

TOURISM EXPENDITURE REVIEW COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
February 28, 2008
Room 4a2, SCDOR
11 a.m.

TERC called a special meeting to discuss business carried forward from its meeting on Monday, February 25 due to lack of a quorum. Damita Jeter posted this open meeting on its website as well as at the SCDOR building. The following were present via telephone: Susie Surkamer, Kevin Yokim, John Curry, Frans Mustert, Ed Riggs, Mark Williams. Mrs. Jeter corresponded via telephone in room 4a2 of the SCDOR building.

1. Edisto Beach. The Edisto Beach Local Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee is concerned with the timing of land purchased by the Town to construct a “shrimping museum.” An application was not submitted to the advisory committee until the property transaction had been completed. In its meeting on February 25, Mr. Curry voted to send a letter to the Town of Edisto Beach that it appears that the Bell Buoy property was closed on prior to the Town sending an atax application to the advisory committee. Should this be the case, this would be an inappropriate procedure per Section 6-4-25 (A).

That motion, however, was tabled until TERC’s meeting on Thursday, February 28. After discussion and review from subsequent information from the Town, it appears that funds have not yet been expended. It is simply the Town’s intent to use the funds in this manner. Additionally, Mayor Burley Lyons explained that atax funds have not yet been committed. After consultation with its attorney, it appears that since funds have not yet been expended, the advisory committee would need to consider the Town’s application. Additionally, since the bond issue did not contemplate the use of funds before the passing of the bond, then funds cannot be used to retire the debt principal, but may be used for the interest. Mr. Curry re-stated his motion that in light of this new information, and since it appears no accommodations tax funds have been spent on the project, the local accommodations tax committee must review the application and make a recommendation to council, who in turn, must consider the committee’s recommendation. TERC would like to stay comprised of any action taken on the issue and the expenditure will be under further review when reported on the Town’s FY 07-08 Accommodations Tax Reporting Form, due in the fall of 2008. The motion passed unanimously by TERC.

In addition to its review of the Bell Buoy issue, TERC noted that several committee members were not compliant due to their lack of involvement in property rental and/or management. Therefore, TERC will ask the Town to re-evaluate the makeup of the local advisory committee and its compliance with Section 6-4-25 (A).

2. City of Beaufort: In its December meeting, TERC voted to withhold funds of \$1000 from the Ladys Island Garden Club for an expenditure that appeared to be research of trees. Based on the additional information sent to TERC, the funds were for brochures given to tourists. Therefore, TERC voted unanimously to reverse its original decision. It will not direct the State Treasurer’s Office to withhold funds.

3. Gaffney: In its December meeting, TERC voted to withhold funds for the Downtown Gaffney Business Association being for profit. However, Gaffney mailed us additional information that proved the for profit report was in error. They are nonprofit registered with the Secretary of State's office. Therefore, TERC voted to unanimously reverse its original decision.

4. Ridgeland : In its December meeting, TERC voted to withhold funds for the Holiday Trail of Lights. Ridgeland asked us to reconsider stating that the event is free of charge and is one of their biggest tourism draws, and although its does not have a good handle on exactly how many tourists it brings in, it feels sure many of the 5,000 to 6,000 attendees are tourists. TERC voted to reverse its decision, however, it will encourage the Town to keep better attendance records.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Damita S. Jeter