

**TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND  
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING**

**Date:** May 14, 2018 **Time:** 9:00 a.m.

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

**Town Council present:** John McCann, David Ames

**Town Staff Present:** Jayme Lopko, *Sr. Planner*; Charles Cousins, *Director Community Development*; Shawn Colin, *Deputy Director Community Development*; Jennifer Ray, *Planning & Special Projects Manager*; Taylor Ladd, *Senior Planner*; Carolyn Grant, *Communications Director*; Jennifer McEwen, *Director of Cultural Affairs*

**Media Present:** Island Packet

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**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Likins called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

**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**

**Recommendation regarding Venue Committee Response to Phase II: a Conceptual Model for a Community Arts Center.**

Ms. Cindy Creamer, Chairman of Venue Committee, thanked this Committee for the opportunity for the Venue Committee to present their findings. We have been committed to this project for the past two years. The Venue Committee members bring many years of experience with different cultural activities in the community. We are unanimous in agreement that the Town should go forward with the recommendations from our Phase I report. We cannot afford to lose any more assets to our neighbors. Hilton Head Island needs a vibe for the future and the cultural aspect.

Mr. Grant asked Ms. Creamer based on the Webb Management report recommendations on a community arts center, how did you interpret how we should move ahead? Ms. Creamer replied the community arts center should be consider as part of our long-range plan because it satisfies many unmet community needs. The Venue Committee unanimously agreed the defined facility spaces, users and uses exceed the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina's capacity to handle. We could repurpose unoccupied buildings. We need to move forward on the entire scope of work.

Mr. Grant stated if the Webb Management report proposed the community art center serve the region why are we doing something different? Mr. Grant said his concern is the tax base we serve – how much will it cost?

Ms. Creamer stated the consultant did not take into consideration ATAX money. The Venue Committee feels a strong need to support 30 different cultural groups on Hilton Head Island. How far would Hilton Head Island residents travel?

Mr. Grant asked why the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina stepped out of the group and not stay involved?

Ms. Creamer stated the Venue Committee spent one year on six different recommendations; we tried to put together something that would work at the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina but they require so many nights and rehearsals we cannot take that away from them. Overall what the Webb reports recommends, they just didn't have the space. When the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina first started it was envisioned to have a mid-size hall in the beginning. Trying to fit everything into one building is very difficult.

Mr. Harkins stated he is in no position to vote today. There are some real important pieces of information that we have to drill deeper on. The Webb Management reports states there were three entities that could avail themselves of a larger facility. The Webb Management report also states the large hall community arts center unequivocally should be located as close to I-95 as possible to create regional opportunities. The Arts Center of Coastal Carolina was saying goodbye to the process. I picked up a sense of discouragement and a sense of distress. The Arts Center of Coastal Carolina says they provided all the necessary data; the Venue Committee said they did not. That to me is not good. We have to resolve that. The Arts Center of Coastal Carolina is very important to the community. We have to in a very deliberate and careful way work something out. It is unacceptable for them to walk away - and for you not to pull them back. We have a wonderful symphony they need more space; that needs to be worked out. We as a political body come under scrutiny how we use community money and we take that seriously. I believe we need consultants from time to time. In lieu of a consultant, what about Ms. Jennifer McEwen, Director of Cultural Affairs? I want the arts to succeed but what I have seen so far, you are in no position to be asking for funding.

Mr. Grant stated we need more time to have a conversation and receive more information. I would like a real discussion about the Webb Management report and move forward based on the data to support it. I do not want to spend more money and not know specifically what we want to address. I would like to hear from Ms. Jennifer McEwen, Director of Cultural Affairs and hear her opinion. What are we asking a consultant to look at? I would like for people to be able to afford the arts but will it affect their taxes? What is another space for? Town Council only has so much money. We need to meet to talk about the Webb Management report, look at why a consultant is needed and we need to know all facts.

Ms. Creamer stated the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina walking away was only on the community arts center area that it was becoming too difficult and the expectations on some sides were not being met. They supported us going forward with Phase II. The Venue Committee's direction on a scope of work was to focus strictly on Hilton Head Island, we were not able to take on a regional aspect. Ms. Jennifer McEwen is a great asset to the Town and the Venue Committee but it will take a hired consultant to take this on.

Public comment covered the following points:

- There is no residential base near I-95, it would be a terrible mistake to put it there.
- The Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra desperately needs a larger space and a permanent home. The Orchestra would lose its Hilton Head Island supporters if the community arts center was near I-95. Residents are not going to drive there and back for a performance.
- Tourist dollars will help with funding.
- It is all about money, bricks and mortar.
- We are at a point we cannot move forward; we need a consultant, someone that knows how to run a facility.

Mr. Harkins stated my takeaway is the disparity of thought between the Venue Committee and Arts Center of Coastal Carolina about the adequacy of the information or lack thereof that we share and that is troubling to me. We have to have neutrality of thought and also need to have support from both sides in order to move forward. We are dealing with well-intentioned people and everyone in this room wants to advance the arts. But if we are not together as a community, we are going to fail. Information is a resource to use and I welcome the next few weeks to make sure we have this dialogue that Mr. Grant and I are referring to and get closer as a community.

Chairman Likins stated that there would not be a recommendation to Town Council today. Chairman Likins stated as a member of the Venue Committee, I have more information than my colleagues. I too feel that a lot of the questions my colleagues are asking have been answered and the information is readily available. The Venue Committee will do their best to pull the data together and provide it to each of you in a manner you can see and have the answers to the questions you have. I will work with staff and the community to provide the information we need.

While this is a challenging issue, we as a community need to be grateful for this opportunity. We are fortunate to have the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina, the orchestra etc. As a Council we have to come up with a collective solution. We should not be willing to lose any of these organizations from our community. If we do, we are not following our own vision. We will be left with nothing. We need a consultant and I encourage Town Council to be more open to move this initiative forward. Chairman Likins thanked the Venue Committee and the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina.

#### **4. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

6/11/2018  
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Approved  
Kimberly Likins, Chairman

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Submitted by  
Eileen Wilson, Sr. Administrative Assistant