

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Friday, November 16, 2018 at 12:00pm
Municipal Complex, Committee Meeting Room, 3rd Floor
100 Ann Edwards Lane
Mount Pleasant, SC 29464

MINUTES

PRESENT: Cheryl Craven, Shannon Hartman, Rebecca Gosnell, Brumby McLeod, and Vishal Patel

ABSENT: Su McManus Frost and Laurie Bixler

ALSO PRESENT: Tom O'Rourke, Council Liaison

STAFF PRESENT: Lauren Sims, Community & Government Affairs Chief

Ms. Gosnell called the meeting to order at 12:06 noon.

I. Public Comments

Ms. Gosnell stated that she would like to ask those present in the audience to identify themselves and the organization they are representing.

Charleston Wine and Food

Mount Pleasant Community Arts Center

Ms. Gosnell made a motion to alter the order of the Agenda or review to allow those present to have their reviews addressed first, which would be to begin with Charleston Wine and Food, followed by Munchkin Radio Plays; seconded by Ms. Craven. All present voted in favor.

II. FY 19/20 (January – June) Group Evaluation

A. Charleston Wine + Food

Ms. Sims asked if the Committee wishes to keep Community Impact at 8.8%.

Ms. Gosnell responded in the affirmative. She stated that this gives the event a 98.8% and asked if there were any Committee members that do not believe they should receive 100% of their requested funding. She stated that the Committee will consider granting funding at 100%.

B. Munchkin Radio Plays

Ms. Gosnell stated that the ATAC would like to find a way to support them and will discuss items of concern in the application and have a clear understanding of why ATAC selected the funding amount. She stated that ATAC would like to grant this project \$1,500 which is equal to the ticket sales projected income. The Committee spoke with others that used Christ Church and there is no fee for them. She stated that it is possible they may not be able to have this event at the level they would like this year. Ms. Gosnell stated that the Committee loved the idea that cultural content is being created to serve young people in Mount Pleasant and they are very supportive and enthusiastic. She said the budget provided relies too heavily on the Town as a funding source versus having the people who come out and participate pay for their experience. She said in Mount Pleasant, a \$5, \$10 or even a \$15 fee is not a cost that is too high to charge for this type of event. She said it would put them in a price point for other Piccolo events as well. She stated that ATAC would like her to give this further review. She said the Committee felt that the hotel projections were aggressive and unable to demonstrate or prove. The committee felt that the challenge that this group continues to have is that they are set up to fund things that bring a lot of heads in beds or impact a lot of people from a cultural point of view. She said if this event is being brought to ATAC and it only impacts a few hundred citizens, then it is very difficult for ATAC to justify, versus events that are impacting

thousands. She said for staff purposes, the Committee is granting \$1,500. Ms. Gosnell stated that if there is anything she is able to do personally to help them find less expensive resources or a venue that is conducive to their needs, she would be happy to assist.

Ms. Moreto stated that one of the issues in Mount Pleasant is that there is no place to perform or exhibit. She stated that they have been shut out of the school system. She had originally hoped to work in the schools, but that has been denied.

Ms. Gosnell asked about the libraries.

Ms. Moreto stated that they are not able to charge an admission fee to the library.

Ms. Gosnell stated that if they did a production in the library and then came to ATAC and they paid for the ticket costs, which is essentially what they are doing today, then it would solve this one issue. She said it is a place that would automatically market for them. She added that there is a built-in base of parents and children. No one is trying to move people to a location that they are unfamiliar with or paying for a location and set up. She said the marketing makes more sense, because they are already using a captive audience. She said these are the things that could move their group towards successful production before they get to a point where people recognize them and will follow them wherever they would like to take them.

Ms. Sims asked if the Chair would like to attribute scores for this event.

Ms. Gosnell responded in the negative.

C. SC Aquarium – Charleston Waterfront

Ms. Gosnell stated that they will not be ranking this submission. The Committee does not feel it meets the minimum qualifications and does not draw new visitors to Mount Pleasant. She said it does

not serve as a cultural event and is taking existing visitors and providing them with another ticket option.

D. USS Yorktown Foundation – Vietnam Photographic Exhibit

Ms. Gosnell stated that there are two programs that the Committee is being asked to fund and will grade them as a group. She said there is the pictorial exhibit that will be here from January through March and is currently in Greenville. She said the other is a Vietnam Day Symposium that will take place on June 6th. She stated that they have requested a \$4,000 funding request for one and \$3,000 for the other.

E. Charleston Jazz Festival

Ms. Gosnell stated that the Committee's preliminary discussion was not to provide funding. She stated that there are no venues in Mount Pleasant, no ability to demonstrate hotel stays to project an accurate number or confirm a number.

F. Lowcountry Oyster Festival

Ms. Gosnell stated that there is an error in their application. She said the points awarded for room nights was an 8, but in the past, there were 1,700 room nights and feels sure this was an application error. She said the number should be moved back to 40 for room nights. Ms. Gosnell stated that she would like to note that the Committee appreciates the very diverse funding strategies, as they have a very substantial list of sponsors and have set their ticket prices to accommodate cost coverage. She said they have also reached out to Charleston County for ATAC funding.

G. College of Charleston Softball Program

Ms. Gosnell stated that this program has a great deal of high season dates. Ms. Hartman stated that she appreciates that all the teams are from out of state; however, she did not feel as if it was true marketing. Ms. Gosnell stated that all of the marketing goes out of town and unlike many events, they do not advertise locally. Mr.

McLeod stated that there are a number of various dates. Ms. Craven stated that this is how many dates these games are played.

H. 2019 Southeastern Wildlife Exposition

Ms. Gosnell stated that SEWE has two projects; there is a \$15,000 request for their expo and a \$25,000 request for the sculpture exhibit and will address them one at a time.

Ms. Sims clarified that they were presented together; however, they are two distinct events.

Ms. Gosnell stated that on the Sculpture Project, this is a joint effort between the Town of Mount Pleasant and the Wildlife Expo in partnership with its artists and Brookgreen Gardens to bring nationally known sculptures into Mount Pleasant.

Ms. Sims stated that on the Sculpture Project, the applicant has applied under a festival or event. She said it would be up to the Committee if they wish to change this designation.

Ms. Gosnell stated that she believes that the Town's Cultural, Arts and Pride Commission (CAP) will work with them to create an event around the Town.

Mr. McLeod stated that they are truly doubling down on the SEWE's success, therefore, putting this as a cultural arts project and recognizing it for that value. He said the applicant also made it seem to be a very short time period, but his understanding is that these sculptures will be here until someone wishes to remove them. He said there are some items on the application that he may have scored differently. He does not believe that piggy-backing this as an event is the correct way to do this.

Ms. Gosnell agreed and asked if it would be the consensus of the Committee to grade this as a "cultural event".

Committee members agreed.

Ms. Gosnell stated that the CAP Commission is working on creating visual arts in Mount Pleasant. To begin diversifying the way Mount Pleasant is being promoted, not just as a place for boats and a destination on the way to the beaches, but to come to the Town for the sake of “art”. She stated that this event folds into this campaign.

Ms. Hartman stated that she agrees with the initiative; however, by the parameters defined by “economic impact”, she does not believe it is a direct result, although she is agreeable with funding it at the full amount requested.

Ms. Sims asked if the economic development category will be left without a score.

Ms. Gosnell stated that it will be discussed when funding is determined, because she agrees with Ms. Hartman’s point of view and would like the record to reflect this, so they will understand that this is an issue they need to work on.

I. 2019 Charleston Challenge Cup

Ms. Gosnell noted that on their marketing, they primarily do digital marketing to their customer base and are looking at 100,000 impressions primarily out of town.

Mr. McLeod stated that this is also where the parents receive the scores and schedules of teams playing.

Ms. Gosnell stated that out of 4,800 participants, they will have approximately half coming from out of town. Their methodology for reaching that group is through digital marketing.

J. 2019 Charleston Spring Shootout

Ms. Gosnell stated that this is primarily a “heads-in-beds” applicant. She said they primarily do digital marketing as well.

K. Mount Pleasant Symphony Orchestra

Ms. Gosnell stated that this is a cultural event and does not have a room night scoring. She stated that this is an event where scoring will not determine the final outcome. She asked Committee members if they would consider funding at the full requested amount when they begin the final tabulations. She stated that the Committee recognizes that without previous data, they are not able to provide accurate information; however, will be reviewing ticket sales and a diversified funding source information in the next series. She stated that the Committee will view this as an investment into their launch in Mount Pleasant.

L. College of Charleston Beach Volleyball Tournament

Ms. Gosnell stated that this group did not attend; therefore, no funding will be provided.

M. Cooper River Bridge Run

Ms. Gosnell stated that all Committee members agreed to potential funding of 100% of the cap amount of \$25,000.

N. Sperry Charleston Race Week

Ms. Gosnell stated that last year, the Committee granted funding of \$15,000 and they are currently requesting \$25,000. Ms. Gosnell stated that \$25,000 is the maximum amount allowable, unless there are extenuating circumstances. She said for example, the Town invests more funding in the 4th of July application from Patriots Point Development Authority, because it is a partnership with the Town. She said if the Town attempted to coordinate this event solely, the expense would be far greater.

O. Charleston Tallship Festival

Ms. Gosnell stated that this event will be moving from North Charleston to Mount Pleasant. She was surprised to see their numbers hold when they moved from downtown Charleston to North Charleston. She stated that they still drew a number of attendees. She believes this will have an enormous impact on the

Town of Mount Pleasant, because it will draw as much, if not more than North Charleston.

P. Cry Joy Park: Gardens of Dark and Light

Ms. Gosnell stated that the Committee has decided that no funding will be granted. The Committee appreciates their cultural contributions to the lowcountry; however, the Committee was unable to find any information in the application or the presentation that indicates whether this event would generate tourism in Mount Pleasant.

Q. Munchkin Radio Plays

Ms. Gosnell stated that this was addressed earlier in the agenda.

R. Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Festival

Ms. Gosnell stated that Councilman O'Rourke stated that he would push forward at the Town level to see if there is another entity to pick this project up and keep it moving forward. She suggested that the Committee recommend full funding pending the solution presented by Town Council to keep the festival in place. She asked that this be in the form of a motion.

Ms. Hartman moved to fund the full amount of \$10,000 for the Sweetgrass Cultural Arts festival, contingent upon the leadership and the continued guidance of the festival; seconded by Ms. Craven. All present voted in favor.

Ms. Gosnell stated that the Committee will now review the scores for each applicant beginning with the USS Yorktown Foundation – Vietnam Photographic Exhibit. She stated that they scored 39 out of 100, as they were not considered a Cultural Arts event.

Ms. Sims concurred.

Mr. McLeod stated that he thought there was discussion that this would be considered a Cultural event.

Ms. Hartman stated that the formula will need to be changed.

Ms. Sims asked if the Committee is considering this a cultural event.

Committee members agreed that it should be considered a cultural event.

Ms. Gosnell asked Ms. Sims to advise the Cooper River Bridge Run that \$25,000 is the funding maximum.

Ms. Gosnell stated that Charleston Race Week the funding would jump from \$15,000 to \$25,000 considering current scoring.

She stated that what is currently being funded at the maximum level are Charleston Wine and Food, SEWE, Cooper River Bridge Run and asked if Race Week was at the same level.

Ms. Craven stated that it is between the Lowcountry Oyster Festival and the \$25,000 maximum when you look at the room nights being generated. She stated that the event is growing and that they want to make the event extend to an entire week which would increase it tremendously. She does not believe it has quite the impact that the Bridge Run and SEWE have at this time.

Ms. Hartman stated that as far as economic impact in Mount Pleasant, it has more than Charleston Wine and Food has on heads-in-beds and revenue generator. She said this should be seed funding contingent on it growing to the full week, because it will double the impact that Charleston Race Week has. She said they need the funding to get this message out to the participants in order to make this event even more successful. She looks at the increase this year based on the anticipation of this event growing to be a full week event.

Mr. McLeod stated that they want to have a week-long event, but it will not be this year.

Ms. Hartman stated that they will need to build the marketing for the week-long event next year. She stated that Randy Draft has been to France and all over the country attempting to pull this tournament

here, which takes time. She said Mr. Draft is using this year to build it for a week-long event next year.

Mr. McLeod stated that it is a significant jump.

Mr. Patel stated that comparing to other events that are provided full maximum funding, he believes it is on par with those events as far as importance to Mount Pleasant. He said it is difficult to quantify and compare to something like the Cooper River Bridge Run but believes that it is justifiable to grant maximum funding based on an event that brings in more international media members, compared to Bridge Run, which has economic impact. He stated that it is more of an event for spectators than it is for participants. He stated that this event has more diversity in the people that it is attracting. He stated that this is a signature event for Mount Pleasant.

Ms. Hartman stated that it is one of the premier events and does not put it on the same scale as the Lowcountry Oyster Roast. She said this should be in anticipation or support of this event growing so a precedent is not set.

Ms. Gosnell stated that in their notes, to advise Mr. Draft that the Town sees this as an investment year and that the Committee would not anticipate necessarily granting him the \$25,000 next year unless he is able to demonstrate that this event is growing.

Mr. Patel stated that Mr. Draft has historically done so, which is why it is seen in the numbers he has provided. He said if Mr. Draft is going to follow his projections for the next five years, this event is going to continue to get much bigger.

Ms. Hartman stated that Mr. Draft is also looking at major sponsorships.

Ms. Gosnell stated that Mr. Draft does draw international media into Mount Pleasant.

After review and discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend to Council the following funding:

**ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE
 FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FY 18.19 BUDGET**

December 11, 2018

EVENT	FY 17.18 FUNDING	REQUESTED AMOUNT	COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS	BEGINNING FUND BALANCE
				\$144,800
Charleston Waterfront Pass	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$144,800
Vietnam Photographic Exhibit	\$0	\$7,000	\$4,000	\$140,800
Charleston Jazz Festival	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$140,800
Lowcountry Oyster Festival	\$9,700	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$130,800
College of Charleston Softball Tournaments	\$5,700	\$7,500	\$5,000	\$125,800
SEWE Expo	\$14,250	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$110,800
SEWE Sculpture Exhibit	\$0	\$25,000	\$10,000	\$110,800
2019 Charleston Challenge Cup	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$1,000	\$99,800
Charleston spring Shootout	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$98,800
Mount Pleasant Symphony Orchestra Concerts	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$91,300
Charleston Food + Wine Festival	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$71,300
CofC Beach Volleyball Tournaments	\$0	\$3,000	\$0	\$71,300
Cooper River Bridge Run	\$25,000	\$35,000	\$25,000	\$46,300
Sperry Charleston Race Week	\$15,000	\$25,000	\$22,000	\$24,300
Charleston Tallship Festival	\$0	\$15,000	\$10,000	\$14,300
Cry Joy Park: Gardens of Dark & Light	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$14,300
Munchkin Radio Plays	\$0	\$6,000	\$1,500	\$12,800
Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Festival	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$2,800
TOTALS		\$218,500	\$142,000	\$2,800

Ms. Gosnell stated that Deputy CFO, Jonathan Edwards assured her that there will be sufficient funding for the major requests at the next cycle.

II. Adjourn

There being no further business, meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
 Barbara Ashe
 November 16, 2018

DRAFT