



*Media Advisory  
For immediate release  
Dec. 22, 2010*

**CHARLESTON, S.C.** –Charleston’s economic vitality and quality of life are too important to make decisions based on assumptions, best guesses and passionate arguments alone, according to actions taken by the trustees of Historic Charleston Foundation last week. At a specially called meeting on Dec. 13, trustees of Historic Charleston Foundation made a commitment to provide the resources and expertise necessary to undertake an independent study of the cruise ship industry’s impacts on the city’s economy, environment and quality of life.

HCF strongly supports the SPA and its core work. It also affirms that the Port is a vital economic engine for the entire state. Concern for the impacts of the cruise ship industry does not indicate a broader concern with other activities of the SPA. The Foundation plans to use findings from this independent study to advocate that the city of Charleston develop or modify ordinances for the industry if called for, while providing a framework for the State Ports Authority to negotiate future cruise contracts. The development of Union Pier’s 64 acres of public land provides a unique opportunity for the SPA, the City and residents to consider a comprehensive plan for future uses beyond a cruise terminal that will maintain the economic viability and quality of life in Charleston. HCF believes the process will benefit from greater input and this spring will undertake a public forum soliciting input from national planning and economic development experts.

HCF’s actions come after President Sam Applegate appointed an ad hoc committee in August to explore impacts of the cruise industry. The committee has met weekly since then, seeking facts and a wide range of perspectives about the cruise ship industry. After much discussion and deliberation, the ad hoc committee recommended that the foundation adopt a plan of action that will ensure that its advocacy positions be objectively based on reliable, independent information.

“Historic Charleston Foundation’s mission is to preserve and protect Charleston’s architecture, history and culture,” said Executive Director Kitty Robinson. “A part of that mission is safeguarding those qualities that set Charleston apart as one of America’s unique architectural and historical treasures, while continuing to be an economically vital, livable city.

“The successful preservation of Charleston requires that we find the right balance in preserving the historic essence of Charleston while maintaining a vital, healthy economy and environment,” she said , adding that HCF has long been known for considering its advocacy positions based on a factual and objective basis. She cited HCF’s key role in the development of Charleston Place during the 1970s and ‘80s as an example of that approach.

In brief, the ad hoc committee’s findings included the following points:

- The SPA is a vital economic engine for both the city and the entire state. Concern for the impact of the cruise industry is a distinctly different issue.
- Downtown residents, particularly those living on the east side of the peninsula are the people most likely to feel the impacts of the cruise ship industry, and their quality of life must be carefully considered.
  - The city of Charleston should establish rules and regulations governing the cruise ship industry, as it does for other segments of its tourism industry.
- Cruise ship activity in 2011 must be closely monitored so that all impacts, good or bad, can be factually determined.
- Moving BMW operations to the Columbus Street terminal will allow for the removal of freight trains south of Columbus Street and will allow the embarkation and debarkation of passengers to take place more efficiently on SPA property with less or no public disruption.
- A clear vision has not yet been determined for the redevelopment of Union Pier, though good ideas have been suggested. The redevelopment of this large, highly visible waterfront property in the heart of the city’s historic market district provides excellent opportunities for the public’s benefit, however plans for its development currently leave many important questions unanswered and will take years to accomplish.
- As plans go forward, HCF will actively participate in the regulatory review process, community outreach and public discussions to ensure that such a large scale development is in keeping with its mission to preserve Charleston’s architecture, history and culture.

Based on these findings, HCF’s action plan includes three key components:

- The city should establish, if called for, regulations and ordinances that balance the economic interests of the cruise industry with citizens’ quality of life. The city, in cooperation with SPA, should require all cruise lines calling on Charleston to comply with these regulations and ordinances.
- HCF will hire a qualified consultant, at its own expense, to independently monitor and analyze cruise visits in 2010 and 2011 to assess their environmental, economic and quality of

life impacts. It will use findings from this independent study to develop its advocacy positions regarding the cruise industry.

- HCF will provide the resources to support a transparent, community-driven planning process to create a vision for the optimal redevelopment of the Union Pier property and cruise terminal. HCF will provide the financial resources to have an acclaimed team of experts study the property and publicly present their findings and recommendations in a public forum to be held in early spring 2011.

“Throughout this process, HCF trustees have focused on identifying issues and seeking positive solutions leading to objective and constructive actions,” said HCF President Sam Applegate. A standing committee will be established to monitor progress toward the accomplishment of these action items.

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