

SHORT-TERM RENTAL AD-HOC COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The Short-Term Rental Ad-Hoc Committee met on Tuesday, June 4, at 12:00 noon in the POA Administration building to discuss bicycles, safety, and potential solutions. The meeting concluded at 1:40PM.

Attendees:

Gayle Cleaveland
Pattie Courtney
Jim Griner
Joe Homa

Doug Luba
Lee Smith
Bill Watkins
Andrew Schumacher

The Committee was joined by Frank Gaston, operator of Hilton Head Outfitters (HHO) and Rich Sanquist, operator of Hilton Head Bicycle Company (HHBC).

Frank and Rich estimated there are 50,000 bicycles on Hilton Head Island at peak season (July) with 25,000 representing those provided by bicycle rental companies. It is currently unclear if the total bicycle volume within Palmetto Dunes has definitively changed as no metrics are available.

The operators indicated those ordering/contracting bike rentals tend to be the mothers of the visiting families—not property management companies. Most rentals occur over the phone or internet—not in person within the rental shop. Bicycles are then delivered to the requested property. HHBC stated their receipt includes bicycle rules, but no acknowledgement of reading is obtained.

The operators indicated that there are some differences between Sea Pines and Palmetto Dunes. Sea Pines requires all bicyclers to always use the path. And vehicles do not have the right of way within traffic circles. The operators were appreciative of the recent enhancements to the Queens Folly corridor, including the path lights. Interestingly, the challenges we face are not unique to Palmetto Dunes. In fact, they are an island-wide challenge being evaluated by the Town of Hilton Head Island.

After reviewing the concerns of owners, the group discussed potential issues and solutions. They include:

Educational Ideas:

- Define the three most important bicycle rules—and attempt to standardize them across plantations that permit rentals.
- Communicate those important rules on every bicycle rented in the plantation. Communication vehicles include a laminated, zip-tied card or a sticker applied to the bike frame.
- Create A-Frame signs that carry one or more of the key bicycle messages and place them in high-volume traffic locations within Palmetto Dunes (on key days, Sunday, Monday, etc.)
- Offer a bicycle safety class for bicycle renters.
- Develop phone holders (acting as a flashlight) that also communicate key bicycle rules.
- Explore smart crosswalks that can verbalize when it's safe for bikers to cross.

- Harness technology such as geofencing to “push” important bicycle rules to a rider’s phone at key locations within the plantation.
- Develop/enhance a Palmetto Dunes Bicycle Ambassador Program.
- Develop a positive reward program for those adhering to the rules.

Enforcement Ideas:

- Enable security, using a bicycle or Segway, to actively engage visitors at key locations (General Store, traffic circle, Haul Away and Mooring Buoy, Sea Lane and Mooring Buoy, Port Tack and Mooring Buoy, and Ocean Lane and Carnoustie) at key times (Sunday morning, Monday morning, etc.) to educate and encourage adherence to the bicycle rules.
- Hire additional full-time summer staff (who work for security and convey authority) to engage and correct bicycle behaviors.
- Enable “Ambassadors” to engage and encourage adherence to proper rules.
- Enable those “encouraging” riders to reference the rules that reside on the bicycle.

Beach Path Ideas:

- Develop/ensure signage at the intersection of the road and the beach path that indicate bicycles must be walked to the beach.
- Explore with the Town the ability to place bicycle racks on the beach—and indicate where bicycles can be parked—not just where they cannot be parked.

Infrastructure and Traffic Ideas:

- Reduce the number of signs on the bicycle paths (the volume tends to de-emphasize the need to stop/yield at dangerous intersections). Perhaps paint the instructions directly upon the path.
- Close the left turn on Queens Folly into the General Store and the left turn from the RTJ clubhouse onto Queens Folly for vehicular traffic.
- Make Sea Lane and Mooring Buoy one-way for vehicular use, allowing for a separated bicycle path.
- Widen all (future) paths to the now required 10’ width—and remove excessing height gradients.

Safety:

- HHO and HHBC offer lights for sale (~\$12 each)—although they do not mandate their purchase. Both organizations said they would not outfit their bicycles with lights as it would encourage nighttime riding, and it would be difficult to ensure their proper operation.
- HHO and HHBC offer helmet rentals, but they do not require their use. It was noted that some will not rent helmets due to health concerns.

Coordination:

- Require bicycle operators to be registered with Palmetto Dunes.
- Explore the opportunity to work with the Town of Hilton Head Island (and other plantations) to define, articulate and message key bicycle rules.
- Explore the opportunity to place bicycle racks on the beach.

The group also discussed the use of bicycles by those who are not guests of the plantation—and what policies and engagement tactics might be employed.

The operators shared they:

- Would not place lights on their bicycles.
- Would not be able to quickly identify the owner of a bicycle for the purpose of conveying a fine.
- Believe requiring their customers (and their riders) to sign a form or watch a video containing the bicycle rules would not be effective.

Next Steps

The group agreed to the following steps. Each agreed to:

- Review the ideas presented today and identify those they believe would be effective.
- Identify the three or five most important rules to be communicated to bicycle riders. For example:
 1. Ride on the path when one is available
 2. Stay to the right
 3. Vehicles have the right of way
- Provide their thoughts to the group via email by **5PM on Tuesday, June 11**.

The objective is to identify and implement solutions that could be tested starting in June for the remainder of the summer—and then evaluate their effectiveness.

Next Meeting

The committee's next meeting is tentatively scheduled for **June 18th at 10AM** in the POA Administration building.

Following a similar format, we will invite Palmetto Dunes Resort, Island Getaway, the Vacation Company, Coastal Home and Villa and either Sunset Rentals and/or Beach Properties to attend. The objective will be to explore solutions to key topics including noise, owner registration, number of people in rental properties, and renter education and communications.