

MINUTES

Town of Pawleys Island

Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee

December 1, 2022, at 9:30 a.m.

Pawleys Island Town Hall

In attendance:

Pawleys Island A-tax Advisory Committee members: Robert Levine (chair), Betsy Altman, Bill Caughman, Will Dieter, Corrine Taylor, Sassy Henry, and Eddie Wilder

Chamber staff: President and CEO Beth Stedman, Director of Tourism Development Mark Stevens, Tourism Manager Clayton Stairs

Media: Charles Swenson (Coastal Observer)

Town of Pawleys Island attendees: Mayor Brian Henry and Town Administrator Daniel Newquist

Presenters: Kat Harris with Pineapple Public Relations, and T.J. Fletcher and Lauren Hartog with Madden Media

The meeting was called to order by Robert Levine at 9:36 a.m. A quorum was present. Levine made the statement of FOIA compliance.

Betsy Altman made a motion to approve the agenda for this meeting. Will Dieter seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

Dieter made a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting on November 9, 2021. Altman seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

Daniel Newquist stated that no Accommodations Tax requests were received by the November 8, 2022, deadline and those funds can be used by the town for tourism-related reasons, including police, marketing and beautification, which the town took over last year.

After some discussion about using funds for the south end parking lot and the Birds Nest section of the island, Sassy Henry made a motion to approve the Town of Pawleys Island using the Atax funds for tourism-related reasons. Eddie Wilder seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

Mark Stevens introduced Kat Harris with Pineapple Public Relations who presented the Social Media Report. She said in February Facebook followers increased by 25% and impressions were up 74%. Instagram fans were up 26%.

Harris said the Pawleys Island engagement rate was 4%, which is well above industry standards. The email marketing campaign showed an average open rate up 12% and the numbers of subscribers up 40%. She said the top post for the year showed 4,300 organic engagements.

Lauren Hartog with Madden Media presented the OnlyPawleys website report. Hartog said the website had 82,000 users and there was a huge spike in organic traffic.

She said the searches used to find the website included Pawleys Island, things to do in Pawleys Island, and Pawleys Island rentals. Hartog stated that people seem to be very engaged on the website.

Hartog said there is a generational story on the website about a family who has vacationed for decades on Pawleys Island.

Stevens gave some examples of print pieces that have helped promote Pawleys Island. He said an Our State article had the headline "A Shining Star on South Carolina's Hammock Coast..." It was a two-page advertorial which cost about \$15,000, but they were able to share that cost with the Hammock Coast.

Stevens presented his Director's Report. He said there were 17 press releases added to the OnlyPawleys website, which was up from the previous year.

He stated that Southern Living Magazine had an article that included Pawleys Island titled "Top Tropical Island Getaways." Other magazines featuring Pawleys Island were Golf Digest and U.S. News and World Report. He added that Sea View Inn, on Pawleys Island, was featured on the front of Guest Quest Magazine.

Beth Stedman shared the Financial Report and Budget with the committee. She said expenses have increased since she and Stevens are trying to increase print and digital ads for Pawleys Island and the Hammock Coast. Stedman said they have talked about a targeted campaign in the Knoxville, Tennessee area with print, digital, radio and geofencing. She said the Hammock Coast did something similar in the Philadelphia area with geofencing and it was successful in bringing people here.

Stedman said that would totally depend on Atax funding and it can be adjusted. After some discussion, Wilder made a motion to approve the budget as presented. Bill Caughman seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

There was no old business. Under new business, Stevens said the committee needed to set up a calendar for meetings in 2023. He said they usually meet quarterly, but at least 3 times per year. He suggested they meet in March, September and November, on Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m.

The committee agreed.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.