

**TOWN OF EDISTO BEACH
ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES
December 4, 2014
4:00 p.m.**

Town of Edisto Beach
Town Hall
2414 Murray Street
Edisto Beach SC 29438

Present: Charlie Vincent, Chairperson, Jane Morrow, Vice-Chairperson, Walton Salley, Molly Watkins, Matthew Kizer, Elizabeth Guilherme and Van Maxwell.

Call to Order: Chairperson Charlie Vincent called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: Matthew Kizer moved to approve the minutes of the August 7, 2014 meeting. Molly Watkins seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

2015 Accommodations Tax Advisory Board Meeting Schedule: Jane Morrow moved to approve the 2015 meeting schedule. The ATAX Board will meet on February 5, May 7, August 6 and November 5, 2015. Matthew Kizer seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

2014 Accommodations Tax Annual Report: Jane Morrow moved to approve the 2014 annual report. Molly Watkins seconded the motion. Matthew Kizer asked Town Administrator Hill to make sure someone was accounting for all the ATAX funds that were supposed to be coming in. Administrator Hill assured Mr. Kizer that the "For Rent by Owner" homes were being tracked and that Maxine Burton, Financial Analyst for the Town, was cross checking information with state reports. Administrator Hill told the Board that ATAX funds that were sent to Charleston County in error have been returned to the Town of Edisto Beach. Chairman Vincent called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

ATAX Fund Balance – The current ATAX fund balance is \$85,280.83 (unencumbered). Jane Morrow moved to approve the fund balance, seconded by Molly Watkins. The motion was unanimously approved.

ATAX Applications

Edisto United – 5th Annual Edisto Eats and Ultimate Chef Competition - \$5,460 – Jenny Smith presented the application on behalf of Edisto United. Ms. Smith had a question about a previous meeting with Council that Amanda Kelsey had attended. Ms. Smith asked why Council did not have the demographic information from the application that was supplied by Ms. Kelsey. Municipal Clerk Deborah Hargis explained to Ms. Smith that because the ATAX meeting had to be postponed due to a lack of a quorum, that the Council would not receive the applications in full until the December Council meeting. Ms. Hargis had supplied the demographic information requested by Council at the workshop Ms. Smith referred to. The ATAX Board makes their decision and then the applications are submitted to Council. The current applications are on the agenda for the December Council meeting. Matthew Kizer asked Ms. Smith what Edisto United did with the money raised by the competition. Ms. Smith told the Board that specific projects were funded by Edisto United to benefit youth on Edisto Island and Edisto Beach. They currently are working with a program called Camper Packs. Youth who may be in need of food over the weekend are taking home backpacks with food for the weekend. Edisto United supports a program for

pre-teen and teen girls dealing with personal hygiene and birth control issues. Edisto United has a boat building program in which at-risk youth who have a parent who has been or is currently in jail or prison. They have the opportunity to assist in building a boat, which incorporates math skills, science skills and social skills. Edisto United has also partnered with the Edisto Island Open Land Trust to have local kids build an outdoor classroom/nature trail and is providing the necessary materials. (galoshes, shovels, etc.) Edisto Elves, which operates under Edisto United, provides school supplies twice a year, funds field trips and assists families at Christmas. In previous years, Edisto United has had a mentorship programs for teens. The Edisto Eats and Ultimate Chef Competition is the major fundraiser for Edisto United and brings in between \$7,000 - \$10,000 a year. Edisto United also asks for donations from local groups such as King's Daughters and the Lions Club. Jane Morrow moved to approve the full amount of \$5,460. Molly Watkins seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Lowcountry & Resorrt Island Tourism Commission – Promotion of Edisto Beach and the Lowcountry - \$17,500 – Peach Morrison, Executive Director of the South Carolina Lowcountry Tourism Commission presented the application remotely. The ATAX Board had concerns about the information on Edisto Beach on the Lowcountry Tourism Commission's website and the website in general. Ms. Morrison assured the Board she would change the website to include more information specific to Edisto Beach and include a link to the Chamber's website. Dan Carter, Executive Director of the Edisto Chamber suggested to Ms. Morrison that the Tourism Commission transfer some of the new information from the guidebook to the landing page on the website. Matthew Kizer asked Dan Carter if the Chamber paid the Lowcountry Tourism Commission to have the link on their website. Mr. Carter replied that they did not. A discussion followed concerning the amount other areas gave to the Lowcountry Tourism Commission. The Commission asks for the same percentage (six percent) of the total amount of ATAX funds received from the state from each area they represent. Jane Morrow made a motion to approve \$6,000 be awarded to the Lowcountry & Resort Island Tourism Commission for the Promotion of Edisto Beach and the Lowcountry. The motion died from lack of a second. Matthew Kizer moved to approve \$10,000 subject to linking the homepage to the Edisto Chamber website. The motion died from lack of a second. Walton Salley moved to approve \$10,000 subject to Edisto Beach being able to change the copy on the landing page. The motion died due to lack of a second. Charlie Vincent moved to approve \$6,000. Molly Watkins seconded the motion. Jane Morrow told the Board that with the approval of the \$6,000 that would give the Tourism Commission the opportunity to make the adjustments to the website suggested by the Board. Ms. Morrow also suggested that in the application process next year that the Tourism Commission be more specific in the information provided to the Board. She would like to see more Edisto Beach-specific information on the application. Mr. Maxwell stated he found it hard to make a decision based on what the Tourism Commission will do in the future. Chairman Vincent called for a vote on the motion and it passed 4 – 3 with Vincent, Guilherme and Maxwell opposed.

Adjournment - Jane Morrow moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Beth Guilherme. The motion was approved unanimously.

The media/public was informed of the date, time and place of the meeting on Friday, November 7, 2014.

APPROVED BY THE ATAX BOARD



Deborah Hargis, Municipal Clerk

March 2, 2015