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## *The Advocate*

Newsletter of the Greater Island  
Council of Hilton Head and Bluffton

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### Announcement

Mike Bennett (pictured), CEO and Owner of i2recycle, is our guest speaker for the November GIC General Members Meeting. Mike will explain how he has developed a waste management program with an emphasis on reduction, reusing, and recycling.

The meeting is Thursday, November 7th beginning at 7:45 am. Please attend the meeting and take part in helping us transform our current waste management practices to more a sustainable path of waste reduction and recycling.



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# RESOLUTION

## Transportation Sales Tax Referendum Update

GIC is asking all members to advocate for the Referendum's passage using any and all social connections available to them. The GIC Executive Committee believes this referendum is critical to address the rapid growth our region has experienced and to preserve our quality of life.

### How We Got Here

On October 3, 2024, GIC members unanimously voted to pass a **Resolution** in support of the Beaufort County Transportation Sales & Use Tax Referendum (TST4) after extensive study by GIC's Regional Committee.

### What We Are Doing

The GIC Executive Committee authorized an ad supporting the Referendum in the 10/16 issue of the Bluffton Sun. GIC Chair, Lee Wilwerding, has submitted an article to the Bluffton Sun for that same issue and to the Hilton Head Sun for the November 1<sup>st</sup> issue. Tom Lennox wrote an Op-Ed for the Island Packet.

Peter Kristian has contacted his POA counterparts on the island to ask them to inform their residents. Andy Twisdale has reached out to his extensive social media networks. The Communication Committee sent a Press Release to the local media.

### What You Can Do

- Send an email to your contacts who live in Beaufort County. Here is sample of suggested [copy for a short email](#) and a sample for [a more detailed email](#). Just copy one of these and paste it into your email. If you are sending an email to a large group, remember to enter the recipient's email addresses as a **BCC** to protect everyone's privacy.
- Share our social media post on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [LinkedIn](#)
- Talk with friends and family about the importance of this Referendum. This is not a partisan issue. It is a quality of life and a safety issue.
- Get out to vote on or before November 5<sup>th</sup>.

### Resources

- [Greater Island Council Support Memo](#)
- [Beaufort County 2024 Transportation Sale & Use Tax Referendum Handout.](#)
- If you have additional questions, we encourage you to go to this [Beaufort County website page on the Referendum which allows you to submit questions.](#)
- [Jasper County Referendum Handout](#)



## Arts and Culture Thrive on Hilton Head Island

We are fortunate that from the earliest residents of Hilton Head Island to today, art, culture and history have been an important part of life here. It started with the Native indigenous tribes stone circles, followed by the Gullah people who brought a rich culture from Africa combined with their experience in slavery and the Reconstruction Era, continuing to weave in elements of modern culture up to today. Later settlers to the Island included artists drawn to the beauty and solitude and musicians and theater lovers who started Dunnigan's Alley, the Main Street Youth Theater, the Self Family Arts Center and many of our other current organizations. They continue to move here to work and live.

Did You Know?

The non-profit Arts & Culture industry in Hilton Head Island contributes:

- Almost \$40M in total industry expenditures,
- Over 900 full time equivalent jobs,
- Over \$20M to resident household incomes,
- Over \$1M to local government revenue and
- Almost \$4M in State government revenue.

In addition, 87% of Americans believe that Arts & Culture are important to Quality of Life. <sup>1</sup>

Thanks to the advocacy of many residents of the Island, the Town of Hilton Head Island has recently become an active and invested partner in supporting and helping the arts, culture and history organizations to provide a growing array of events and venues to enhance our lives and provide a significant economic boost. About two-thirds of the attendees at events are residents so this sector is focused on our local citizens and provides a foundation for attracting tourists that share in our values and respect our ecology and residents.

Today, our Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA), which was created in 2017 is the focal point for communication to residents, guests and the arts community. They have a mailing list of 5,600 people, whom they keep informed of upcoming events and through the Arts Council of Hilton Head encourage partnerships and collaboration among the close to 40 non-profits and individual artists, performers and musicians. For major events, emails go out to over 11,000 using the Town's subscriber list.

Beginning on October 10<sup>th</sup> through November 23<sup>rd</sup>, the OCA and the Arts Council of Hilton Head will sponsor the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Crescendo Arts Festival, with a kickoff party on October 15<sup>th</sup> at Shelter Cove Park from 5:30-7:30pm with music, food and artists selling their work. It is a wonderful event with giveaway bags to the first 200 attendees. The festival culminates on November 23<sup>rd</sup> with the famous Lantern Parade on the beach at Coligny. Be among the thousands of people carrying lanterns or just watching the spectacle. It ends at Celebration Park with a big party

with music, food trucks and mingling with friends from all over the island. Want to make a lantern and don't know how? Classes will be run all over the area.

It should be noted that there are wonderful arts communities and organizations in Bluffton, Beaufort and other areas of the Lowcountry. If you are visiting one of the areas off the Island, be sure to check the area's website for information on their arts and cultural offerings.

On Hilton Head Island, we celebrate our arts, culture and historical sites. Be a supporter by loving our organizations and making donations, attending their events, living the arts by participating as a novice or professional, and learning about them through lectures, classes and events. Lastly, let your voices be heard at Town Council meetings to let them know their investments in the arts are necessary and valued.

Find the Office of Cultural affairs at: <https://culturehhi.org> or on FB and Instagram. You can sign up for their bi-weekly newsletter, learn about our arts organizations, see schedules of events and be in the know all year.

<sup>1</sup>Above statistics are taken from the Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 report, 2019 by the Americans for the Arts.

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## Committee Reports



### Education Committee

The committee joined the Chamber's Business Education Partnership committee. The migration went well. A committee representative attended the meeting and updated the group on our childcare initiative. He conveyed the need to have the Chamber advocate for the employer's share of the costs. He also explained that the Chamber can play an important role at the state level for that portion of the cost. A

letter went to the Department of Child Welfare in early September. It might be necessary to pull Jeff Bradley and Shannon Erickson, our representatives to the State legislature back into the fray because Michael Leach, SC Director of Social Services hasn't responded yet. We also had a GIC member speaking to the SoLoCo board on the subject.



## Communications Committee

The committee is working on a press release pertaining to the transportation referendum. The committee was also tasked with developing an ad for the Bluffton Sun, on the same subject. The ad will drive readers to the article that was in the September Advocate on the subject of the transportation referendum. The article will reside on our website.



## Medical Committee

A new MRI is being constructed at Island Imaging, on Palmetto Parkway in Hilton Head. The nurse retention program is taking off with 51 retained and 20 new enrollments in nursing. The island is recruiting one new doctor and there is another prospect in the works. Novant is stepping up and out with community relations. One example is their sponsorship of a huge VIM gala.



## Parks and Recreation Committee

Michael Rosenfeld, Hilton Head Island Land Trust board member, attended a recent committee meeting. He talked about Land Trust protected properties: Fort Howell, Cypress Conservancy, Museum Street Property, Whooping Crane

Conservancy, and Northridge Tracks. The organization works year-round to protect, preserve, and conserve these properties. There's only one preserve outside of a gated community here on HHI.



## Government Watch

News from local and state agencies continues to be disseminated.



## Nominating Committee

The committee is looking for a new Vice Chair to replace Ray Warco. Ray will move to the GIC Chair position beginning January 2025. Lee Wilwerding's two-year term expires December 31st.

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## Monthly Members Meeting Speaker Recap

Marc Orlando (pictured), Town Manager of the Town of Hilton Head Island, was our GIC featured speaker on October 3, 2024.

After a brief overview of the island's history, and the Town's organization chart, he talked about where he has invested in staffing and resources in the last three years to support the Town's Strategic Plan.



Notable successes include the expansion of Fire and Rescue Services resulting in a cardiac arrest survival rate five times higher than the national average. Increasing Short Term Rental Code enforcement. Approval of the plans for the first Workforce Housing development. Funding of the Gullah-Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation Task Force and the Office of Cultural Affairs.

His presentation included a list of the Town Council's Strategies for 2023-2025 and fascinating demographic data. [Click here](#) see his full presentation.

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