

ATAX Board Meeting
November 7, 2013

**TOWN OF EDISTO BEACH
ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES
November 7, 2013
4:00 p.m.**

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

Present: Iddy Andrews, Chairperson, Walton Salley, Molly Watkins, Lisa White, Jane Morrow, Charlie Vincent.

Absent: Alex Pournelle (no reason given)

Call to Order: Chairperson Andrews called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance. Chairperson Andrews thanked Walton Salley and Jane Morrow for agreeing to serve a second term on the Board. She also thanked Municipal Clerk Deborah Hargis for her diligence in putting together the ATAX packets.

Approval of Minutes: Jane Morrow moved to approve the minutes of August 1, 2013. Lisa White seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Old Business:

Bay Creek Park Restroom Update: Patrick Brown presented information to the ATAX Board concerning the restrooms at Bay Creek Park. The Board and Town Council have already approved \$85,000 to build restrooms at the Park. A second application not to exceed \$50,000 was made in August of 2013. That application was tabled pending additional information. Mr. Brown presented the information requested by the Board on modular and mobile restrooms. After contacting two different companies, it was learned that modular units cannot be flood proofed. Mobile units range in price from \$22,960 to \$79,990. There is an issue with connecting the mobile units into the existing sewer system and therefore would have to be pumped out by a septic company or have personnel open and close sewer lines, incurring additional costs. There is a unit from AMS Global that can be directly connected to the sewer that ranges in price from \$55,942 to \$84,889. The discussion then moved to site built restroom facilities. The Town Building Department negotiated with a contractor who submitted a bid from the RFP to quote two site built restroom facilities. The wet flood proofed restroom was \$96,568. This method requires a variance from the Town Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. FEMA allows this variance, as per the Building Department's conversations with State NFIP Coordinator Maria Lamb. A site built restroom can be dry flood proofed for \$120,593. Chairperson Andrews asked Mr. Brown for his recommendation. Mr. Brown stated that the site built structure would be a more appealing addition to Bay Creek Park. A mobile unit would not look as nice, in his opinion. Jane Morrow made a motion to approve an additional \$12,000 in ATAX funds for the Bay Creek Park restrooms. Molly Watkins seconded the motion. Charlie Vincent agreed that the mobile unit was not a good idea. Lisa White asked if the \$96,500 total cost included tying into the septic system, and Mr. Brown affirmed that it did. Chairperson Andrews called for a vote, and the motion passed unanimously. Chairperson Andrews thanked Mr. Brown for supplying the additional requested information so the Committee could make a more informed decision.

ATAX Board Meeting
November 7, 2013

New Business:

2014 Accommodations Tax Advisory Board Meeting Schedule: The meeting dates for 2014 are scheduled for: February 5, May 7, August 6 and November 5. Molly Watkins moved to accept the dates as published. Charlie Vincent seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

2013 Accommodations Tax Annual Report: The annual report was submitted to Damita Jeter of the Accommodations Tax Expenditure Review Committee on September 23, 2013. Jane Morrow moved to accept the annual report. Lisa White seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ATAX Fund Balance: There was a question about a discrepancy in the ATAX fund balance concerning the amount approved by the Board and Town Council for the Edisto Chamber's off season marketing and advertising. The Board was under the impression that \$26,500 was approved for the off season marketing. Charlie Vincent moved to accept the ATAX Fund Balance with the \$500 correction. Walton Salley seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously. After researching the matter, the amount is correct as published in the ATAX 65% Fund dated October 15, 2013, Chamber Marketing and Advertising: \$26,000.

ATAX Fund Approval Letters: Jane Morrow moved to accept the approval letters as corrected, Edisto Chamber of Commerce, Edisto Beach Fall Festival 2013 - \$3,000 and Edisto Chamber of Commerce, Off Season Marketing and Advertising, 2013 - \$26,500. Jane Morrow moved to approve the letter, seconded by Lisa White. The motion passed unanimously.

Dan Carter, Edisto Chamber of Commerce, Budget Overview: Mr. Carter supplied the Board with a handout which is attached, entitled Edisto Chamber of Commerce A-TAX Budget Supplement Tourism Financial Overview.

ATAX Applications:

Edisto Beach Fire Department, Beach Wheel Chair Replacement - \$6,500 Fire Chief Denney Conley presented an application on behalf of the Edisto Beach Fire Department for replacement and repair of beach wheel chairs. Chief Conley reported on the positive response from those using the chairs. There are eleven chairs, four of which need repairs. Chief Conley would like to increase the number of chairs available, but the current application is for repair and replacement of current chairs. During the season, Chief Conley reported that all chairs are in use at times. The deterioration of the chairs is due to normal wear and tear, not to vandalism or incorrect usage. The Fire Department has implemented a new check-in/check-out system so that the chairs can more accurately be accounted for. Both Jane Morrow and Walton Salley spoke in favor of the wheel chair program and the appreciation visitors have for it. Chairperson Andrews questioned the numbers on the final report of wheel chairs used. Chief Conley said the numbers were inaccurate and that future applications would reflect the correct numbers. The Chief said his goal was to continue to improve the program and expand it as time and finances allow. Molly Watkins moved to approve \$6,500 for the replacement and repair of beach wheel chairs. Jane Morrow seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Lowcountry & Resort Island Tourism Commission – Promotion of Edisto Beach and the Lowcountry - \$18,900. Peach Morrison, Executive Director, presented an application requesting \$18,900 for promotion and advertising of Edisto Beach. Ms. Morrison began her presentation with an overview of the organization, highlighting the Welcome Center off Interstate 95 with the Commission office on the second floor. Ms. Morrison gave the Board a copy of the recently concluded conversion study which is attached. She also distributed a spreadsheet showing ATAX funds requests by location, which is also

attached. Ms. Morrison passed around several magazines to the Board showing advertisements done by the Commission, including Horizon magazine, Go Escape and Food Traveler. Ms. Morrison reported that web traffic is up 55% from 2011-2012 to 2012-2013, and visitors to the Welcome Center are up 24%. Charlie Vincent moved to approve half of the requested amount, or \$9,450. Jane Morrow seconded the motion. Discussion followed concerning the redundancy of the advertising through the Chamber, the Town website and the Commission. Chairperson Andrews called for a vote, and the motion passed 5 – 1 with Lisa White dissenting.

Town of Edisto Beach Building Department, Bay Creek Park Electrical Upgrade - \$80,000. Patrick Brown presented an application on behalf of the Town of Edisto Beach. He began his presentation with a brief overview of the park facilities and the electrical needs that had been anticipated when the park was first proposed. As events are larger, electrical demands are greater. Council requested that the electrical issues be addressed. Prior to an RFP being submitted, Council requested information on estimated costs. That information is included in the packets of the ATAX Board members. To summarize, that information includes upgrades to the electrical system, lighting in the parking lot, low-level lighting along the boardwalk and outlets at two different band locations (two power pedestals) and scattered outlets for caterers. Solar lighting was explored, but found to be more expensive and not very attractive. Mr. Brown stated the company he spoke with did not do the full design, but a conceptual design to gather enough information to give a good idea of the cost. Traditional lighting would cost an estimated \$71,185. Walton Salley asked Mr. Brown how many events were held. Mr. Brown said there were a few, but he anticipated more weddings, oyster roasts, etc. once the upgrades were complete. Mr. Brown sees a big issue in the parking lot with the lack of lighting. Lisa White asked about the fee for the park. Mr. Brown said there is a \$150 fee for the building only, \$600 for the park, and a larger fee if the renter wanted to close the park to the public during the event. Jane Morrow asked if the electrical and the bathroom would be able to be completed separately. Mr. Brown said they were independent of the each other. Mr. Brown was asked if the electrical project could be completed in stages. He answered that he did not know how to decide what could be left out and what could be done. Lisa White made a motion to approve \$60,000 in ATAX funds for the electrical upgrades to Bay Creek Park. Charlie Vincent seconded the motion. There was discussion on how much money was being put into the park. Chairperson Andrews called for a vote and the motion passed with a 5 – 1 vote with Jane Morrow dissenting. Lisa White then moved that Town Council revisit the fee schedule for Bay Creek Park. Jane Morrow seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Learning Through Loggerheads DBA Edisto United, 4th Annual Ultimate Chef Competition and Edisto Eats Food Festival - \$4550. Amanda Kelsey presented an application on behalf of Learning Through Loggerheads, Edisto Eats and Edisto Elves, which have joined forces to become one functioning nonprofit organization – Edisto United. The 2014 will be very similar to the 2012 event in that there will be two preliminary chef competitions to narrow the field to two competitors at the finale which will be March 15, 2014. The preliminary events will be held February 11 and February 25, which are both week days. The goal of the festival this year is to increase attendance 20% from the 2012 event. There will be different methods of advertising this year, such as a “Save the Date” campaign, radio, websites, social media, etc. The Board commended Ms. Kelsey on her thorough application. Chairperson Andrews asked Ms. Kelsey if she anticipated any problems with using the parking lot at McConkey’s for the finale since Bi-Lo has taken over Piggly Wiggly. Ms. Kelsey said she did not. Lisa White moved to approve \$4,550 for the 4th Annual Ultimate Chef Competition and Edisto Eats Food Festival. Jane Morrow seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Adjournment

ATAX Board Meeting
November 7, 2013

Molly Watkins moved to adjourn the meeting. Lisa White seconded the motion which passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 pm.

The media/public was informed of the date, place and time of the meeting on October 31, 2013.

APPROVED BY THE ATAX BOARD



Deborah Hargis
February 6, 2013