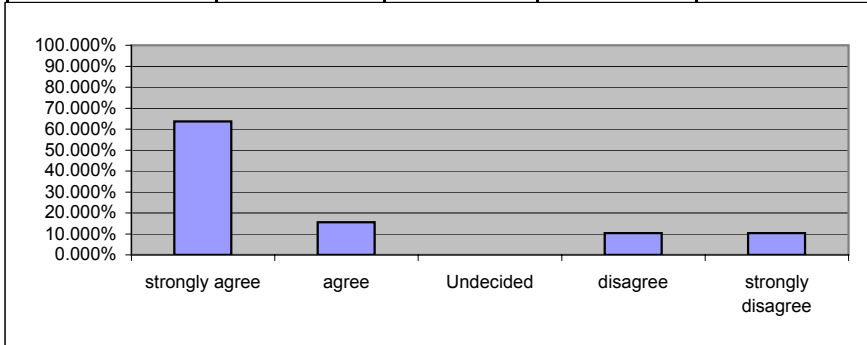


Tybee Island Mini Survey – Tabulated Results
Results of Tybee Neighborhood Association Website Survey Questions
January 2007 Mini-Survey -- Small Businesses on Tybee
77 responses

Your answers to the following questions will help us address this area.

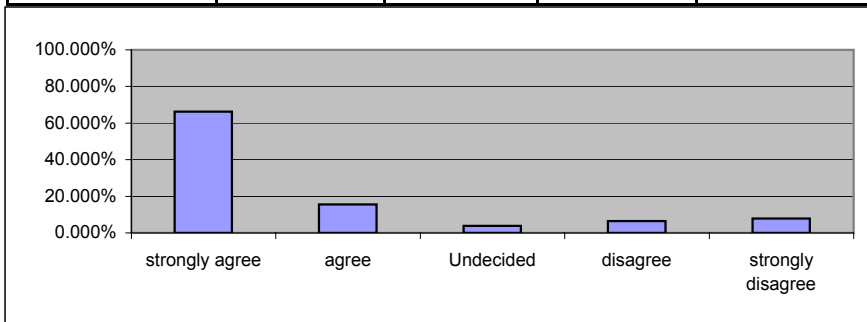
Statement 1: Small businesses are important in meeting the needs of those who live on the Island.
Please select your level of agreement or disagreement.

| strongly agree | agree | Undecided | disagree | strongly disagree |
|----------------|---------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| 63.636% | 15.584% | 0.000% | 10.390% | 10.390% |



Statement 2: Small businesses are important in meeting the needs of tourists visiting the Island.
Please select your level of agreement or disagreement.

| strongly agree | agree | Undecided | disagree | strongly disagree |
|----------------|---------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| 66.234% | 15.584% | 3.896% | 6.494% | 7.792% |



Tybee Neighbors February 2007 Survey – Helping our Small Businesses Survey Comments as of 2/3

3. ...we support our small businesses by shopping locally whenever possible, and by supporting our government in any efforts they may put forth to provide assistance. Better education for tourists about what businesses are on the island would be helpful.

4. ...provide tax incentives -- lobby with our state government to assess property values in some way other than how much a neighboring residential property may have sold to a developer to build new condos.

1. Supporting small business saves a lot of trips off-island. It also helps those businesses survive during the off-season. We think small business owners should be able to get tax breaks, establish TIF districts, be able to apply for small loans to rehab exteriors more easily, find parking areas for employees, many of whom can't afford to live here, suspending the parking meter fees during off-season.

2. We need to attract small businesses that are not directly related to beach activities. Such as book stores, variety stores, movie rentals, more family style restaurants and cafes, clothing stores etc. Again, by advertising tax breaks,(see ideas in #1 above) many people might want to locate such businesses here. And when they do, we as residents need to pledge our continuing support by spending our money locally.

3. Businesses could offer discounts to locals. In one town where we worked, a youth baseball league sold small pre-printed wallet-sized cards containing sections for participating businesses to advertise and list a 'coupon' for 10% off, free beverage or buy one get one offers. The purchaser of the card could use it repeatedly until the expiration date. The youth league used this as a fund-raiser. It was a win-win for all.

4. Tybee should have access to a small business advisory service for helping locate businesses here, and/or to give struggling businesses advice on how to solve problems. Such an organization could help with surveys of the area, help with financial problem-solving, developing business plans, etc. so inexperienced entrepreneurs can succeed.

3. Many of the business out here have noticeable staffing shortages in the summertime, especially the restaurants. This shortage affects the level of service they are providing the visitors as well as the residents. It has become commonplace for the local eateries to post how long it will take to prepare food/wait for an entree. I have not traveled to any resort communities where business took that approach to customer service. Look at Savannah and its busiest restaurants-Garibaldi's, Bistro, Pasticcio, etc do not have a long wait disclaimer on their menu. They staff for the business. I think lack of public transportation to the island limits potential workers and consequently limits the businesses' ability to serve the customers-both locals and tourists alike.

4. Tybee needs to follow up on enacting tax freeze on commercial property to give relief to business owners that own rather than lease their place of business. It is prohibitively expensive to build out here, not even considering the future costs to maintain the property. I think the "aid to construction" fee should be waived or at least discounted by half or more for businesses that build out here, since they are providing other income to the City and the community economy as a result of operating here.

4. The city of Tybee needs to encourage business owners through tax breaks or financial incentives to improve their businesses' facade primarily near Tybrisa, but also in the corridor along Hwy 80. They need to formulate a look or brand, ask that current business owners comply with that goal. Signage and lighting and overall appearance of commercial property should be paramount to Tybee government. Everyone benefits from the appearance of a clean, well maintained and professional looking business district. Note: Professional can still look quirky. Maybe new Economic Development person can tackle this job-look at existing businesses, take photos, schedule meeting with owner, make recommendations.

4. The City of Tybee has an engineer that reviews all plans for drainage issues. I suggest that the new Economic Development person meet with prospective business operators, review the application & business owners' plans for construction or remodeling and assist with the process. This action would serve not merely as an enforcement tool, but as a partnership to clarify the type of business so it is permitted correctly, possibly recommend aesthetic changes to the current site or to the planned building, help make suggestions or changes jointly. They would also serve as a liaison between the business owner and City Marshall & Manager to achieve the goals outlined by both parties. Now we have an enforcement system, or a "no" system as many have called it: you ask and they say "no". We need a business partnership system if there is to be new and successful growth.

4. Consistent Enforcement: this is crucial for continuity between one business and the next. The City should work to enforce the current ordinances as they relate to businesses, and once the new brand or future ordinances is/are established, the City Staff has to make it a priority to execute the plan.

4. The City needs to prioritize and encourage the development of an island-wide shuttle service for locals and tourists. A shuttle will help with the parking issues and will allow visitors from savannah, employees and guests on the island without a vehicle to travel around the island safely. The City should work to help get grants and "partner or consult" with a prospective shuttle service operator to facilitate the permitting of the shuttle, establish the routes & stops, and help in any way possible to get this operational within the next year.

3. Clean up Tybrisa Street by having other businesses beside swimsuit shops. Put a face lift on the buildings where food is sold. Don't charge so much for parking. Large families cannot afford the fees and then spend money to buy expensive food. That is why they bring lunches from home. Tybee should build a parking garage and if it can be only one story or two stories now at least lay the foundation for another story later. Covered parking would also give shelter from lightening and heavy rainstorms. Having a parking garage would also help control traffic that make visitors take several hours to get back to Savannah after large events. Clean up the rest rooms in the pavilion. Keep the trash cans in front of the Pavilion adequate so they don't smell so badly.
4. Fine people who leave their trash cans on Butler Avenue. The visitors walk down the middle of the street because of these cans that are placed right on the curb. I have seen the can still on Butler Avenue on July 4 weekend. You know there is no trash collection then. In other words Tybee needs to clean itself up. And finally, keep dogs and cats off the beach. Most young children are afraid of loose animals and no one likes to step in animal droppings. The tides do not come up enough (at least right now) to clean the beach.

3. if our chamber of commerce supported small businesses that also attract tourists... art, history, eco-tourism, shopping. Their ads should focus on what to DO on Tybee, the heads and beds mount up when you give them something to do. Help us do our things by doing the things that you do well: promote our festivals, kites, regattas, sand art, turtles, parades etc.

4. a) review and finalize the event planning and vender permitting process underway in the fall. Jason Nobles had streamlined the things ... to put on a festival in Memorial Park. I sure would hate to have it go back to the old way.

3. I'm curious as to how businesses decide what will work on Tybee....I've never seen a questionnaire or survey to residents (or visitors) on what the public wants from them. Businesses who provide services that benefit both residents and tourist - i.e., a fresh market, a clothing boutique, etc. would be beneficial. Also, if businesses had consistent hours of service, it would help with residents who can rely on their being opened.

4. Make sure the zoning uses are available and appropriate for small businesses. For businesses who can't or are not comfortable - for whatever reasons - join the Chamber, it would be nice to have another avenue where their goods/services could be advertised at a reasonable fee.

3. Lower prices would be wonderful, but taxes are going to prohibit that from ever happening. It's not the Tybee taxes, but those assessed by Chatham County and the school system. I have had several discussions with Pete Liakakis and he points to the State Law as the controlling factor. However, he agrees that the application of the law by the Tax Assessor's Office is not rational and I argue that it simply is a matter of incompetence at best and unfair application at worst. This is what needs to be addressed. The law is unlikely to be changed, but those who apply the law can and must be changed.

4. See 3 above.

3. If: They are financially viable. Not only does being financially viable help attract small business, but in addition it helps them grow and prosper. And having been a small business owner (a pharmacy) I can tell you that the level of service as well as the quality of service and merchandise is directly proportional to that businesses financial well being. If the majority of your COB (cost of doing business) is spent on property taxes or rent, that means you will be less likely to afford that extra personnel that will increase your level of service, and the more likely that the money you would invest in your inventory is going to be spent on rent or property taxes.

Most small business people like to reinvest in themselves (their own business). However you must maintain a certain profit margin to stay in business. If your COB is so large due to government burdens, then you must cut personnel and inventory. Both hurt the island. The number one reason small businesses fail is money flow. If I have to cut inventory and people, I will take in less revenue. Simply because I lose a sale either because I do not have something that someone wants to buy, or the customer goes somewhere else due to poor customer service or price.

Remember, most of our businesses compete with Wal-Mart not on price but on convenience and customer service. Damage those and small businesses on Tybee will never compete with Wal-Mart, Publix etc just off the Island. Part of Tybee's charm is the small business, it reminds tourists (and ourselves) of our past when small business's thrived, and we knew everyone's name. People become attached to certain places like that, whether it be Vinnies Pizza, Fannies, Spankys, TS Chu's. Take those away and replace them with McDonalds, and the dollar store and it will hurt the very culture that draws people to Tybee. People come here because it's unique, and different. Could you picture our Labor Day parade on Hilton Head LOL? Point being I was a visitor for many years, and bought on Tybee because I want to retire there. Let those small businesses on Tybee fail and you will make Tybee one more cookie cutter Island with no special charm. Being Unique starts with small business on Tybee, travels thru those who visit and stop with the fine people who live on Tybee year round. Destroy that balance, and you destroy Tybee.

4. To attract small business, help them compete. Property Taxes may seem like all we ever say, but they are the root cause of why small businesses may not be able to survive. Imagine you buy a business; scenario 1: you rent, your landlord's property taxes go way up. Those costs are directly given to you thru an increased rent. 2: you want to start a business on Tybee, but no-one will rent you a space on a 5 year lease because the landlord is afraid of a huge property tax increase at any time. So the landlord does not want to

commit to a 5 year lease that may not cover the next property tax increase. 3: you want to buy a parcel and put your business on your own property. Again how do I present a business plan to anyone if I have no idea what my COB will be from year to year?

Let me make it simple, for I am a simple man I have no MBA etc just my experience. Take for example Vinnies Pizza (we look forward to it every visit). Say Vinnies landlord hits him with a rent increase on his next lease. Say it goes up 500 dollars a month, because the landlord has to pay property taxes. Vinnie will have to calculate how much more volume he will have to do to generate 500 dollars more profit each month. How does Vinnie do this, many ideas can come into play here. So lets assume he keeps his price the same (I would raise prices)how does he generate that extra 500 dollars. Most likely he cut costs; because that is the only place he has any control. He cut hours for employees, this hurts them (who wants to drive to Tybee to make 7.50 an hour when they can get something better in Savannah) and it Hurts Vinnies, because his customer service, i.e. time to get a customer in and out just got worse. Customer service suffers. Secondly, Vinnie can go with cheaper ingredients! This decreases the quality of his product. So come to Tybee stop at Vinnies and have to wait 2 hours for Pizza that just does not seem like what I so often look forward to each visit. Now as a customer I say, I'll drive to one of those Franchise Pizza places because they can do it faster and I don't taste any difference anymore. Bottom line Vinnie just lost a customer. So in an effort to increase profit, Vinnie just lost business.

So Vinnie does what any small business man would do, He does his best to see if he already is making the 500 dollars a month and can pay it out of his pocket. The answer is either yes (but now he could make a better living at Wal-Mart) or No he does not have the extra 500. Based on this Vinnie says Lets close and find another place to open a pizza parlor.

Now Tybee has another vacant building, and the landlord decides to sell. Because without Vinnie he has no income, and his building is now worth \$\$\$\$\$ so he sells.

Eventually they will all be empty because the math doesn't work for any small business. But big business looks at it from a different angle so maybe they want to try.

Say goodbye to small business Hello truck stop.

Pretty dismal picture I painted, but hey just a thought. Now what do we do.....Sales tax...I know the government bookkeepers will say, it's not as reliable. Too bad, who does Vinnie have to rely on???? A county Sales tax spreads the burden, and will not hurt Tybee. Tourists don't care, and locals will be paying the same sales tax on the Island or off. It levels the playing field.

One final thought, the only thing I would hate more than high property taxes on my property that is increasing in value is to have high property taxes on something that is decreasing in value. Don't let them kill Tybee. Hey there's an idea Lets print bumper stickers that say "Save Tybee Island" and sell them for a buck a piece. I wonder if that would cover our costs LOL.

"Save Tybee Island"

A recurring theme for small businesses like myself is the rising property taxes.....these have to be capped or limited to keep small business on the island.

Property taxes are my largest expense....I do not feel that it should be.

I have noticed many residents opposition to new restaurants and small business being near them. Kinda hard to encourage new business if the residents do not want them near them.

4. I believe whenever possible, those of us who live on Tybee should use the services available on Tybee. Everything from having pictured framed to buying gas. Too many businesses do not make it through the winter because we who live full time on Tybee do not consider how many of our everyday needs can be satisfied without leaving the island. If we want a vital business community here we must support it.

Small businesses can exist and thrive on Tybee if they are service-oriented, and make life easier for the tourist or resident. People will always need to eat, and the more diverse the restaurants are the more choice people have when looking to die out. People would also patronize Tybee businesses if the offered extended hours, or delivery service.

The City could encourage small businesses with tax incentives, and advertising campaigns such as Pirate Fest, etc.

I believe that the biz's are doing what they can. It is up to the residents to support them. I am committed with my dollars to buy all presents from the biz's here on the island. I spent over \$1k at Christmas and for 3 birthdays in Jan. I have spent over \$200.

I do shop at IGA regularly.

CHU's is too high priced for me, drinks, gum etc...

I use Island Pharmacy.

My hairdresser left the island and I found a new one on Johnny Mercer and Victory.

I wish we had better Car Bumper Stickers. They are plain & boring.

They were seasonal kiosks

3. Advertising, discounts for locals, understanding what customers want/need (comment box).

4. Shop locally, all local businesses should advertise in Tybee Breeze (free announcements).

3. Provide for bicycle parking.

Improve curb appeal....e.g. attractive low impact signage

Create an aura of ecotourism - recycle

4. Ban unmuffled motorcyclists. Support and enforce a noise ordinance.

Create a monthly Tybee trolley gallery tour similar to the SCAD hop.

3. Businesses focus on quality, service, fair prices and quit whining. Example: The first place I paid \$1.95 or more for tea in the U.S. was on Tybee. That was 3 years ago. Had lunch at another restaurant today tea is still less than \$1.50. Too many places here are gouging to get the tourist green back. Fine they will not get mine.

4. NOTHING!!!! Let it be survival of the fittest. Who is helping keep regular folk on Tybee? This is a beach ... not a place for business handouts. If a business can not make it they need to look inward not to us for help...

3. ...if there is a lot more local encouragement to keep the businesses open. A lot of small businesses go under because there is not a lot of local support -- and then the businesses go away and everyone says "Oh, I liked them" or "Oh, I was going to go to their shop"... Everyone expects the same shops in the same locations -- let's encourage some new shops to open. Let's encourage new restaurants to stay open...

4. Encourage city sponsorship -- group ads at a discounted price, group billboards, website exposure, sign exposure, PARKING encouragement. Free parking on Sundays (in the 'downtown' area) is always a good one.

Encourage Tybee beautification -- how about some hibiscus trees in pots on Tybrisa? Some flower pots? Nice sandwich boards? Nice painting on the outside of the buildings?

Diversification? Right now there are about 5 of the same shops (boogie board shops). The truly diversified businesses are in areas that look residential and don't get as much traffic.

Make sure the island and business community understand that these small businesses keep our residents employed on the island. We need to embrace and welcome our visitors and treat them with exceptional hospitality- not treat them like intruders.

Some type of ongoing hospitality training or reminders to the residents about how important supporting small business is to keeping people employed and keeping the economy of Tybee running is needed.

The City needs to keep working to support small business and keep people working.

Comments = There are no quick answers to these questions. This is not just a small business problem. It is a Tybee Island problem that the businesses and the residents are going to have to work together on. This requires someone, other than a city official, to organize a group to define the problem and propose solutions.

I would like to offer some of my opinions on the cause for what it's worth.

There are major three (3) basic reasons that have caused an impact on Tybee small businesses ability to maintain a necessary profitable position.

The first reason being that local school officials have continually lengthen the school year which in turn has shortened the time a family has for their the school summer vacation. This in turn reduces the number prime time days needed by the small businesses to support their financial burden. This burden also results in an increase in pricing for the local full time residents who have to pick the void.

The second reason is that the small businesses and property owners have allowed our city officials to be influenced by developers who have convinced them incorrectly that their focus should be on more high density building like other resort areas. The problem with this presumption is that Tybee doesn't have the land base area necessary to support the recreation or attraction needs required, such as Hilton Head does. Just a small number of Hilton Head golf courses would cover all of Tybee Island. This high density building also aggravates the problem relate to the limited amount of drinking water available which is a big problem that doesn't need this negative direction to be pursue. Tybee officials would like to hide this critical problem but it is real and is not going to go away.

The third reason is somewhat tied to the reason above. The high density building process has resulted in an enormous increase in property taxes. Many residents can not afford this increase and may have to sell there long time family property. Many who do not want to pass this problem onto the heirs may elect to sell. This tax burden has not only affected the residences, but also the small businesses on the island. The businesses normally pass this on to there customers, but since the Tybee residents also are now being faced with high percentage increases they are likely going to take there business else ware. I must also add that if it had not been for the unfair method of taxation on personnel property some of this burden could be been absorbed. There nothing wrong with property tax if it is used to support property needs. Since property has no value until sold and should not be taxed at market value.

Classification of property needs to be standardized across the by the state. School tax part of property tax should be deleted. It already is in a number of counties for seniors.

There is a natural order to what can be viable. We have had some small businesses that had no chance of succeeding. A forum to help some of the people that want to open these businesses along with tax breaks would be of help. Also a poll to find what needs there are among the residents and tourists that come to the island. There are many of us that come from other beach communities that can give input to this. Giving thought to the reasons that we go off island for things and services should reflect as to what we need here. Then we need to support on island business even if it is not as good as off island to get started.

3. Restaurants are open for lunch during the off season and give Tybee residents a discount price, if not at lunch, at night. During the winter months the construction workers are on Tybee during the day. Businesses need to be open to meet their needs.

4. Businesses need to be able to reach, not only Tybee residents, but the residents of Wilmington Island, Whitmarsh Island, etc.

As long as businesses on this island are keeping regular hours that people can count on, then it is crucial that we, as a community, support them! Even if it is only by recommendation to other locals, or tourists, we have to give every dollar to this community to keep it thriving! Otherwise, it will become a community for the wealthy that can afford to invest in their part-time vacation condos. Those tax dollars are not supporting the cost of the individual businesses!

They would offer permanent residents an incentive ie a discount card or special promotions for year round residents.

To keep and attract small businesses, it is imperative for the city continue in their efforts to provide tax relief to business owners. Although council is petitioning the legislature to develop an exemption for commercial property similar to the Stephens-Day bill, we need to work together as a community to support their efforts.

The cute and funky business districts of Tybee are a great tourist attraction to us. We love Fanny's on the Beach and the little artsy cottages when you come onto the island. Please don't spoil the wonderful ambiance of Tybee.

3. They could provide free parking.

4. Perhaps a gated parking lot off the beach where tickets could be validated by local businesses. Beach-goers would still pay to park.

Restaurants need to advertise more off the island . There are some very good places to eat down here. They need a niche to draw people to want to come here. Take advantage of the events we have & do something special. I have some friends that will travel over an hour to go to a good restaurant. I understand that small businesses are trying to lobby for tax relief this is the key to helping businesses stay open . High rents & high taxes will kill a business almost immediately. We also need to cater to the needs of all age groups.

3. We work to make Tybee a year-round tourist destination. Small businesses will stand a chance of surviving and thriving if they have a longer business season.

4. Work on ways to preserve zoning for our business districts. The tax code, both Tybee and County, needs to be revised to tax on current use and not highest and best use. The latter will result in an island of condos without a business community. All of us, residents and tourists alike, will suffer for a lack of services and entertainment and the end result will be a decline in Tybee as a tourist destination. This is the unintended consequence of the current tax philosophy.

EVERY COMMUNITY HAS A NEED FOR SMALL BUSINESSES TO GROW. THEY ARE AN INTERGAL PART OF THE TOTAL GROWTH OF THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE; HOWEVER IF THE REAL ESTATE PRICES AND RENT EXCEED THE COMMUNITY THAT WE ARE TRYING TO SUPPORT THEN WE ALL FAIL.

CURRENTLY WE NEED ADDITIONAL PARKING FOR THE TOURISTS. WE NEED TO SET LIMITS ON REAL ESTATE GROWTH, WEREBY THE BUISNESS' CAN GROW TO SUPPORT THE CURRENT GROWTH ON TYBEE BEFORE IT GETS OUT OF HAND. IN MY OPINION THERE IS NO NEED FOR A CITY COUNCIL. THE SIZE OF TYBEE SHOULD ONLY REQUIRE A MAYOR TO OVERSEE A QUALIFED STAFF THAT KNOW THEIR FIELDS OF EXPERTISE AND CAN READ AND INTERPRET THE CURRENT LAWS AND REGULATIONS. IF FOR SOME REASON THEY CAN'T, THEY SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM THEIR POSITIONS AND REPLACED WITH PEOPLE WHO CAN GET THE JOB DONE. EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE CURRENT LAWS AND REGULATIONS ON THE BOOKS, THE CURRENT CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMITTEES HAVE THE RIGHT TO INSERT THEIR OWN PERSONAL AGENDAS INTO DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THE OUTCOME OF SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS. IN SOME CASES AS I HAVE OBSERVED PERSONALLY, MEMBERS OF BOTH THE CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION DO NOT HAVE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS SET FORTH. THE LAW NEEDS TO BE FOLLOWED WITHOUT REGARD TO PERSONAL OPINIONS FROM THE COUNCIL MEMEBERS AS TO HOW THEY THINK THE LAW SHOULD BE APPLIED VERSUS HOW THE LAW IS ACUTALLY WRITTEN. THESE PERSONAL INFLUENCED DECISIONS ARE AFFECTING THE SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS. EVEN THOUGH TYBEE RESIDENTS WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPRESS THEIR OPINIONS, IF THE PROPSD DEVELOPEMNT IS WITHIN THE GUIDLINES OF THE LAW, THE CITIZENS NEED TO RESPECT THE LAW OR LOBBY TO CHANGE THE LAW. TIME SPENT AT CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS DECIDING ON WHETHER OR NOT FOLLOW THE LAW IS A WASTE OF TIME. THE LAW IS THE LAW!

THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE REQUESTING VARIANCES OR EXCEPTIONS TO THE LAW NEED TO PRESENT THEM TO THE CITY MANAGER, ZONING MANAGER, AND THE MAYOR OF TYBEE, AT WHICH TIME THEY CAN DECIDE WHETHER A PUBLIC MEETING IS NEEDED.

3--there is more diversity of products and services for sale.

--businesses could stay open all year.

--stores could be located in a more central shopping area which is close to parking lots.

4.--provide a directory of services and products available on the island.

--encourage new businesses (not just more tee shirt stores) through tax breaks.

--provide some city owned rental space in good locations with good security and a clean central lobby area (like the visitors' center but closer to downtown).

Extra thoughts:

I rarely shop on the island because there's not much to choose from, prices are higher and the stores tend to be grubby. If I could, I'd rather shop on Tybee and never leave the island, especially in the summer. Also, it's hard to locate services that I need, such as a pool cleaning and repair service (I use one from Hilton Head). A good, up-to-date directory would help.

1 Adopt city ordinances that give the owners and operators of seasonal and full year businesses tax incentives and other economics benefits to operate profitably.

2. Provide refundable tax credits for businesses that invest in improving and upgrading their physical facilities.

3. The city should conduct a feasibility study to determine the amount and types of businesses that have the most probably of success for conducting business on Tybee.

3. They have special sales like the businesses do in Savannah. At least during the winter months when business is slow.

3. By shopping at the businesses, keeping the revenue on Tybee. Free parking during some of the busy hours. Helping to dress up the business sections of the island.

3. Expand and improve public recreational facilities on Tybee, attracting more traffic year-round. Example: tennis court surface, basketball, beach volleyball, boat ramps, skatepark. Work with the YMCA to expand programs: more surf camps, soccer camps skateboard camps etc.

4. Tax relief. Commercial properties don't receive the homestead exemptions that residential properties do. With the rising property values, commercial property taxes have skyrocketed. We've already seen many Tybee businesses close shop, and we'll see more if rising taxes make business on Tybee less feasible. We need more commercially zoned property used as commercial.

3. Wish I knew how small businesses can better meet the needs. I patronize the bike shop, the IGA, Chu's for gifts and household, the tax preparers, the lawyer, Sea Kayak for supplies, Doyle's nursery for my yard, the 2 seafood stores. I am single and also not a big consumer, but I'm very glad to have these businesses here. I do not want any chains on Tybee. I can stop by those on Wilm Isl.

4. To keep our small businesses, they of course need to make money. I guess the biggest question is keeping real estate affordable for new businesses, but I don't see how we can tell people what to charge for selling their businesses.

3. They have a better profit margin during the "on" season so they can survive the "off" season and still be around for the locals. This means some tax breaks, reduced business license fees, etc.

4. We need to patronize our small businesses. However, since most of the businesses, except Chus, have inflated prices, if they want the locals to shop there they need to offer locals discounts. Otherwise, we know where Wal-Mart is. While I am for supporting our businesses, I, too, have a budget. If we do as suggested in #3, we can attract new businesses. If there is a profit to be made, they will come! However, we need fewer t-shirt shops and more entertainment type shops - not bars!! Now that we have no amusement park and no putt-putt there is nothing for tourists to do in the evenings.

3. If they are more adaptable to the needs of residents during the off season.

4. We need to find a way to reduce the stress placed on our local enterprises from increasing property taxes.

Parking issues affect small businesses a lot. Do away with the meters

I agree with both 1 & 2, but especially with being important to the residents. We have owned our little house there for 20 years now and wish we could live there year-round. I miss the "good old days" there. So many have left us and so many are wanting now to turn it into another resort or Key West that it's character is in danger of being lost!! The biggest demand I see is for decent restaurants to feed everyone who comes there for a vacation, and those of us who like to stay and get away there but not cook all the time. The skate park should be there so ALL kids there have someplace safe and legal to go as there really isn't much for them to do there other than the beach anymore since the amusement park is gone. Maybe it could be combined with a small skating rink or something. But the costs have to be kept down. We have to rent our house out now some to help pay the high property taxes. Also, I think all OWNERS of property there, not just residents year round, should be entitled to at least one parking sticker. This is a pet peeve of mine. That way we can go out and get stuff for our houses there on the island without having to feed the meters!

I do not live on Tybee, but I know small businesses add a lot to its character...I don't know what could be offered except some form of tax incentive since that is what is driving them away...

Tybee needs an authority like the Savannah Development and Renewal Authority which has been operating for 12 years and has attracted several hundred million of investment to Broughton and nearby streets. It is lead by volunteers in business downtown. Secondly, Tybee need to get control of the hotel-motel tax revenue that goes to the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce to use for promotion and development and not to disappear into a slush fund at the Chamber.

Give them some tax breaks first of all.

Possibly make some parking available for a limited time to business patrons only

Develop business district areas with attractive shops and restaurants that will appeal to both residents and visitors

During the off season the shops are closed even to the residents and tourist which I feel should be open daily even with shorter hours.

With what Tybee charges for a business permit they should have a publication highlighting the business and rate them so the tourist know for example there is not any one that develops photos and they would know where to go on Wilmington, etc..

Small businesses are a vital part of Tybee's life - economically, socially and culturally. Two key words are essential here - 'small' and 'vital'. We're a functioning community by the sea - not a gated retirement resort. Although residents and visitors still have to go to Publix, Wal-Mart, CVS and Home Depot for some goods and services, I believe that most people would rather patronize local establishments once they're out here. That includes professional services, also. Island business owners should be given every benefit possible so that they can stay up and running - year-round. They should be encouraged to offer diverse goods and services tailored to the specific needs of the community. They need lower property taxes, of course, but also other incentives and clear instructions - perhaps even aid with compliance - concerning city restrictions and ordinances. A targeted city-wide marketing plan would also be helpful to let all new-comers, and local patrons know !

what goods and services they provide, hours of operation and so forth.

For too long our community has functioned hit or miss without a "Tybee Island" Chamber of Commerce. As part of the City's new Economic Development Committee, small business owners should form a "Tybee Small Business Association" to allow for more owner representation, more input into what happens on the island, and the ability to pool resources and advertising dollars to create an effective island-wide marketing program. This might be linked INDIRECTLY to the present Tybee Tourism Council and Katrina Murray as Savannah Chamber liaison, but it needs to operate totally independent thereof, under the City's direction, ... If we want to attract and keep small businesses, we need to be ready to nurture them in a more professional manner..!

I would support small business much more if there were things being offered that I want. IGA carries very few low sugar/low fat items. I think they would do well with these as many people who want to live a healthy lifestyle look for them. I would strongly support a book/magazine store. A nice women's clothing store would be super also.

To keep our small businesses they must become more friendly and customer satisfying. The storekeepers are often rude and then they don't have what I need either. A great example of small business that meets both criteria is the High Tide surf shop. Shell ART is a great place if you need gifts. Otherwise, we go off island for all our shopping. Some people say taxes are too high. I don't know about this but if they truly are it would be a good thing to look into.

Re: Statement 1:

We Strongly Agree that the restaurants and IGA are important to those that visit and live on Tybee.

We Strongly Disagree that the tourist shops on Tybrisa are important to those who live on Tybee.

Bars aren't important to our life style.

Re: Statement 3:

The problem with the tourist shops on Tybrisa is that they are all selling the same merchandise. They would do better if each shop specialized in different merchandise.

Re: Statement 4:

We don't think that should be our concern. If the businesses offer what the public wants, they will buy. We have more important issue that should be addressed.

Establish incentives for commercial property owners to make space leases affordable for small businesses (existing and new).

- Promote and lure new businesses (i.e. dry cleaners, pet grooming/boarding, etc.) through tax incentives and waivers.

- Establish affiliations between existing businesses and new businesses (i.e. cross advertising and exposure).

- Attract and pursue small scale conventions, retreats, expos, etc. in the off-season.

The city can assist this endeavor by expanding the Recreational and Leisure Director's role, while working with the Tybee Tourism representative(s).

- Promote the leisure assets that aren't normally promoted, like the camp ground facilities and the marine districts.
- Pursue economic subsidies through state and federal funding for small municipalities.

We must work together, the Tybee Economic Development Committee, the City of Tybee, the Tybee Tourism Council, Tybee Fest, the Art Association, the Tybee St. Pat's Committee, the Beach Bums and the other organizations/businesses that promote and orchestrate events that positively impact our business community. Pursuing avenues to promote our existing and new businesses will build, not only additional revenue for all, but build a confidence of prosperity for new businesses.

WE CAN DO THIS!!!

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3. a lot of the stores sell stuff geared towards tourists. i don't need that kind of stuff on a daily basis, so i don't regularly shop there.
 4. if a business owner figures out that they need residents to stay in business, then they need to offer a good or service that will attract residents to their store. i think free market should determine who operates a business in our community.
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Small businesses can better meet the needs of residents and tourists...if they can manage to stay in business. Not being a small business owner, I do not know specifics. Everything that city government can do to help them prosper should be done. In addition, locals can help by utilizing services, goods, etc. offered locally.

All small businesses need to be treated equally and all small businesses need to be licensed with the city. There is too much favoritism with marshalling the small businesses with some paying the licensing fees and many others not.

4. Their taxes need to be lower. If their taxes are too high to make a profit, why should they stay.
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A recurring theme for small businesses like myself is the rising property taxes.....these have to be capped or limited to keep small business on the island.

Property taxes are my largest expense....I do not feel that it should be.

I have noticed many residents opposition to new restaurants and small business being near them. Kind of hard to encourage new business if the residents do not want them near them.

Businesses might be better off if:

The city supported the efforts of Tybee businesses by offering tax relief/incentives to help with escalating property taxes to property/business owners which is also causing a huge increase in commercial rental rates. Many existing businesses are struggling to afford to purchase or rent property on Tybee, and the prices make it difficult to attract new businesses onto the island. Also, the City should encourage business activity by maintaining a "business friendly" attitude towards business owners willing to take the risk of opening a business on a in a market that is a very seasonal environment and takes a lot of juggling to be successful. Tybee should be very careful in future planning to not limit business growth potential when they are updating the master plan or making other ordinance changes that could impact business. The city should not limit the zoning or any other ordinance that could handicap our successful lodging/vacation rental industry.

I think an on island shuttle/transportation service business would be excellent for businesses and attractions, locals, tourists, and help with traffic and parking issues. I also think a Savannah to Tybee shuttle would be great too, but I understand this may be more difficult to implement successfully.

I think Tybee lacks affordable housing (both for sale and for rent) for our employees and small business owners who were not fortunate enough to purchase property when it was still somewhat affordable.

The City needs to make the improvement of our commercial district (Tybrisia, and the Strand) a top priority. It is long overdue for a face lift and the improvements will only serve to help the businesses in that area, plus make it more attractive for tourists and residents to enjoy.

The City should not spend money on skate board parks; it should INVEST money in maintaining our economic outlook which effects for more people than a skate park. Also, I don't believe the value of the land donation is being considered in the building of the park. There are many other uses that would better serve more residents and visitors than a skate park.

The City needs to build a parking garage. Parking is a challenge all summer for both visitors and employees and many business owners do not have the parking to accommodate their employees and their customers, not is there adequate space in the current city lots.

The City should encourage shoulder season and off season events and festivals because they attract visitors and bring business to the island in a time when we desperately need it. The City should work in partnership with the many volunteers that produce such events and make it very easy to get it done. The city does not have a Leisure Services division, and if it were not for the Tybee non-profits, Tybee would not have any of the cultural events, art shows, and festival we currently have. The city should offer their city services for little or no fees because these events are good for business on Tybee and fun for our citizens.

The City should look at converting the Gym to a multi use facility that could be used for performances, meetings, receptions, or for small business conferences. It needs adequate staging, seating and a sound system, and more parking. If it were a conference center, could the city get the 1% hotel tax that is currently going to the convention center on Hutchinson Island, which does not benefit Tybee at all?

Business owners need to be more involved in what is going on the island and should contribute their ideas towards improving the business environment on Tybee. Many business owners and managers are not "in the loop" of what is going on Tybee and what efforts are being made by the city to work with businesses. There is too much apathy when it comes to attending workshops and improvement meetings, yet plenty of complaining that things are not perfect. There is a need for a small business group independent of a City Committee that should meet to work together to form common economic goals for the island and work with the city and the Tourism Council to move forward.

Business owners need to improve the appearance of their businesses and improve their customer service level. Many Tybee businesses do not strive to have the best customer service, friendliness, or service in general. I know the visitor's center often hears complaints of rudeness, poor service and outright bad service, and this is an area that we should all strive to improve for everyone's sake.

With everybody minding the business communities business as they have been for the last 20 years it is hard to say that there will be a fix for the island business problems!
