convinced that a targeted engagement process can be delivered that would produce valuable new insights for the Town in a way that captures the public interest and invites broad participation. The key is to design the engagements to fit the community – and not the reverse, including meeting with people in their own

neighborhoods or organizations. A targeted engagement process that is specifically designed to create the right blend of activities is both highly feasible and strongly recommended.

- **Scope of Content: What should be the scope and breadth of the content of the visioning process and its outcomes (i.e., a vision and plan)?**
  Options:
  - Narrow content focus (i.e., growth, development/redevelopment, environmental stewardship);
  - Broad, whole-of-community content focus with growth, development/redevelopment, environmental stewardship as a central element of the inquiry;
  - Broad whole-of-community focus without a central element.

  Recommended Option: broad, whole-of-community content focus with growth, development/redevelopment, environmental stewardship as a central element of the inquiry
  Rationale: Much of the focus on the future of Hilton Head Island in the past has been on the Town's physical growth, development and environmental preservation. Other subjects have been taken on as part of this planning, but mainly in the way that they connect to the above concerns. This is understandable given the Island's, history, geography, unique natural environment, and special qualities as a place to live. At the same time, the Island today faces a broader range of issues and concerns driven by other trends including economy, demographic, social and cultural forces, technology, etc. Ignoring these trends is not recommended, as ultimately they will influence and shape the continued development of the Island as well. The Consultant recommends a broader dialogue that explores the full range of issues and concerns for the Island's future, but which maintains the more traditional focus at the center of the process ("How should our Island look and feel in 20 years?").

- **Local/Regional Focus: How local or regional should the focus of a visioning process be?**
  Options:
  - Town/Island-centric focus;
  - Town/Island-centric focus with an element focused on future regional relationships;
  - Completely regional centric focus.

  Recommended Option: Town/Island-centric focus with an element focused on future regional relationships.
  Rationale: Hilton Head Island is no longer an isolated island community. Growth and development on the mainland is creating a larger urban region with its own demographics, economic and political drivers, and more. What is the relationship of the Town and Island to Bluffton and Beaufort County – and in the future how fully integrated or autonomous will the Island be? This may be one of the most significant questions driving the future of the Island; it begs an informed public dialogue. At the same time, the ultimate focus of the visioning process should be on the future the Town and Island – including the decisions and actions it undertakes along with its regional partners going forward. Clearly, there are regional institutions and partnerships that are critical to the future of the Island. It will be important to consider the Island's future in the wider region, even if the ultimate purpose is to secure the future of the Island itself.

- **Plan Ownership: Who will be the ultimate "owner" of an Island "Vision Action Plan"?**
  Options:
  - Town Vision Action Plan;
  - Shared Town and Community Partners Vision Action Plan.

Recommended Option: Shared Town and Community Partners Action Plan.
Rationale: Typically, a strategic visioning process results in both a long-term vision and a near-term plan of action to help achieve it. This would be the recommended outcome of a comprehensive visioning process for Hilton Head Island. The bigger question is this: Should that plan inform only the decisions and actions of the Town itself, or should it engage and include the commitments of other community partners (government, business, education, civic and community-based groups) as owners of the plan? To the Consultant, the latter is the clear answer. Given the above recommendation for the participation of other community partners in owning and sponsoring the visioning process, it would follow that these institutions also could be called upon to implement certain actions in the plan as well. This is a recognition that the future of the Island rests in more than just the hands of the Town itself. The most effective vision plans take this shared, collaborative approach to community action.

- **Project Branding/Marketing: How thoroughly should the visioning process be branded and marketed?**
  Options:
  - "Good Branding/Marketing (Project Brand/Logo, PSAs);
  - "Better" Branding/Marketing (Project Brand/Logo, PSAs, Communications Plan, Community Outreach)
  - "Best" Branding/Marketing (Project Brand/Logo, PSAs, Communications Plan, Community Outreach, Webpage/Social Media, Community Events and Activities).

  Recommended Option: "Best" Branding/Marketing (Project Brand/Logo, PSAs, Communications Plan, Community Outreach, Webpage/Social Media).
  Rationale: The foundation of all good community planning is open, transparent and professional communication. The better and more professional the communication, the better the process will be in terms of the quality of its participation and outcomes. The best project branding and marketing will create a sense of excitement and engagement that goes well beyond the planning process itself, producing long-term benefits for the community in the quality of community participation over the long haul, improved community relations, ongoing civil dialogue, and better leadership. Good branding and marketing requires a modest up-front investment with a potential for major long-term return on investment. Done well, it also creates positive benefits for marketing of the community, i.e., for visitors, tourism, and economic development.

- **Project Timeline/Cost: How much should be invested in the visioning process in terms of time and cost?**
  Options:
  - Abbreviated timeline and minimal cost;
  - Expanded timeline and moderate cost;
  - Extended timeline and significant cost.

  Recommended Option: expanded timeline and moderate cost.
  Rationale: Time and expense are the ultimate bottom line in designing and delivering a community visioning process. With the recent history of planning on the Island, it would be tempting to go with as little time and least expense as possible, however this route is not likely to deliver the desired results. The above recommendations on project design are intended to deliver the most comprehensive and effective visioning process for the least cost. This would include options to bring in more sponsors and funders, as well as reduce

consulting and staff costs. From a process design perspective, the Consultant's estimate is a project that lasts between 12-15 months, depending on start and finish dates and taking into account the best times for public engagement, to deliver a whole-of-community vision and strategic action plan owned by the Town and its partners. Budgeting will require assumptions and estimates, but expenses should be moderate compared to the most comprehensive municipal visioning efforts in the Consultant's experience, including those that are "turnkey" in nature.

Addressing Specific Committee Questions

The Public Planning Committee posed a number of more detailed questions regarding the potential details of a community visioning process for the Town of Hilton Head Island to the Consultant. These 12 questions and the Consultant's responses are included in the Addendum that follows this memorandum.

Conclusion

It is the Consultant's hope that the above findings and recommendations are helpful to the Public Planning Committee and Town of Hilton Head Island in moving forward with its intent to conduct a strategic visioning process for the Island. Questions of clarification from the Committee regarding its content are welcome. Thank you for the opportunity to be of service to the Town and community of Hilton Head Island.

ADDENDUM
Hilton Head Island Visioning and Master Planning
Questions Posed by the Public Planning Committee & Answers from the Consultant

- **HOW DO WE GET IT RIGHT?**
  - Assess what you've done already; identify key strengths, weaknesses and gaps (i.e., what was missed) in what has been done.
  - Look at best practices for better ideas and approaches to improve and fill in the gaps.
  - Identify a way forward (process) that respects HHI's needs, resources and capabilities.
  - Test your way forward with key stakeholders and the public to ensure support for the process.

- **HOW IS THE EXISTING PLANNING WE HAVE ALREADY COMPLETED USED?**
  - Publicly respect previous work for the time and effort invested in it.
  - Publicly commit to building on the foundation this work provides, but improving it as well.
  - Conduct a gap analysis to identify strengths/weaknesses and gaps.
  - Develop a way forward based on your analysis.

- **CAN WE DEFINE THE PURPOSE OF THE PLANNING PROCESS?**
  - Yes. You can do this by attempting to define your *intentions*, *outcomes*, and actual *deliverables*. *Intentions* would be the strategic goal of the process (e.g., engaging the entire community in creating a vision plan for its future); *outcomes* are how your community may change as a result of going through the process itself (e.g., a clear plan for future growth, more engaged and active community, more confident public decisions); *deliverables* are the actual products (e.g., a strategic community vision and action plan).

- **CAN WE CLEARLY DEFINE OUR OBJECTIVES FOR THE PLANNING PROCESS?**
  - Yes. Objectives for your process would be more detailed and specific answers to the above purpose (intentions, outcomes, deliverables).

- **HOW DO WE INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY?**
  - A first step is to determine how broad or narrow community engagement will be. This may be a function of how important community engagement is determined to be in the first place.
  - A broadly engaging process implies more time and effort, but in addition to taking the community's pulse and tapping into its visions and ideas, it can have big payback in terms of building support for the process itself, as well as building future networks for achieving results.
  - A more extensive or sophisticated engagement process may use a "diverge/converge" model: diverging out into the community for high-level *participatory* input and validation, and converging on smaller *representational* working groups to do the detailed work.

- Whatever the methods, openness, transparency and good communication is critical when engaging the public.

- **HOW DO WE GATHER INPUT?**
  - There are many ways to gather and analyze community input for a visioning process. They include one-on-one information gathering (e.g., stakeholder interviews, focus groups); traditional media newsletter, mailers, media inserts (mainly for outreach, not so much for input); speakers bureau and community forums; websites and online tools; traditional meetings (e.g., meetings, workshops, open houses; "summits"); customized meetings ("meetings-in-a-box for the DIY element, targeted meetings for people less likely to participate, etc.); community surveys (scientific telephone surveys, online non-scientific surveys); outreach/input via online tools and social media; community events and celebrations, and more.
  - The key is to shape this large menu of possible outreach/input methods and tailor them to fit the community, the defined purpose of the process, available community time and resources, as well as the type of input and validation that will be more useful.
  - Branding and marketing of a process is critical to engaging the fullest possible public input, as well as ensuring the future viability of the plan being created. An effective brand goes a long way in making a project visible, engaging, and, ultimately, successful.

- **IS ALL INPUT CREATED EQUAL?**
  - No. Every form of input has its highest, best and most effective uses. Generally, there are three kinds of input: *aspirational*, *strategic* and *tactical*. *Aspirational* input is most typically gathered at the broadest level possible and is most helpful in informing a community's values, long-term vision and high-level goals. *Strategic* input is most typically gathered from representational groups within the community with specific interest, expertise or information, and is most useful in identifying specific goals, strategies and actions. *Tactical* input is most typically gathered from the organizations or individuals actually charged with implementing the community's actions.

- **WHAT FACILITATION METHOD IS USED?**
  - Types of facilitation will change depending on the kind of input being gathered by what means and for what aspect of a vision plan. Much of a visioning process requires professional facilitation, which is very different from traditional public meetings, hearings, public forums, committee structures, or even decision-making. As a rule, broad consensus is the goal of this kind of facilitation as opposed to parliamentary or Robert's Rules decision-making. Good facilitation understands and knows how to strike the right balance between these poles. For example, electronic keypad polling (which is really just voting) can be an excellent tool for gauging public preferences in large public meetings.

- **HOW ARE THE RESULTS AND FINISHED PRODUCT COMMUNICATED?**
  - Communicating a community's vision plan is essential to making it a live and living document. Branding and marketing (see above) also can play a critical role. More plans

today are shared electronically than in print form. Also, the most innovative plans are truly "live" plans that can be periodically updated electronically going forward to keep them alive and relevant.

- **HOW DO WE DEFINE THE PROCESS IN SETTING, GOAL AND OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND TACTICS INCLUDING METHOD OF MEASUREMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY?**
  - A sophisticated vision plan will include all of these elements. Measurement and accountability is the Holy Grail of leading edge vision plans. "Community indicators" and "metrics" are emerging tools to measure success and ensure accountability. They also merge perfectly with electronic plan formats. Very few cities or towns have gotten this far but there are examples.