

Memo



To: Mayor and Town Council
From: Shirley A. Freeman, Director of Finance/Administration *SJF*
Date: June 14, 2016
Subject: Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee Recommendations

Town of Bluffton
20 Bridge Street
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Bluffton, SC 29910
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Recommendation: That Town Council approves the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce FY 2017 Marketing budget as recommended by the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee (ATAC).

Background: The budget for the Town's Designated Marketing Agency was reviewed and approved by the ATAC members with the following recommendation for Council approval:

The Chamber research the cost and comparative benefits of ads in Southern Living, Gun and Garden, and Cond'e Nast versus their proposed Southern Lady regional print ad campaign proposed on page 15 of the plan.

Recommendation: In accordance with the grant process, the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee met on May 23, 2016, to review the quarterly grant applications and have made the following grant award recommendations for Town Council's consideration:

Requesting Organization	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended
Heyward House Historic Center (Annual)	90,000	90,000
Total	\$ 90,000	\$ 90,000

Background: Total State and Local Accommodations Tax funds currently available for distribution are \$115,863. When comparing the State and Local Accommodations Taxes collections for the quarter ending March 2016 to the same quarter of the previous year, the revenues are up \$19,973 or 31.3%.

Documents attached for your review:

- ATAC meeting minutes from May 23, 2016
- Previously funded grant listing
- Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce FY2017 Marketing Plan

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
May 23, 2016

Chairman Bret Anthony called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Other committee members present were Sam Britt, Charlene Gardner, and Maria Kramer. Courtney Hampson was absent. Staff in attendance was as follows: Director of Finance Shirley Freeman, Assistant Director of Finance Trisha Greathouse, and Town Clerk Sandra Lunceford.

The total funds available for distribution are \$115,863.

Approval of Hilton Head-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce Bluffton's Marketing Plan and FY 2016-17 Budget as the Town's Designated Marketing Organization (DMO):

Ariana Pernice, Vice President, Visitor & Convention Bureau presented their Marketing Strategies and Programing Plan for the Town of Bluffton. Ray Deal, Controller, was available for questions. The Chamber is estimating receiving \$85,000 from State and Local ATAX monies as the Town of Bluffton's Designated Marketing Organization (DMO). There was a period of questions and answers regarding the plan. She also introduced Kelly Brunson who will be located in the Chamber's Bluffton's office.

Gardner made the motion was made to approve the Hilton Head-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce and Visitor & Convention Bureau (VBC) Annual Marketing Program with the recommendation that the Chamber research the cost and comparative benefits of ads in Southern Living, Gun and Garden, and Cond'e Nast versus their proposed Southern Lady regional print ad campaign proposed on page 15 of the plan. The Committee commented that they were not familiar with Southern Lady magazine. Kramer seconded. The motion carried unanimously

Committee Approval and Recommendation to Town Council on Applicant Request as follows:

Bluffton Historical Preservation Society (Heyward House) – Annual Request of \$90,000:

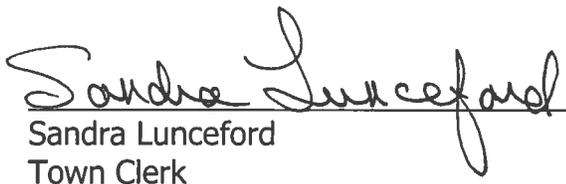
Katie Epps, Director of the Heyward House Historic Center, introduced Anthony Barrett the newly appointed Executive Director. She gave an overview of the application and mentioned that they are asking for \$10,000 less this year than last year. The Heyward House serves as the Welcome Center for the Town of Bluffton. Through their marketing and social media efforts plus a partnership with other local organizations. The Heyward House has seen significant growth since the beginning of this fiscal year due to social media, visibility, activity, and connectedness and has become known as "the place to start" when exploring the Town of Bluffton. (Continued)

Bluffton Historical Preservation Society (Heyward House) – Annual Request of \$90,000 – Continued:

In order to increase the quality of their tours and programs, they are involved in the Experiential Tour Development Program with the Hilton Head/Bluffton Chamber of Commerce and Joe Veneto, the Opportunity Guy. They are reworking their house and walking tour scripts to make them more engaging and immersive for their daily visitors and it will make us more attractive for conferences, bus tours, and other large groups. Their brochures are placed in the rack card stands in hotels, timeshares, rentals, etc. Also are placed at airports and State welcome center in South Carolina. Daily statistics are collected from a guest sign-in book. They are working to be more self-sufficient and focusing on more donations. The requested funds are used for operations of the Heyward House and does not including capital improvements. Mrs. Epps, answered questions regarding their program and explained they had received a grant of \$100,000 in total for use on anything including capital projects but it excluded salaries.

Gardner moved to approve the Heyward House's annual request of \$90,000 and to be fully funded this quarter. Britt seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.


Sandra Lunceford
Town Clerk

FY 2016 ATAX Grant Report
6/3/2016

FY 2016 Grant Requests	Amount Requested	Advisory Committee Recommendation	Town Council Approved	Source of Funding	Paid FY 2016	Remaining
Applications Received March 31, 2015						
Bluffton Historical Preservation Society - Annual Amount \$100,000	100,000	25,000	25,000	State ATAX	\$ 25,000	\$ -
Total Grants for 1st Quarter Payments	\$ 100,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000		\$ 25,000	\$ -
Applications Received June 30, 2015						
Beaufort County Black Chamber of Commerce	\$ 20,000	\$ 3,250	\$ 7,500	State ATAX	\$ 7,500	\$ -
Bluffton Historical Preservation Society - Annual Amount \$100,000 (2nd Req)	\$ 75,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	State ATAX	\$ 25,000	\$ -
Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	Local ATAX	\$ 20,000	\$ -
LowCountry Golf Course Owners Assoc	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	\$ -	Local ATAX		\$ -
The May River Theatre Company	\$ 15,000	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	Local ATAX	\$ 7,500	\$ -
Old Town Merchants Society - Annual Request \$48,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	Local ATAX	\$ 12,000	\$ -
Society of Bluffton Artists - Visual Arts as a Destination	\$ 10,700	\$ 6,000	\$ 10,000	Local ATAX	\$ 10,000	\$ -
Total Grants for 1st Quarter Payments	\$ 160,200	\$ 81,250	\$ 82,000		\$ 82,000	\$ -
Applications Received September 30, 2015						
Bluffton Historical Preservation Society - Annual Amount \$100,000 (3rd Req)	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	State ATAX	\$ 36,137	\$ 13,863
Old Town Merchants Society - Annual Request \$48,000 (2nd Req)	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	Local ATAX	\$ 12,000	\$ -
Farmer's Market of Bluffton - Annual Request \$34,000 (3rd Req)	\$ 14,142	\$ 14,142	\$ 14,142	Local ATAX	\$ 11,786	\$ 2,356
The Greater Bluffton Chamber of Commerce - The Taste of Bluffton	\$ 20,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	Local ATAX	\$ 4,975	\$ 5,025
Total Grants for 2nd Quarter Payments	\$ 96,142	\$ 86,142	\$ 86,142		\$ 64,898	\$ 21,244
Applications Received December 31, 2015						
Old Town Merchants Society - Annual Request \$48,000 (3rd Req)	\$ 24,000	\$ 24,000	\$ 24,000	Local ATAX	\$ 20,475	\$ 3,525
Farmer's Market of Bluffton - Annual Request \$53,585	\$ 53,585	\$ 24,068	\$ 29,436	Local ATAX	\$ 4,844	\$ 24,592
Total Grants for 3rd Quarter Payments	\$ 77,585	\$ 48,068	\$ 53,436		\$ 25,318	\$ 28,118
Total FY2016 Grants	\$ 433,927	\$ 240,460	\$ 246,578		\$ 197,217	\$ 49,361