

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

July 10, 2018

The Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee meeting of July 10, 2018, was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by the Committee Chair, Sue Ingram. A quorum of the members attended the meeting. Other Committee members attending were: Randall Buck, Jim Eisenhauer, Joe Pontuti, Ron Schildge, Stuart Spisak and Patsy Zanetti.

Chair Sue Ingram introduced John Wells, who is the Town Council liaison to the Committee. Councilman Wells introduced the Town Administrator, Joe Cronin, to members of the Committee. Councilman Wells went on to explain the need for the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee and their responsibilities as well as how the State statute specifies that the Accommodations Tax funds be spent. Councilman Wells reminded the members that the amount of Accommodations Tax available to be spent in 2019 will not be as large as the amount in 2018. In 2017, the Town received two checks from Charleston County for State Accommodations Tax funds that were erroneously sent to the County and a large portion of these funds were budgeted to be spent in 2018. Councilman Wells also stated that the Town is not prepared to ask for approval at this time for any items they might want to use Accommodations Tax money on since they have not started the 2019 budgeting process yet.

Town Administrator Cronin stated that the Town would begin this fall to project revenues and expenditures for 2019 and would not know until that time if the Town would request A-Tax funds to be spent on beach patrol, fireworks, etc., as they have previously.

Chair Sue Ingram asked representatives for the organizations requesting Accommodations Tax funds for 2019 to begin their presentations.

- **Bohicket Merchant's Association** – Todd Gerhart, President of the Bohicket Merchant's Association, presented a request for the **Kick-It At Bohicket** event that will be held each Tuesday from May 28, 2019, to August 27, 2019, and also November 22, 2019. Kick-It At Bohicket is a free, family-oriented evening that will include music by a DJ, a photo booth, a face painter, games and a balloon artist. The total estimated cost for the event for 2019 to the Association is estimated to be \$22,200. Advertising of the event will be done in *The Seabrooker* and *The Island Connection*. **Request is for a \$17,000 contribution.**
- **Bohicket Marina & Marketplace** - Nick Macpherson, representing Bohicket Marketplace & Marina, presented a request for:
 - **2019 Billfish Tournament Sponsorship & Dolphin Slam** – Mr. Macpherson explained that the Billfish Tournament that is held at Bohicket Marina is one of

five legs of the Governor's Cup Fishing Tournament that is held every year in South Carolina. There were 43 entries in 2018, which was a record for Bohicket Marina. Previously, there have been between 19 and 27 entries. The entry fee for each boat is \$2,000. The Dolphin Slam, a mahi mahi tournament, is a less expensive tournament, \$200 per boat, that has been held at Bohicket Marina for the last five years about two weeks before the Billfish Tournament. The number of boats entered in the Dolphin Slam has increased from 10 to 105 boats in 2018. The dates of both tournaments will be April/May of 2019. **Request is for a \$10,000 contribution for both fishing tournaments.**

- **Parking detail and security patrols** conducted by Charleston County Sheriff's deputies during the Tournaments and other high traffic weekends. **Request is for a \$5,500 contribution.**
- **Two large horizontal message boards** to be placed on each end of the Marina that would contain information promoting the eco systems of the Seabrook Island area. **Request is for a \$2,000 contribution.**
- **Alan Fleming Tournament Committee/Club at Seabrook Island** – Cat Russo, Tournament Co-Chair for 2018, and Mike Kaiser, Tournament Director, presented a request on behalf of the **2019 Alan Fleming Senior Clay Court State Championship**. Ms. Russo stated that she is co-chair of the tournament this year, with Susan Leggett, but she will be chair in 2019. This tournament brings in 250 tennis players from approximately 20 states and a lot of visitors at a time of year when there is not a lot of activity at Seabrook Island. Mr. Kaiser stated that the Tournament, which was established in 1981, has become one of the most popular events on the southern senior tournament schedule. The Tournament is designated as a Senior Clay Court State Championship Tournament as well as National Championship for 40's, 50's, 60's and 70's mixed doubles. Competitors range from 35 to 80, men and women, who compete in singles, doubles and mixed doubles. The Tournament exposes the players and their guests to the pleasures of visiting and living on Seabrook Island. Most of the players stay on Seabrook Island for 4 to 5 nights and they patronize local shops and restaurants. The Seabrook Island Club provides the food and space for their opening and closing events, but sponsorships are relied upon to put on this type of tournament. Referee compensation and housing has increased because of the number and caliber of referees that are needed, along with costs for the welcome party and tournament banquet. If the Town is a Presenting Sponsor, this would be advertised in Tournament publications, displayed on the sponsor banner at the Racquet Club for a year, through website linkages with the Tournament and the Town would get special recognition at the Tournament Banquet. **Request is for a \$10,000 contribution.**
- **Women's South Carolina Golf Association** – Clarissa Childs, Executive Director of the Women's South Carolina Golf Association and Kristi Coggins, Tournament Director, presented a request on behalf of the **South Carolina Women's Open Golf Tournament** – Ms. Childs stated that 2019 will be the second year for the South

Carolina Women's Open Golf Tournament to be held at Seabrook Island. The date of the tournament will be August 8-11, 2019. The event will bring in players and visitors, who will more than likely spend 3 to 4 days on the island and will visit local shops and restaurants. Players will be between the ages of 13 to 70. Ms. Coggins commented that there would be 4 divisions – senior professionals, open professionals, amateurs and senior amateurs. The group hopes that the Town will become a sponsor and eventually they also would like to get national sponsors, who are interested in helping to promote women's golf. There are 108 golfers in the 2018 tournament and they would like to have 144 golfers participate ultimately. Their goal is to have Seabrook Island become the home of the South Carolina Women's Open Golf Tournament. The Town's sponsorship would mean bigger purses and would help with costs to make the event become bigger and better year after year.

In response to questions from the Committee about the timing of the budgeting process and the next A-Tax Advisory Committee meeting, Town Administrator Cronin stated that, with the Committee meeting this far in advance of the budgeting process, it would be necessary for the Committee to expect to have more than one meeting every year. The Town Administrator remarked that efforts have been made to license those, who have rental units on Seabrook Island that have not been licensed in the past, and he hopes this will positively influence not only business license revenue but accommodations tax revenue. The Town's 2019 budget must be adopted by December and the process should start in September or October of 2018. It was suggested that late September might be a good time for the Committee to meet in future years, with applications going out about 30 days in advance.

Sue Ingram, Chair of the Committee, stated that she had asked a representative from the Charleston Area Convention & Visitor's Bureau to attend today's meeting to talk about how their organization markets Seabrook Island, but they were unable to attend. The CACVB will, however, be sending some printed information for Committee members.

The following recommendations were made by the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee for 2019 State Accommodations Tax funds:

- **Bohicket Merchant's Association** – Ron Schildge moved to recommend a contribution of \$17,000 for **Kick-It At Bohicket** for 2019. The motion was seconded by Stuart Spisak and the vote to approve was unanimous.
- **Bohicket Marina and Market Place** – Each request made by Bohicket Marina was considered separately. Joe Pontuti moved to recommend a contribution of \$10,000 for the **2019 Billfish Tournament and Dolphin Slam Tournament**. Jim Eisenhauer seconded the motion and the vote to approve was unanimous. Ron Schildge moved to recommend a contribution of \$5,500 for **parking detail and security patrols** by Charleston County Sheriff's deputies during prime tourist season, as stated in the

Marina's request. Patsy Zanetti seconded the motion and the vote to approve was unanimous. Stuart Spisak made a motion to **deny** the request for \$2,000 for **two horizontal message boards** to be placed at the Marina. Joe Pontuti seconded the motion and the vote to deny the request was unanimous.

- **Alan Fleming Tournament Committee/Seabrook Island Club** – Stuart Spisak moved to recommend a contribution of \$10,000 for the **2019 Alan Fleming Senior Clay Court State Championship Tournament**. Ron Schildge seconded the motion and the vote to approve was unanimous.
- **Women's South Carolina Golf Association** –After considerable discussion, Patsy Zanetti made a motion to recommend a contribution of \$18,000 for the **South Carolina Women's Open Golf Tournament**. Randall Buck seconded the motion and the vote to approve was unanimous.

Chair Sue Ingram stated that there would be another meeting of the Committee in 2018 when the Town had determined how much Accommodations Tax funds would be needed for their various 2019 projects. The Committee meeting in 2019 for use of 2020 funds will, more than likely, be scheduled for late September or early October to avoid having multiple meetings.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Faye Allbritton, Town Clerk