

COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

Council Members:

Roy Costner, Chairman
Chris Bowers, Vice Chairman
Wes Hendricks, Vice Chairman Pro-Tem
Trey Whitehurst
Carl Hudson
Ensley Feemster

Staff in Attendance:

Gerald Wilson, County Administrator
Ken Roper, County Attorney
Meagan Bradford, Clerk to Council
Mike Hayes, Risk Manager
Creed Hashe, Chief Deputy
Jay Pitts, Director of Tourism
Jamie Burns, Community Relations Manager

Guests in Attendance:

Heidi Williams, Green Crescent Trail
Chad Carson, Green Crescent Trail

The Committee of the Whole met in the Main Conference Room, at the Pickens County Administration Facility, on Monday, September 17, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. All members of the committee were in attendance with Chairman Roy Costner presiding.

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Roy Costner called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order. Councilman Carl Hudson led the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE:

Chairman Roy Costner stated the first item for discussion is Log No. 104, Green Crescent Trail.
Green Crescent Trail – Log No. 104

- Gerald Wilson introduced Heidi Williams, Secretary of Green Crescent Trail and Chad Carson, Founding President of Green Crescent Trail.
- Heidi Williams stated that she serves on the board for the Green Crescent Trail. She further stated that Green Crescent Trail was founded around 4 years ago and is a 501-C3 non-profit organization. She explained that the goal was to create a multi-use network of pedestrian and cyclist pathways in and around the greater Clemson area. She stated that her organization would like to give Council a framework of what the goal would look like. She thanked Council for funding the feasibility study for the Green Crescent Trail. She reported they were able to have that study executed due to receiving the recreation funding and having support from the City of Clemson and Town of Central. She reported that this project sets forth around 40 miles worth of trails that are designed to connect the many assets that are in and around the Clemson area, such as parks, lakes, beaches, a great public University. These assets would not be accessible without getting in a car. She introduced Chad Carson and informed Council that they are available for questions in the future.
- Chad Carson launched a presentation. He stated that Green Crescent Trail is an

COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

organization made of citizens of Pickens County, mostly from the Central/Clemson area which is where they first started. Green Crescent Trail sees their mission as making our community a better place to live, learn, work and play. He further stated that they are believers in this kind of public infrastructure and other positive efforts that affect economically, tourism, quality of life, etc. He shared that the vision of Green Crescent Trail is to connect all the places that are already here. He asserted that our county is amazing, but one of the deficiencies that they've identified is that a person can live in a house with a park only a ¼ mile away, yet getting to that park is not safe for most people. He declared that they want to make those small connections safer for citizens. He stated the vision they have for that is not only specific kind of trails, but also greenways and streets with a bike lane or sidewalk in some areas. Another vision would be connecting the public transits, such as commuting. He stated that the feasibility study was completed in 2016, with the majority of funding having been contributed by Pickens County, Town of Central, City of Clemson and Southern Wesleyan. He shared that they tried to get feedback from local town meetings about what community assets the citizens think are important. He related that it came down to parks, downtown areas, universities and schools, historical and cultural attractions, local libraries, forests, natural areas and residential areas. He stated that the bulk of the \$55,000 feasibility study was funded by the Pickens County Recreation funding. The feasibility study is the planning document and the vision for what they hope to eventually bring to reality for Pickens County. He further stated that the feasibility study broke the entire area down into road segments. Mr. Carson presented pictures for a brief visual of their vision for Hwy 93 (Central to SWU), Downtown Central, Hwy 93 (Central to Clemson), Berkeley Drive, and Pendleton Road. He explained that they are a small volunteer team and have three main goals that they think will help the implement of the vision. The three goals are Political Advocacy, Promotion and Communications, and Resource Development.

- After much more discussion, Councilman Wes Hendricks asked Mr. Carson where Green Crescent Trails was at as far as getting the fiscal items completed.
- Mr. Carson stated that this fall, the Hwy 93 route is their number one priority. He shared that the Town of Central applied for a grant last year that they did not get. He explained that getting that grant would have helped them get the Hwy 93 segment done. He informed that the other project in Central that they would like to complete this fall is a section where there are already some sewer easements the Town of Central has near the Central-Clemson Recreation center. They could put gravel down or have trails there. He stated that in Clemson, they would like to have restriping done on Hwy 93 and Berkeley Drive. He stated that they asked the City Planner in Clemson and it seems to be a project of approximately \$300,000-\$400,000 between both roads. He stated that the DOT does not have any plans to restripe, so it will have to be a local project.
- Councilman Trey Whitehurst asked if they have reached out to their local delegation on the restriping.
- Mr. Carson stated yes, they met recently.
- Councilman Trey Whitehurst announced that is who they need to push on.
- Chairman Roy Costner asked if they are applying for the grants, or are they primarily using it through the city.
- Ms. Williams stated they met with ACOG.
- Councilman Carl Hudson asked if they will be applying for a grant this year.
- Ms. Williams stated yes. She further stated that some grants were previously awarded to Clemson so they try to collaborate in such a way that one year Clemson will apply, and the next Central.
- Chairman Roy Costner commented that he is wondering what we heard on a Federal level. He stated he wasn't sure if the senator or a congressman can help

COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

with the funding.

- Ms. Williams explained that the restrictions on applying for federal funding are so cumbersome in terms of who can actually perform the work. She stated it makes it more expensive than if you were to find private funding dollars. She further stated they have been encouraged to look for funding locally.
- Councilman Trey Whitehurst added that another thing to consider is they have ACOG, which is urban funds and GPATS is rural funds. They are two separate entities with two separate grants. He stated both of those are funding sources they should look into because they have certain demographics to qualify for each one.
- After much more discussion, Ms. Williams stated she will be sending an email to Council with their contact information for any additional questions. Ms. Williams and Mr. Carson thanked Council for having them.

❖ No action taken by committee.

Tour of New Jail – Log No. 103

- Chairman Costner stated due to Hurricane Florence's weather last week and it being muddy at the new jail, we will be moving the Tour of the New Jail to the next Committee of the Whole meeting on October 15, 2018.

Executive Session

- Chairman Roy Costner called for a motion to convene into Executive Session as defined by S.C. Code of Laws, Section 30-4-70 (a), to discuss Boards and Commissions.
 - Motion was made by Councilman Wes Hendricks, seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously, to convene in executive session for the stated purpose.

2018 Accommodations of Tax Recommendations – Log No. 102

- Chairman Roy Costner called the Committee of the Whole meeting back to order. He stated the final item to discuss this evening is the 2018 Accommodations of Tax Recommendations, Log No. 102.
- Administrator Gerald Wilson stated that County Attorney Ken Roper has been working with the ATAX Committee on this report and will be speaking in regards to this report.
- Attorney Ken Roper explained these recommendations were brought to council because the statute requires the committee to review the applications and make recommendations. He reported that one issue the committee dealt with is they knew that they had around \$105,000 to work with; they made several decisions based on this number. Since the time that the committee made their recommendations, it was learned from Finance that there is actually \$143,000 available in the account. He stated that based on the recommendations, the committee can move forward and decide whether or not to keep some of that money in the reserve, or use it on some of the applications that were not fully funded and/or funded at all. He shared that he has the written applications that were received with him tonight.
- Chairman Roy Costner announced he would like council to consider they are getting back more information from ATAX Committee than they ever have, but it still is not complete.

COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

- Councilman Trey Whitehurst stated last year, they asked the ATAX Committee specifically to please come back to council and show how this increased “heads in beds” in Pickens County hotels.
- Ken Roper stated that based on the input from June 2017 meeting, the ATAX Committee added that information to the application. He shared that some of that data is there, while acknowledging that there is always room for improvement. He further stated that information is not in the draft summary of the report. The draft summary gives an overview of each event/project.
- Chairman Roy Costner commented that this is similar to the same thing Council does when approving recreation funding. He explained that when someone sends in an application for recreation funding; they have to give a detailed summary of why they need the money and what they are going to spend it on.
- Mr. Roper remarked that it is asked if they have received accommodations tax funding in years prior on the application. He expressed that a lot of the applicants are not giving enough on the application, even though they know it will be a good use of money.
- Councilman Trey Whitehurst stated we should be able to get data from hotels.
 - After more discussion, Councilman Wes Hendricks made a motion to consider giving some accommodation tax funding for the Holly Springs Center. Chairman Roy Costner seconded the motion, but stated he is not ready for council to vote since they need to see more information first.
- Chairman Roy Costner declared that he wanted to draw Council’s attention to the purpose of the Accommodations Tax. In the Accommodations Tax Committee Report, it states:

The purpose of the Accommodations Tax is to attract or provide for tourism, which is defined by state law as “action and activities of people taking trips outside their home communities for any purpose, except daily commuting to and from work.” The SC Department of Parks, Recreation, & Tourism use a “50 Mile Rule” of thumb for a distance traveled by a tourist under this definition. As further clarification of the definition of a tourist, Pickens County Council directed that all applications for ATAX funding should include an estimate, based on solid analysis, projecting hotel room nights generated by each applicant.

- After more discussion, Mr. Costner asserted that in looking at the core of what the ATAX Committee is supposed to be recommending, he believes this opens the door for Council to look at the recommendations and make some adjustments.
- Councilman Trey Whitehurst agreed. He stated we, as a council, have a responsibility for these ATAX funds to be utilized in the manner as Mr. Costner read above. He further stated, outside of all political things, it is all about returning the money back to where it came from. He declared this should be the focus.
- After more discussion, Councilman Carl Hudson observed that it sounds like applicants are not turning in specific information. He stated that if they want the money, then they should adhere to the rules and be specific when applying.

COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers asked Mr. Roper if the money has to be to a non-profitable organization.
 - Mr. Roper stated there is nothing in the statute that says it has to be non-profit. He further stated that 30% of the money has to go towards tourism promotion.
 - Vice Chairman Chris Bowers commented that Easley Gymnastics is a business looking on put on an event. He stated that the business is going to host a sanctioned regional tournament and anticipates that 80% participation will be tourists. He further stated that this means 80% of participants will need a place to stay, which means they will most likely use hotels.
 - Councilman Wes Hendricks added that the same can be said about Senior League World Series, Clemson Rowing Competition, etc.
 - Councilman Trey Whitehurst inquired that if one business is funded, will it open the door to other businesses to apply for funding for events.
 - Attorney Ken Roper stated the committee's approach was that these businesses are for-profit businesses, not non-profit. He informed that the law in this section states that it has to be for promotion of arts and culture, construction maintenance of facilities, public facilities, shuttle services, etc. He continued that it does not say a for-profit business is disqualified. However, the committee stated that is not what the ATAX funding is for.
 - Councilman Trey Whitehurst asked if we could reach out to other counties about their ATAX Funding, like Myrtle Beach and Charleston, to see how they handle these situations.
 - After much more discussion, Councilman Wes Hendricks made a motion to withdraw his first motion mentioned above. Councilman Hendricks made a new motion for 2018 Accommodations of Tax Recommendations to remain in Committee; that whether or not to contribute to the Holly Springs Center and/or some of the other organizations would be based on obtaining further data. Councilman Ensley Feemster seconded and motion carried 6-0.
- ❖ Committee recommends moving this discussion to the next council meeting on October 1, 2018. Motion was made by Chairman Roy Costner, seconded by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers and motion carried 6-0.

ADJOURN:

Hearing no further Committee business, Chairman Roy Costner called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers, seconded by Councilman Wes Hendricks and carried unanimously. The Committee of the Whole stood adjourned at 7:58 p.m.