

TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND
State Accommodation Tax Committee Meeting
Council Chambers Meeting Room
November 14, 2024, 1:00 pm

Minutes

I. Call to Order: *Mr. Farrell called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.*

II. Roll Call:

Present at Meeting: Luke Farrell, *Chairman*
Amy Anderson
David Wohl
Don Semmler
Jodi Rush
Kelly Sach
Roger Warren
Steven Ellis

Also Present: Stephanie Tillerson, *Town Administrator*
Dorota Szubert, *Finance Director*
Tripp Hays, *Charleston Area Visitors' Bureau*

III. Approval of Minutes:

A. SATAX Meeting Minutes of June 17, 2024

Mr. Wohl made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2024, SATAX Committee meeting. Mr. Ellis seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

IV. Old Business:

None

V. New Business:

A. Charleston Area Visitors Bureau (CVB) Presentation

Chairman Farrell introduced the presentation from the Charleston Visitors Bureau, noting the spectacular slide presentation he had seen.

Mr. Hays discussed the progress of the new Kiawah-specific program called Adara. The completed video project was initiated by a conversation with the Mayor, who mentioned an idea of doing something in the space of nature, conservation, and wildlife. The 12-month project involved significant resources and support to capture incredible footage.

Mr. Hays presented a clip of the video.

Adam and Chris from Blue Ion provide an update on the Adara program and a new campaign specific to beaches.

Adara is the largest travel data aggregator, providing access to hotel information, booking data, and more. The initial campaign, a five-month push for \$30,000, targeting room night bookings to hotels, saw 3.5 million impressions but only 11 trackable bookings to the Andell Inn and \$7,000 in revenue. The campaign did not meet the expected performance, with only 42 confirmed bookings and 79 travelers to Charleston. The data missing from the Resort and a longer booking window were identified as potential reasons for the low performance.

The Committee Members engaged in an in-depth discussion of the reasons for the low performance, recommendations, and the possibility of trying new approaches.

Adam introduces a new OTT (over-the-top) advertising campaign with Sinclair Broadcasting, targeting beaches in and around Charleston. The campaign has reached 334,000 households since September 4th, with a 98% video completion rate.

B. November Applications for Fiscal Year 2024/2025

Project	Applicant Sponsor	November 2024/2025 Requested Amount
Destination Marketing & Advertising	Andell Inn	\$ 120,000.00
Enhanced Video Equipment	Barrier Island Ocean Rescue	\$ 78,785.42
Freshfields Village + Garden & Gun / Event Partnership	Freshfields Village / Freshfileds (EDENS) LLC	\$ 25,128.00
Marketing of KI Events and Holiday Programing	Kiawah Island Golf Resort	\$ 200,000.00
Continued Outreach with the Dolphin Education Program	Lowcountry Marine Mammal Network	\$ 1,500.00
Channel Realignment at the East End of Kiawah Island	Town of Kiawah Island	\$ 77,000.00
Leisure Trail Improvements	Town of Kiawah Island	\$ 70,000.00
Traffic Monitoring	Town of Kiawah Island	\$ 26,195.00
Totals		\$ 598,608

Andell Inn - Destination Marketing & Advertising

Lena Zobec from Andell Inn presented a \$120,000.00 request for three marketing campaigns for 2025, including Google ads, direct media spending, and website content refresh, citing a 10:1 return on investment.

The Committee Members discussed funding general marketing and the need for a strategic approach to budget allocation. Also highlighted was the importance of balancing general marketing with specific events and infrastructure projects. The Members agreed to the need to have a future meeting to discuss a philosophical approach to spending and long-term strategic planning.

The Committee Members engaged in an in-depth discussion of one of the goals and objectives provided in the project description: to increase annual visitors by 4500 and generate additional revenue of 400,000.

Barrier Island Ocean Rescue - Enhanced Video Equipment

Michael Sosnowski from Barrier Island Ocean Rescue presented a \$120,00.00 request for enhancement of the Public Safety drone that has become instrumental not only for rescue situations but also for daily operations and special events. The presentation described the equipment, including a Starlink package, a drone camera upgrade, a spotlight, and an additional controller.

Committee Members discussed the ownership and logistics of the equipment, considering the contractor status of the rescue team.

Freshfields Village - Garden & Gun / Event Partnership

Copeland Knapp from Edens discussed the success of the Garden and Gun event partnership and requested an additional \$25,128.00 in funding for the March event. She provided a video discussing that the October event saw over 3500 visitors, a 66% increase of visitors for that same day from 2023, with significant increases in sales and visitor engagement. She also reviewed data obtained through Placer.ai, an online tool that tracks foot traffic.

Ms. Knapp indicated that the March event, which includes music and food, is a significant draw for visitors and explained that the event would not have been possible without the additional funding from SATAX.

Kiawah Island Golf Resort - Marketing of KI Events and Holiday Programing

Elizabeth King, Director of Recreation for the Kiawah Island Golf Resort, highlighted the importance of public access events, which are free and open to all guests, especially during holidays. She presented a slide show and discussed the upcoming Thanksgiving and Christmas programming, which includes over 34 hours of holiday events, and requested \$200,000 for marketing these events and promoting Kiawah Island.

Lowcountry Marine Mammal Network - Continued Outreach with the Dolphin Education Program

Lauren Rust from the Lowcountry Marine Mammal Network discussed the dolphin education program in the Kiawah Inlet, which provides educational resources and signage for visitors, requesting \$1,500.00 to maintain and replace worn-out signs and brochures that are distributed throughout the island.

Chairman Farrell encouraged Ms. Rust to think broadly about expanding the program, increasing the volunteer program, and creating an education program that would help both protect the dolphin environment and enhance education and understanding. Also discussed was the balance between attracting visitors and providing educational resources without increasing visitor impact on the dolphins.

TOKI - Channel Permitting and Beach Renourishment

Mr. Jordan, the Town Biologist, presented a request for channel permitting to address beach erosion, explaining the process of renourishing the beach by closing off a flushing channel and opening a new one further to the East, allowing all that sand to attach to the shoreline and naturally renourish the beach.. The project is estimated to cost \$77,000 for permitting, with additional costs for construction and mitigation.

Mr. Warren discussed his experiences with both the 2006 and 2015 renourishment projects and would be involved in contributing to help defray the cost for this renourishment. Chairman Farrell emphasized the importance of the project for preserving the beach and habitat and the Town's support for the project and sharing the cost.

TOKI - Leisure Trail Improvements Traffic Monitoring

Mr. Gottshalk discussed the need for improvements to the leisure trails on Kiawah Island Parkway and Beachwalker Drive. Currently, areas on both leisure trails are holding water after a rain event, and areas on Beachwalker Drive are experiencing root intrusion. He requested \$70,000 for milling and regrading sections of the trails to address ponding and root damage.

Committee Members discussed the scope and estimated cost of the project and, with the potential of road improvements on the Parkway, whether the improvements would be temporary or permanent repairs.

TOKI - Traffic Monitoring

Mr. Gottshalk discussed the data recently collected on the Parkway, showing vehicles traveling too fast, specifically through the Mingo Curve. He presented a proposal for traffic monitoring equipment, including speed monitoring signs, stealth boxes, and a message board, to help mitigate

speeding and to improve safety and traffic flow. The total cost for the traffic monitoring equipment is \$37,422, with a request for \$26,195 to cover 70% of the cost.

Following the presentations, Committee Members were asked to complete their voting forms, which Ms. Szubert would collect and would tally the votes.

Ms. Szubert reviewed the funding recommendations as follows:

✚ Destination Marketing and Advertising			
Andell Inn			
Requested:	\$120,000.00		
Recommend Funding:		\$67,000.00	
✚ Enhanced Video Equipment			
Barrier Island Ocean Rescue			
Requested:	\$78,785.42		
Recommend Funding:		\$78,154.00	
✚ Freshfields Village + Garden & Gun / Event Partnership			
Freshfields Village / Freshfields (EDENS) LLC			
Requested:	\$25,128.00		
Recommend Funding:		\$25,128.00	
✚ Marketing of Kiawah Island Events and Holiday Programming			
Kiawah Island Golf Resort			
Requested:	\$200,000.00		
Recommend Funding:		\$192,000.00	
✚ Continued Outreach with the Dolphin Education Program			
Lowcountry Marine Mammal Network			
Requested:	\$1,500.00		
Recommend Funding:		\$1,500.00	
✚ Channel Realignment at the East End of Kiawah Island			
Town of Kiawah Island			
Requested:	\$77,000.00		
Recommend Funding:		\$77,000.00	
✚ Leisure Trail Improvements			
Town of Kiawah Island			
Requested:	\$70,000.00		
Recommend Funding:		\$70,000.00	
✚ Traffic Monitoring			
Town of Kiawah Island			
Requested:	\$26,195.00		
Recommend Funding:		\$26,163.00	
TOTAL RECOMMENDED FUNDING:		\$535,945.00	

Ms. Szubert stated that with a total of \$1,000,00.00 available for allocation, the funding recommendations total \$535,945.00, leaving \$464,035.00 that will roll over to the next year. Once approved, the recommendations would be presented to the Ways and Means Committee at their December meeting. Committee members agreed with the funding recommendation amounts.

Mr. Ellis made a motion to recommend to the Ways and Means Committee the funding allocation amounts as listed. Ms. Anderson seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

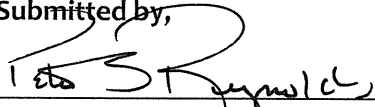
VI. Citizens' Comments:

None

VII. Adjournment:

Chairman Farrell adjourned the meeting at 3:13 pm.

Submitted by,



Petra S. Reynolds, Town Clerk

Approved on: 3/10/2025