



**Town of Hilton Head Island
Town Council
Community Services Committee Meeting**

**Monday, May 22, 2017
8:30am – Conference Room 3
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.
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
 - a. Approval of May 8, 2017, and May 15, 2017, minutes of the Town Council Community Services Committee.
- 4. Unfinished Business**
 - a. Discussion and action on recommendations from Webb Management Services and the Venue Committee regarding Phase One: Needs Assessment.
- 5. Executive Session**
 - a. Conduct interviews for Boards and Commissions.
- 6. Adjournment**

Note: All or a portion of the meeting may be held in Executive Session.

Please note that a quorum of Town Council may result if four (4) or more Town Council members attend this meeting.

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
Community Services Committee Special Meeting
Monday, May 8, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.
Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

Members Present: Chairman Kim Likins, Bill Harkins, and Marc Grant
Members Absent: None
Town Council Present: Mayor Bennett, John McCann, Tom Lennox, David Ames
Town Staff Present: Jayme Lopko, *Senior Planner*; Jennifer Ray, *Planning & Special Projects Manager*; Charles Cousins, *Director Community Development*; Brian Hulbert, *Staff Attorney*

1. Call to Order

Chairman Likins called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

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. Approval of Minutes - Meeting Minutes of March 13, 2017 were approved as presented.

4. Unfinished Business

a. Discussion and action on recommendations from Webb Management Services and the

Venue Committee regarding Phase One: Needs Assessment. Ms. Cindy Creamer, Chairman of the Venue Committee presented the Venue Committee's recommendations including follow-up actions. These recommendations and actions are based on research and Webb Management Services recommendations. The following six recommendations are:

- i) **Community Arts Center**
- ii) **A Hall in Beaufort County**
- iii) **Mitchelville and Other Heritage Assets**
- iv) **Coastal Discovery Museum**
- v) **Community Gathering and Other Event Areas**
- vi) **Culinary Heritage**

1: Community Arts Center

The most basic facility which Hilton Head as a community needs is a Community Arts Center which can provide a combination of rentals, presentations, educational programs and outreach activities. The Arts Center of Coastal Carolina has the physical attributes to become this space and was designed to serve a set of community based groups.

It would seem reasonable for the Town to invest in the Arts Center if that organization is prepared and able to re-formulate its business model to become more of a community arts center rather than being dominated by self-produced theatre. If the Arts Center is not prepared to make that change, we would encourage the Town to consider other options and possibilities for a community arts center, ideally through the adaptive re-use of some other existing structure.

Mr. Harkins stated the consultant's opinion is that the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina should re-formulate its business model. Mr. Harkins would like to see what would be the economic impact of that change; would it be revenue neutral, would it increase expenses or decrease expenses? That would be a very helpful item because I would assume when the consultant undertook this and came up with suggestions, he also considered the implications. In terms of optimal use of space or ability for the community to optimally use the space it would seem we should have a space analysis as you would do with any space. I think that would be a "to do" step.

Chairman Likins stated that it must be operationally sustainable and have maximum use and be relevant to the organizations that use it.

Mr. Grant inquired as to what communities were looked at that are similar to Hilton Head Island. Mr. Dan Castro, Venue Committee member, reported the focus started at the local level then regional areas in South Carolina and then expanded to nationwide areas with small populations and resort communities. We looked at 50 total and studied 30 communities. We examined the type of facility, the revenue that was brought in and the economic impact on the community. We also reviewed the management operations and whether it was private or municipal.

2: A (large) hall in Beaufort County

This recommendation is for the development of a new mid-size multi-purpose hall for music, dance, theater, film, speakers and other events with a capacity range between 1,200 and 1,500 seats.

Mr. Harkins stated that he would like to see this on Hilton Head Island. It would help differentiate us in the marketplace. A lot of good work has been done - but are we getting ahead of ourselves? When we embarked as a community on this study, a lot of well-meaning and well-intentioned people gave time, talent and treasure to help with what they are interested in. It seems we probably have resource redundancy. We realize we have a wealth of value in the arts but we are not coordinated. Step one is to recognize we have an opportunity and a problem at the same time. Going to the next step, how are you going to pull all this together? When the new Director comes aboard, hopefully that person will come with lessons learned from other communities, a keen understanding who is here and what they are capable of and should we get that person on board to become more informed - sometimes slower is faster and we move at much a more informed rate; look outside the box for funding; ATAX is an opportunity in the future.

Committee members agree with the need for a hall in Beaufort County and hope to create something meaningful, a place where a variety of events can take place.

3: Mitchelville and other heritage assets

Mitchelville is a strong option to attract a significant national audience and would improve our reputation as a diverse and welcoming community, attracting a new segment of visitors.

Committee members were in favor of active partnership of the Town, Coastal Discovery Museum and the Mitchelville Preservation Project to help drive this forward.

#4 Coastal Discovery Museum

The Coastal Discovery Museum's strategic plan includes goals to add and improve facilities that will allow the museum to accept touring exhibitions made possible by its Smithsonian affiliation.

The Committee members praised the Coastal Discovery Museum's strategic plan and for the accomplishment of developing a relationship with the Smithsonian.

5 Community Gathering and Event Areas

This recommendation involves short and long term planning and implementation for three different types of spaces: performance/festival locations, park settings and village gathering places.

Committee members voiced positive response that this item has multi-generational appeal for residents and visitors.

6 Culinary Heritage

This is an opportunity to rediscover Hilton Head Island's food and farming heritage. Committee members agree this item is a quality of life benefit and tourism attraction and this should be part of the Town Visioning process.

Ms. Creamer concluded the presentation by stating that the Webb recommendations should be viewed as steps of investment and an opportunity for Hilton Head Island to be part of regional planning and working with public/private partners for the greater good.

These recommendations have different time elements. Support of this vision does not mean that the Town will take on full financial responsibility for these venues.

In conclusion we recommend moving forward with the Phase 2 contract with Webb Management Services especially moving forward on recommendations for a Community Arts Center and a Hall.

Ms. Joseph, Vice Chairman of the Venue Committee stated they have until June 6 to present these recommendations to Town Council. We asked Webb Management Services to provide us some sense of Phase 2 for three of the six recommendations with an estimate of cost so we can move this set of recommendations forward and take the next steps.

Chairman Likins asked the Committee members if they were ready to make a recommendation to move this to Town Council. Mr. Grant and Chairman Likins stated they were comfortable with the recommendations moving forward.

Mr. Harkins stated that he would like to walk before run. What has been done so far is fantastic and he would like for it to continue to move but needs more information. Mr. Harkins suggested having a community workshop with the consultant to share with us the logic behind the different ways to format the community art center and different ways to utilize space for optimal use and the financial implications. We need more time. I think it is incumbent on the consultant to share with us what logic from his standpoint was the recommendation to go off-island.

Ms. Joseph said she spoke to Mr. Duncan Webb after his presentation and he had gone through in his presentation all the reasons why it should be located off island. He said it was reasonable for the Committee to ask to keep this on our plate while we go into Phase 2. We cannot ask him to do more than he has done.

Chairman Likins stated the consultant did explain his recommendation. He looked at, as requested, existing organizations on the island and what they needed for venue space. There is no need to have the consultant come back and it would not be worth the expense. Webb Management Services did deliver on the original scope of work. We knew Phase 1 would lead to Phase 2.

Chairman Likins stated that no action will be taken today. Town staff will schedule a conference call with Webb Management Services, the Community Services Committee, Ms. Creamer and Ms. Joseph to discuss Venue recommendations.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Submitted by Eileen Wilson, Sr. Administrative Assistant

Approved by:

Kim Likins, Chairman

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING

Date: May 15, 2017 **Time:** 8:45am

Members Present: Kimberly Likins, *Chairman*; Marc Grant; Bill Harkins

Members Absent: John McCann, *Alternate*

Town Staff Present: Gregory D. DeLoach, Esq., *Assistant Town Manager*; Lindsey Rambow, *Records Administrator*; Eileen Wilson, *Senior Administrative Assistant*; Jayme Lopko, *Senior Planner*; Charles Cousins, *Director of Community Development*

Media Present: WTOC

1. Call to Order

Chairman Likins called the meeting to order at 8:50am.

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 Minutes

The minutes of the May 1, 2017, meeting were approved as written.

4. Executive Session

At 8:51am, Mr. Grant made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of conducting interviews for boards and commissions. The motion was seconded by Mr. Harkins and approved.

5. New Business

At 10:45 a.m. the Committee returned to Open Session.

a. Conference call with Webb Management Services at 10:45am.

Chairman Likins thanked Mr. Duncan Webb of Webb Management Services for participating in this conference call to answer questions regarding his recommendations for a Community Arts Center and for a Hall in Beaufort County.

The following is the consultant's recommendation for a Community Arts Center:

The most basic facility which Hilton Head as a community needs, is a Community Arts Center which can provide a combination of rentals, presentations, educational programs, outreach activities. Visual artists in particular lack space for teaching and related programs and continue to need space for exhibiting.

The Arts Center of Coastal Carolina has the physical attributes to become this space and was designed to serve a set of community based groups.

It would seem reasonable for the Town to invest in the Arts Center if that organization is prepared and able to re-formulate its business model to become more of a community arts center rather than being dominated by self-produced theatre. Certainly, the request for funding for technical equipment upgrades, which is valid, is easier for the Town to justify if the Arts Center is able to respond to the community's need for an arts center.

If the Arts Center is not prepared to make that change, we would encourage the Town to consider other options and possibilities for a community arts center, ideally through the adaptive re-use of some other existing structure

Mr. Harkins asked Mr. Webb if the Town were to embrace investing in the existing Arts Center of Coastal Carolina, has Mr. Webb explored the financial implications. Mr. Webb replied he has not explored the financial implications but has submitted to the Town a detailed Scope of Work for Phase 2. Mr. Webb stated that he is of the understanding that the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina is open to working with the Town for a solution and Mr. Webb stated that he would, if requested, work as the negotiator between the Town and the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina.

After a brief discussion, the Committee agreed that it would be important to have Mr. Duncan Webb leading the negotiations between the Town and the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina.

The Committee moved on to ask questions relating to the consultant's recommendation for a Hall in Beaufort County. Chairman Likins asked Mr. Duncan if there is the opportunity for something on Hilton Head Island? Is there the possibility of space on Hilton Head Island to support these organizations and events and be viable? The group would be remiss if it didn't ask to have this as part of study for Phase 2. Based on facts and knowledge of this community, we want to know why in your mind off-island versus on-island is a better solution.

The consultant's recommendation for a Hall in Beaufort County:

We would recommend the development of a new mid-size multi-purpose hall for music, dance, theater, film, speakers and other events with a capacity range between 1,200 and 1,500 seats.

There are over 100 days of demand from key groups on the island (Hilton Head Symphony, Hilton Head Choral Society, Hilton Head Dance, and the World Affairs Council of Hilton Head) for such a hall. In addition, the University of South Carolina-Beaufort has interest in expanding its arts programs and could be a potential partner in the development of such a project.

A mainland location, in proximity to I-95, would provide increased access to touring product traveling between Charleston and Savannah and as well as the growing populations in Bluffton and, potentially, Jasper County. Discussions of such a facility are

already taking place in Bluffton, as the community and Beaufort County consider the future of Hilton Head National Golf Club.

Mr. Webb stated the recommendation he made for an off-island location is a *better choice* but I did not say *on-island* does not make sense. I'm just saying it is a stronger concept. Mr. Webb said he is willing and able to help consider implications of an on-island versus off island. We will explore an on-island option to give the community the information it needs to make a determination.

Chairman Likins stated the overall goal is sustainability, to have something lasting.

Mr. Harkins asked the consultant - regional versus local on a business level - how much cost for him to tell us, realistically speaking, which direction to pursue.

Chairman Likins stated it will come down to cost as to whether it is worth spending the money to research the option for a location on Hilton Head Island.

The Committee agrees that they want to be sure the decision that gets made is best for the whole region and is sustainable.

Mr. Webb stated he will send to the Committee more language on the cost and process for researching a large hall location on Hilton Head Island.

The conference call ended at 11:45 a.m.

b. Discussion and action on recommendations from Webb Management Services and the Venue Committee regarding Phase One: Needs Assessment.

Mr. Grant stated the Committee should focus on the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina and an outdoor facility. These two items should be a priority. The Hall should be long-term. Mr. Grant said his concern is the budget has only so much money and some things will have to be tabled until next year. All these programs are important but if taxes are going to be raised, we cannot abuse taxpayers' money.

Mr. Harkins stated he views the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina not as an expense but as an investment.

Ms. Jayme Lopko stated two issues going on: one is recommendations coming forward to Community Services Committee to Town Council. Phase 2 is a separate presentation and a separate recommendation that would come to you for a contract when we have a scope of work with the budget worked out. We didn't bring them together at this point because we wanted to get a recommendation from Town Council for a contract on what you want to work on.

Chairman Likins said it is difficult to make a recommendation at large without the cost factor. We need more detail on the financial section. The Committee will review the detail information that Mr. Webb will submit tomorrow.

Chairman Likins stated the scope of work from the consultant's work was limited to what we requested of the consultant. He did what we asked. Going more in depth is not a rejection of the consultant's recommendation.

Ms. Cindy Creamer, Chairman of Venue Committee, stated that it was the Venue Committee that expressed to Mr. Duncan Webb to create something to benefit the regional community not just Hilton Head Island. Ms. Creamer expressed wanting to keep all components together and to advance and enhance the programs.

The Community Services Committee will schedule a time to meet again in the next week to discuss the additional information from the consultant.

6. Adjournment

At 12:17 p.m., Mr. Harkins moved to adjourn. Mr. Grant seconded, and the motion was approved.

Approved
Kimberly Likins, Chairman

Submitted by
Lindsey Rambow, Records Administrator
Eileen Wilson, Senior Administrative Assistant

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Community Development Department

TO:	Community Services Committee
FROM:	Cindy Creamer, <i>Venue Committee Chairman</i>
VIA:	Jayme Lopko, <i>AICP Senior Planner</i>
DATE	May 4, 2017
SUBJECT:	Phase One: Needs Assessment Recommendations

Venue Committee Recommendation: At the April 20, 2017 Venue Committee meeting, members voted unanimously to recommend to the Community Services Committee that Town Council approve their recommendations as detailed in Exhibit A.

Summary: The Town contracted Webb Management Services in December 2016 to begin the first phase of work, a needs assessment for entertainment, arts, culture, and heritage on the Island. After conducting 115 interviews, holding 5 community forums, collecting information about the Island and its organizations, and researching art trends, the consultant came up with six recommendations for the Town. Those final recommendations were presented to the Venue Committee on March 23, 2017.

The Venue Committee has been working over the past year researching and gathering information on entertainment, arts, culture, and heritage in our area and areas similar to ours. The Committee reviewed the recommendations of Webb Management along with the information they had collected and researched to respond to each of those recommendations. A detailed response from the Committee to each of the consultant's recommendations is contained in Exhibit A. In addition, the Venue Committee suggested steps that could be taken in a possible phase two with the consultant to advance some of the recommendations.

The recommendations of the Community Services Committee on Phase One: Needs Assessment are targeted to go to Town Council for final approval on Tuesday June 6, 2017.

Background: In recent years, Town Council has sought to examine the role of our local performing and cultural arts organizations and how they add value to and enrich residents' and guests' lives, support economic development, and attract guests to live on the Island. To that end, an Arts and Cultural Strategic Planning Committee was formed and an Arts and Cultural Assessment and Strategic Plan completed in 2016. This Report outlined various marketing and organizational implementation methods, and suggested that further research be conducted on venue issues and challenges to the numerous arts, cultural, historical, and entertainment organizations on the Island.

To accomplish this, a Venue Committee was created. This sub-committee of the Community Services Committee of Town Council has a mission to support the advancement of Hilton Head Island as a rich and diverse arts and cultural destination that enriches the lives of our residents and guests. The Venue Committee is comprised of 15 members of our community including: Cindy Creamer, Jane Joseph, Gregg Russell, Bob Lee, Karen Attaway, Tim Ridge, Rex Garniewicz, Gil Campbell, Juliann Foster, Charlie Clark, Lili Coleman, Dan Castro, Suzanne Thompson, Florence Gibbes, and Terry Herron.

Attachment:
Exhibit A - Venue Committee Recommendations

Venue Committee Recommendations

From April 20, 2017 Meeting

Community Arts Center

The most basic facility which Hilton Head as a community needs, is a Community Arts Center which can provide a combination of rentals, presentations, educational programs, outreach activities. Visual artists in particular lack space for teaching and related programs and continue to need space for exhibiting.

The Arts Center of Coastal Carolina has the physical attributes to become this space and was designed to serve a set of community based groups.

It would seem reasonable for the Town to invest in the Arts Center if that organization is prepared and able to re-formulate its business model to become more of a community arts center rather than being dominated by self-produced theatre. Certainly, the request for funding for technical equipment upgrades, which is valid, is easier for the Town to justify if the Arts Center is able to respond to the community's need for an arts center.

If the Arts Center is not prepared to make that change, we would encourage the Town to consider other options and possibilities for a community arts center, ideally through the adaptive re-use of some other existing structure.

The Committee agrees that we need a Community Arts Center. The definition of organizations that are potential renters/users of the Center should be expanded and could include non-Entertainment, Arts, Culture and History (EACH) organizations, such as business meetings and community organizations as well as summer youth programs, visual artist studio space and rehearsal space. Right now there is insufficient space that is available and/or affordable for many smaller EACH organizations.

The Arts Center of Coastal Carolina (ACCC) was designed to serve community based organizations. In addition, plans exist for potential additions to the complex that were never implemented but the additional required parking is no longer available (vertical parking option might resolve this issue).

We don't know that the building currently has the physical attributes to become a community center. The Committee believes that a review of the building needs to occur based on the agreed upon usage model for the building and that all costs to repair, redecorate, functionally enhance (e.g. modifications to make it effective for the designated uses) and bring to Hilton Head "standard" need to be identified. This would be a follow-on activity done by Webb Management subsequent to an agreement on Community Arts Center business model (see next item).

The Arts Center Building is the Committee's first choice for a Community Arts Center for Hilton Head if the both the Arts Center organization and Town can agree to a business

model for a “Community Arts Center”. We recommend that Webb should conduct this work and that it is a high priority. It should include a space usage recommendation (e.g. rehearsal space in the building vs. finding space outside), programming recommendation, staffing/expertise requirement and financing information (revenue, expense, rental pricing) to ensure that it is a sustainable model. The contract should also include clear expectations, measurement and oversight requirements. A timeframe for this agreement should be put in place so both parties can move forward.

We recommend that the Webb Phase II Scope of Work contain a requirement that the timeframe for resolution of the decision by the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina to meet the necessary model as a Community Arts center be completed within 90 days of the start of Webb’s Phase II contract.

If the Town and Arts Center come to such an agreement, the Town should financially assist the Arts Center with the lighting issues that were previously requested. This assistance should include a re-evaluation of the technical equipment upgrade in terms of the new programming model.

A recommendation addressing the sale/leaseback of the Arts Center property should be included during the 90 day Phase II scope.

If no agreement is reached, the Committee will make a recommendation within the 90-day timeframe regarding other options or possibilities for a community arts center.

A hall in Beaufort County

We would recommend the development of a new mid-size multi-purpose hall for music, dance, theater, film, speakers and other events with a capacity range between 1,200 and 1,500 seats.

There are over 100 days of demand from key groups on the island (Hilton Head Symphony, Hilton Head Choral Society, Hilton Head Dance, and the World Affairs Council of Hilton Head) for such a hall. In addition, the University of South Carolina- Beaufort has interest in expanding its arts programs and could be a potential partner in the development of such a project.

A mainland location, in proximity to I-95, would provide increased access to touring product traveling between Charleston and Savannah and as well as the growing populations in Bluffton and, potentially, Jasper County. Discussions of such a facility are already taking place in Bluffton, as the community and Beaufort County consider the future of Hilton Head National Golf Club.

The Committee fully agrees that a hall is needed to serve the growing Hilton Head Island (HHI) organizations lacking a suitable venue. A multi-purpose, flexible space design would expand its usage beyond formal performances.

- Accommodates commercial rentals, social group events, and exhibitions.
- Hosts weddings, business seminars, art showings in a well-designed lobby with food & beverage catering available.
- Allows for more performances/more flexible programming and improves potential for audience growth
- Facilitates broader audience participation through more ticket pricing options
- Improves audience experience (facilities, catering options)
- Provides the opportunity to attract groups in the shoulder seasons when outdoor events are not viable - e.g. Historical, Educational, and Religious gatherings.

The demand assessment takes into consideration only organizations based in Hilton Head Island as they currently stand. However, if a hall of this size were developed, we can see much additional demand:

- HHI-based organizations are planning to alter their programming when this space comes to fruition, increasing demand.
- Other off-island organizations would likely have interest in utilizing this space as well.
- A myriad of programming is available from promoters, or other organizations in the county, including presenting shows & business gatherings needing space beyond hotel ballrooms.
- Lobby bookings increase usage.

The Committee also agreed that the building concept/design must be done first in order to determine the amount and type of space needed to accommodate the planned uses for the Hall. That information will provide data to identify locations that would be appropriate and available.

The Committee is concerned about making the decision to locate such a hall on the mainland at this point in the evaluation process. We recommend that both on-island and off-island options should be kept open:

Bluffton:

We support any location off-island that is no further than the intersection of highways 46 and 278. There is strong feedback that HHI residents will not attend events at any site further out than “just over the bridge”. If located at the USCB Hilton Head gateway, there is a concern that few current subscribers would drive past SC-170 for concerts. We have had feedback from groups which would like to utilize a new facility expressing concern over the locations of an off-island venue.

We support Hilton Head National as an option to explore but have great concerns over its viability as a location due to public resistance and lack of serious development plans for the facility. We also have the following caveats:

- The developer will meet certain minimum standards regarding seating and functionality
- It must be built early in the development project
- The Town of HHI must retain some governance/control over the usage of this venue to ensure our island organizations are protected and can use this space at a reasonable cost and have schedule allowance.

Other concerns about an off-island site include:

- Affects Hilton Head Island Accommodations Tax (ATAX) funding for occupants moving from HHI
- May negatively impact revenue from subscribers/donors
- Negatively impacts Island businesses (restaurants, etc.)
- Hilton Head Island loses some branding advantage by not having a resident symphony
- It may be very difficult to bring HHI, Bluffton and Beaufort together to get this done although we believe that having a facility available to the whole Region is very valuable.

Hilton Head:

- Experience supports the notion that being closer to I-95 than HHI for performers is negligible.
- Although population growth is off island, 2.5 million visitors come to HHI. This is a major source of Arts revenue and economic impact for HHI.
- HHI has the affluent senior population who support EACH providers.
- HHI has the infrastructure, hotels and beach that attract visitors, who prefer Island-based events – such as festivals, shows, and concerts.
- Local organizations need a venue for large events, such as large dinners because the Island hotels give priority to bookings for multi-night usage or to events with clients staying at the hotel.

Concerns about a Hilton Head location:

- Limited land options for a major venue

- Road and bridge traffic issues which would need to be validated
- Parking issues

Therefore, key criteria for determining location will be the availability of land/parking and minimizing traffic issues.

We recommend that Webb Management proceed with a Phase II activity to define the programming, facility building concept, location and financial model for a multi-purpose facility. This activity should be completed in a four-month window.

A review of Hilton Head Island ATAX rules affecting local organizations that might be performing at an off-Island site needs to be done during Phase II to allow Webb to evaluate the financial impact of ATAX funding on the organizations. This should be part of a larger financial analysis of this multi-purpose hall.

In parallel with Webb's Phase II work, the Venue Committee should contact large venue management companies to obtain their evaluation of the feasibility of a multi-purpose hall in Beaufort County and including facility features, market demand, location and their interest in helping to design and manage such a facility.

Mitchelville and other heritage assets

Mitchelville is widely recognized as Hilton Head Island's 'hidden gem'. The park, on its own, has significant local, regional, and national importance. Combined with other regional heritage sites, it could become part of a greater regional trail network within the larger Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor, also connecting to the National Park Service and their recent work on the Reconstruction Era Monument. These efforts could strengthen the island's connection with its own history and heritage and impact visitation to the island in significant ways.

Yet, despite this potential, little progress has been made in recent years. The Town has committed to provide two years of financial support for an Executive Director for Mitchelville and is leasing the park to the Mitchelville Preservation Project for a nominal amount.

We would endorse the idea that the Town proceed with various investments in Mitchelville. However, we would encourage a more active partnership that ties those investments to a series of Town-mandated goals around program development, organizational development, and partnerships.

Mitchelville is a strong option to attract a significant national audience and would improve our reputation as a diverse and welcoming community, attracting a new segment of visitors. Additionally, having a key historical attraction on the Island could open up another source of tourism revenue for the Town. A key first step is to bring the new Executive Director on board. A key skill for this individual is getting grant funds. There is a great deal of competition for these funds but it will be a critical element. Funding for children's programming is easier to obtain.

We recommend that it should be included in the overall Venue plan. We recommend that Webb management work with the Town and the Mitchelville leadership to agree on measureable goals for the Town and Mitchelville partnership. We recommend that the Town support the leadership of Mitchelville in their efforts to build a national audience through collaboration with the Smithsonian, National Museum of African American History and Culture, National Park Service, and other similar organizations. We believe that further development of interpretive and master plans for Mitchelville should be undertaken by a consultant with experience in developing similar sites and who is hired through the Mitchelville Preservation Project.

We also believe that there should be a continued close collaboration between the Mitchelville Project and the Coastal Discovery Museum in order to utilize their expertise and resources in this area.

For the longer term the Town plan should add other heritage assets such as the Civil War and Reconstruction sites, Gullah/Geechee culture, and Native American archeological sites.

Coastal Discovery Museum

The Coastal Discovery Museum is an important cultural asset for Hilton Head Island as it speaks to such critical issues as the environment, land, and the culture of the Lowcountry. The Museum runs many programs of interest to full-time and seasonal residents and their families. And, they are an attractive and well-run destination for visitors to the island, effectively becoming a clearing-house for a range of other attractions and amenities.

Within the recently completed strategic plan are goals to add and improve facilities that will allow the Museum to accept touring exhibitions made possible by its Smithsonian affiliation.

We endorse this plan and would encourage the Town to consider how it might support the expansion, as and when the Museum's needs become more defined.

The Committee fully supports Coastal Discovery Museum's (CDM) current strategy of a flexible, large exhibition space at Honey Horn to bring in world class exhibits during the high tourist season, which can be broken down during the shoulder seasons into smaller spaces for local groups (e.g. art shows, art for sale, chamber music). Also the strategy includes a space to accommodate 200 theater type seats. The space should be self-sustainable or profitable from an expense standpoint, achievable by selecting the appropriate exhibitions. CDM could also consider making it a unique Visitor Center. Current estimate is 10,000 sq. ft.

In addition, the CDM is pursuing a strategy of Responsible Development: the intent to be a collaborator and partner with the town and use the property to serve the community in ways that don't impact the natural beauty of the community. Examples would be pop-up concerts, including outdoor symphony performances such as Symphony under the Stars.

The Committee believes this should be a joint partnership between the CDM, Town of Hilton Head Island and Beaufort County since it would serve the population within a three-hour drive.

We recommend that Webb management work with the Town and CDM leadership to agree on measureable goals for the Town and CDM partnership.

The CDM should continue to refine the plan and work with other arts/cultural organizations on the island to identify potential users of the space and their specific usage needs.

The financials for this project should be considered along with the other recommendations to ensure that appropriate funding can be allocated to this museum space.

Community Gathering and Event Areas

There is a recognized need in the community for gathering space. While Coligny and Shelter Cove have been successful, the Town could go further in its attempt to create public gathering space, with more integrated planning that can support the local art and music scene, local retailers, and festivals.

We are thinking particularly of younger people and families and the different ways that they might choose to participate in the arts and culture.

Such spaces might include more formal performance and festival locations, less formal park-settings, and more village or urban gathering places.

This is a longer-term effort for Town and Village planners, thinking about how open space might be protected and used for events, how other areas might be upgraded, and how commercial concentrations might be planned and developed to include a Village square.

This recommendation involves short and long term planning and implementation for three different types of spaces: Performance/festival locations, park settings and village gathering places.

The Committee agrees that the highest priority of these spaces is the performance/festival location, or outdoor event space for several reasons.

- Could be used for multiple organizations; festivals, events, symphony, other groups
- Provides opportunity for residents and visitors to experience community outdoors - Multi-generational appeal – youth, adults, families – informal
- Would accommodate wide variety of musical genres – classical, pop, contemporary, jazz, Latino, African-American, Gospel
- HHI has a proven track record for successful outdoor presentations
- Simple construction – raised pad/covered stage, power, parking - A quick build, modest cost
- “Lock it and Leave it” feature
- High revenue potential – 5000 lawn capacity, major performers. Can be an economic engine for the entire EACH program, following the model that as many other Towns have used
- Serves as Community Park for festivals needing 5000+ capacity
- When events are not booked, can revert to athletic fields
- Hilton Head’s climate provides up to eight month’s usage
- This could be located by itself or paired with another venue depending on location and space requirements.

We recommend this Committee look at creating a permanent outdoor performance space on Hilton Head to attract the potential for different kinds of entertainment and audiences, addressing the interests of more diverse members of our community.

To accomplish this, we recommend Webb and local experts form a task team to look into the venue possibility, including determining what would be needed to build, considering permanent seating and a covered stage, and where to locate.

- Our Committee already has a list of available properties.
- Honey Horn should be considered for “pop up” (temporary) event space. Although this temporary space is more expensive for setup and cleanup for each show, this venue has already been successful in serving concerts for audiences of 5,000 to 7,000. It also includes parking.
- We suggest and favor a beachfront/waterfront location to create a unique experience that would fit well into the Hilton Head brand if such a site were available.

Hilton Head needs to have a fun gathering space – a place where people “must” go. In the longer term, the Town should be looking at creating gathering spaces as areas of the Island are developed or redeveloped. We recommend this goal become a consideration in every Town review of development/redevelopment on the Island, as well as an integral part of the Town’s visioning process.

- We need to be creative in our thought processes - for example, looking at the roof lines as an area of potential development/use.
- We recommend exploring the concept of a cultural district/area, potentially completed as a private endeavor with Town support and encouragement. This would help rejuvenate pockets of the Island.

Culinary Heritage

Finally, we see a tremendous opportunity to rediscover Hilton Head Island's food and farming heritage; firstly, by re-planting portions of the island and, secondly, through the establishment of a regional farm-to-table program.

From a facility perspective, perhaps the best first step would be to attract a culinary institute to the island. This could serve as a catalyst for a series of food-as-culture initiatives, all of which could have a significant impact on the quality of life for full-time and senior residents and form the basis of new cultural and heritage tourism.

The University of South Carolina at Beaufort is developing a facility on Hilton Head specifically for hospitality management. It will have a kitchen, but is intended more for internal teaching uses.

We support the concept of food-as-culture and culinary arts as a quality of life benefit and tourism attraction, improving the HHI brand. This could also fill in for reduction in golf tourism and support the idea of HHI as eco-friendly. Rediscovering the Island's food and farming heritage and farm-to-table programs is also a positive idea. Some time in the future, it could be desirable to have a culinary institute on the Island, but this would not be a priority for the Committee now.

Our approach would be for the Town to support an initiative to bring together for profit and non-profit organizations with an interest and capability to spearhead and develop this type of project. There are many opportunities work with the Restaurant industry, health institutions and schools to put this in motion which should provide the financial commitment. Later if University of South Carolina, Beaufort (USCB), Technical College of the Lowcountry (TCL) or other organization is interested in creating a Culinary Institute on the Island, the Town should support them.

This project of expanding food/cuisine offerings and visibility should be part of the Town's visioning process which could then help to gather the interested people and organizations. Members of the Venue Committee are interested in this project and have volunteered to represent the Venue Committee in that process.

Examples of ideas to consider might be:

- A 501[c] 3 non-profit (e.g. within the Community Foundation of the Low Country).
- A town sponsored Think Tank or Forum to solicit a "team".
- To be successful, Native Islanders and members of the Latino community need be involved.
- Celebrate Hilton Head as a farming community (to include historic crops such as indigo, rice and cotton) while exploring maritime farming (shrimping oyster harvesting fishing, etc.).

A Vision for New Facilities

Note: The following five bullets are the final summary items that Webb presented as a justification for moving forward and taking action on his recommendations.

- *Recommendations are not a menu but set of investments to be viewed together.*
- *These investments will increase property values, enhance quality of life, and make HHI profile a destination.*
- *Opportunity for HHI to be part of regional planning, locating facilities sensibly, working with public/private partners for greater good.*
- *Build a capital project plan with funding and sustainable over time for the collective group of projects.*
- *Set priorities and define Town role in advancing plan.*

The Venue Committee adds:

We believe it is critical to consider these recommendations as a long term set of investments that must be viewed as a package.

These recommendations have different time elements. Some can be brought to fruition more quickly and easily, while others will take some time to develop. It is important to ensure that any action does not preclude the completion of other items listed.

We should not assume support of this vision means that the Town will take on full financial responsibility for these venues. These must be public/private partnerships and we should be working with the County and the State as well as businesses and individual donors to develop financial support.

Together, these recommendations cover diverse members of the population and help solidify Hilton Head's brand. There is ample evidence from the Arts & Cultural Strategic Planning (ACSP) Committee report and anecdotal evidence to support these benefits, including the increase to property values.

Recommended Next Steps

Additional investigation is necessary to move these ideas forward and prioritize recommendations.

Many of the recommendations can progress concurrently, as they will be multi-year projects.

The Committee recommends moving forward with a Phase II* (see definition below) contract with Webb Management as quickly as possible to include the following:

1. Resolve the Arts Center recommendation. This has been an urgent need for some time. Webb should participate in discussion between Arts Center and Town to provide objectivity and achieve timing. Key tasks include:

- a. Defining Business Model with ACCC and Town
 - b. Determining Repair/Upgrade Cost for New Usage
 - c. Evaluate the sale/leaseback proposal
2. With input from potential regional partners, determine the concept design and future location (Bluffton or Hilton Head Island) of a mid-sized multi-purpose hall. Once this is determined, proceed with planning, fundraising and development, in collaboration with regional partners.
3. Work with the Town and Mitchelville leadership to define measureable goals for the partnership between the Town and Mitchelville as they proceed with their planning/fundraising/development activities.
4. Work with the Town and CDM leadership to define measureable goals for the partnership between the Town and the CDM.
5. Determine the infrastructure requirements and future location of an outdoor event space.

*“Phase Two, if needed, includes concept development, physical planning, the beginning of site discussion, a business plan for new and/or improved facilities, and beginning the work of testing the capacity in the community to support the project that has been recommended. The purpose of this work is to provide the information and confidence to move forward with a decision.”

The Committee and Town should proceed with the following:

1. Continue with joint plan between the Town and the Coastal Discovery Museum for building expansion. (Town)
2. Incorporate plans for “Village Squares” into the Town’s long-term strategic plan. (Town)
3. Participate in the Visioning process to work with other Town stakeholders to advance the Culinary Heritage initiative. (includes Venue Committee representation)
4. Clearly define the Towns vision with regards to EACH in branding and future planning. (Culture & Arts Network Director and Culture & Arts Advisory Committee)

The Committee believes that Phase II should be completed as quickly as possible due to the urgency especially of moving forward on Recommendations for a Community Arts Center and a Hall. For this reason, the contract for Phase II with Webb should have the following time parameters all measured from the beginning of Phase II:

- Recommendation on Community Arts Center: 90 days
- Recommendation on a Hall: four months
- Recommendation on Outdoor Event Space: four months
- End of Phase II: five months (allowing time for a reconciliation between the previous three recommendations so that the conclusions of Phase II make sense as a whole)

The subject of surveying citizens for community input on these recommendations has been an issue since the inception of the Venue Committee. The Committee has several questions about such a survey which include:

- the advisability of doing a survey of current citizens for projects that could take many years to complete
- the question of who should be surveyed: HHI citizens, Beaufort county citizens, current visitors, and/or potential visitors.
- the question of when a survey is valuable, i.e. What level of detail needs to be available about the projects? What is the appropriate time in the process?
- the type of survey which might be appropriate: phone, internet, and/or in person
- is there a better vehicle than a survey to gather and evaluate community input?

The Committee recommends seeking guidance from Webb management, Dr. Salazar (of USCB) and the Town's Visioning consultant to better evaluate the action that should be recommended for this subject as work on Phase II proceeds.