

**TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND  
ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Approved**

**Date:** August 27, 2015 **Time:** 9:00 a.m.

**Members Present:** Mike Alsko, *Chairman*; Stewart Brown, *Vice-Chairman*; Rob Bender, Trish Heichel, Cliff McMackin, Charles Miner

**Members Absent:** Brad Marra

**Staff Present:** Susan Simmons, *Finance Director*; Brian Hulbert, *Staff Attorney*, Marcy Benson, *Senior Grants Administrator*; Erica Madhere, *Finance Administrator*; Cindaia Ervin, *Finance Assistant*

**Council Present:** John McCann, Kim Likins

**Others Present:** Members of Organizations interested in applying for 2016 Accommodations Tax Grants; Members of the public.

**Media:** None

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**1. Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

**2. FOIA 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:**

**a. Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee Meeting of July 14, 2015**

Ms. Heichel moved to approve the Minutes of July 14, 2015. Mr. Bender seconded the motion. The Motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

**4. Chairman's Report:**

None

**5. Unfinished Business:**

None

**6. New Business:**

**a. Calendar Year 2016 Accommodations Tax Grant Applicant Workshop to discuss the Application procedure, changes, expectations, and to address Applicant questions and concerns.**

Chairman Mike Alsko explained the purpose of the meeting is to review the 2016 application, address any changes that have been made, and to answer any questions the applicants may have. Mr. Alsko invited Rene Phillips, Website Administrator for the Town, to the dias to walk the workshop attendees through the online application process. She explained each step in detail and highlighted some changes that were made to this year's

application, such as revised word limits in certain sections, the addition of more funding categories, the addition of the Procurement section, the changes to the Measuring Effectiveness section (formerly named Prior Recipient's Report), and the addition of the Executive Summary Section. She gave the applicants helpful hints including not to "cut and paste" answers from Microsoft Word since doing so will add background data that will skew the word count. She also mentioned that using the previous year's username and password will pre-populate the 2016 Application with information submitted for the 2015 application, including the budgets and financial statements, so that only the current year statements need to be uploaded. In the Executive Summary section, there are three options: the ATAX Effectiveness Form may be filled out and uploaded, the applicants may upload their own Executive Summary, or the applicants may enter information into the text box provided in the Application Portal. If a document is uploaded that needs correction, or if technical assistance is needed, the applicants should contact Ms. Phillips.

The Committee thanked Ms. Phillips and invited the workshop attendees to voice their questions and concerns. A question was raised about how partnering / collaborating applicants should apply, and the Committee advised them to consolidate when it makes sense, with one applicant having responsibility. In instances that one applicant is responsible for many projects, the Committee plans to evaluate, discuss, and make recommendation for each project individually.

Several attendees asked questions regarding needing more guidance on what should be included in the Executive Summary section. The Committee explained that the applicants should decide what is important to share with the Committee in order to give a high level view of their successes and/or failures. The organizations should consider how they measure their success, and educate the Committee to portray the results of their efforts. Applicants should think of the Executive Summary as a way to tell their story, including communicating efforts that didn't work, and explain what was learned and how the results will lead to better decision making in the future. There isn't a right or wrong way to complete the Executive Summary. The Committee expects some Summaries will be complex, some will be broad, and others will be very specific, but the goal is to show what has been affected by ATAX funding, and to help determine and substantiate that the money is helping the organization to grow and attract tourists, and ultimately, that the money is being well spent.

The Committee reviewed the meeting schedule for the remainder of the year, and advised the attendees that the date Town Council will consider the Committee's recommendations and determine the grant awards changed from December 8 to December 15, 2015.

## **7. Adjournment:**

Ms. Heichel moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bender seconded the Motion. All Members voted unanimously in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

**Approved:** October 8, 2015

**Respectfully submitted:**

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**Mike Alsko, Chairman**

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**Erica Madhere, Secretary**