



Resort Advisory Commission  
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## RESORT ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES

**DATE:** December 3, 2020

**TIME:** 3:00 pm

**PLACE:** Virginia Beach Convention Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Room 1BCD

### COMMISSION MEMBERS

#### PRESENT

BJ Baumann  
Bill Gambrell  
Bryan Cuffee  
Chuck Cayton  
Doug Douglas  
George Kotarides  
Keith Ireland  
Kristina Chastain  
Laura Habr  
Lori Overholt

Michael Levinson  
Michael Ronan  
Mike Eason  
Page Miyares  
Randy Thompson  
Russell Lyons  
Tyler Brown

#### COMMISSION MEMBERS

#### ABSENT

None

### OTHERS PRESENT

Cynthia Spanoulis, VA AQM  
Caryl Thompson, VA AQM  
Phil Davenport, BAC  
Brian Solis, CMO, RMO  
Billy Almond, PDRC  
John Zirkle, VBHA  
Guy Tower, City Council  
Jamie Capps, RMO  
Terri Boothe, VB Resident  
Kathy Warren, SGA  
Deb Zywna, SGA, Recorder

BJ Baumann called the meeting to order at 3:00pm. Motion carried to approve the November 5, 2020 minutes as written.

### Bayfront Advisory Commission (BAC) Update – Phil Davenport

BJ introduced the Chair for the BAC, RAC's sister Commission in the Bay area for an update on their business. Phil Davenport retired from the City three years ago, and he is now serving on the BAC for approx. one year so far, as the newly appointed Chair.

They had several issues in 2020 that required review, which included addressing a substantial turnover in BAC membership, and neighborhood concerns about development in the primarily residential Shore Drive corridor.

Three apartment complex projects are in progress, and an old hotel at Great Neck Road (Marriott Delta) is being renovated.

One of their big issues is short-term rentals existing in two overlay districts, neither of which anyone was in favor.

The BAC has changed from strictly hearing developers' plans for the area little input, to taking a more proactive position to making formal recommendations to Council on what they hear. That new responsibility does provide more leverage in speaking with developers, which is working well for them.

In 2021, they want to update their Shore Drive Corridor Plan this year, which will be done by the Planning Department.

There are some long-term projects that the City either has underway or under consideration, but Phil Davenport reviewed some smaller projects that they believed could get done more easily and less expensively in the short-term.

Sand replenishment is occurring, with only the Ocean Park area still in need of replenishment. Drainage and sea level projects have begun and are ongoing.

The scooters were a concern in 2019 but they are not as much of a problem now. They were not in favor of having them in the area during construction and will likely be addressed again in 2021.

BJ Baumann thanked Phil for the update, noting that the RAC shares some of the same issues. They look forward to working with the BAC in the future.

Virginia Aquarium Capital Projects and Long-Range Plans – Cynthia Spanoulis, Caryl Thompson  
President and CEO of the Aquarium, Cynthia Spanoulis appeared with COO Caryl Thompson to share plans since the Aquarium's inception in 1986 with Phase I of development. They have had four expansions since then.

The Aquarium is a large cultural, educational and economic engine for the community and is responsible for the entire coast of Virginia for marine stranding, research and conservation. They are a City Department and work closely with the Aquarium Foundation.

Although the Aquarium was closed for over three months during COVID, their staff continued to supply 24-hour-a-day care for 8000 animals.

Cynthia shared about their most recent project and exhibit space expansion, the Darden Marine Conservation Center and the new South Building, which continues to carry the education and conservation message in a fun and entertaining way.

Cynthia reviewed the Aquarium's economic impact for the City and State economy: \$257M and 3500 jobs for the City and approx. \$7.6M in tax dollars for the City and an additional \$9M for the State to invest in other services.

She thanked Deb Zywna and Kathy Warren for inviting them to participate in the RASAP planning sessions last year, including the Aquarium in the City's vision. The Aquarium has launched a Master Planning process with the Board and stakeholders to redo the Bay and Ocean Pavilion and to expand the Aquarium's footprint and is looking forward to the developments.

Holiday Lights Program – Bobby Melatti

Bobby related some welcome news to the Commission that they have already surpassed the amount of money they made with the Holiday Lights this year to-date, compared to what they made last year. He thanked City Staff for the additional efforts in making this happen, as the public needed something to do that was a nice departure from the focus on COVID throughout the past year.

### **Chairman's Report**

BJ Baumann reported that at the last CVB Task Force meeting they voted to support beginning a discussion for having a CVB Authority and announced that the Public Hearing was to be held regarding that next week.

Additionally, they have a Joint Oceanfront Committee (JOC) comprised of RAC and Human Rights Commission members. Formed primarily to address College Beach Week, their focus has shifted slightly toward initiating new programs for 2021. With the assistance of Laura Habr, they will involve the resort business community to establish safe places for dialogue on racism and other emotionally charged issues. They are also working to develop a small business owners' tool kit to help address these issues in the workplace. She invited interested parties of the Commission to contact her.

### RAC Nominating Committee

With nominations announced by Kristina Chastain, **a motion was carried to re-elect BJ Baumann and Randy Thompson to serve as RAC Chair and RAC Vice-Chair, respectively, for the 2021 year.**

### Committee Reports

#### Transportation, Parking, Pedestrian Committee (TPPC) & Resort Area Mobility Plan (RAMP) Steering Committee

Chuck Cayton reports that the RAMP consultants held focus groups two weeks ago to obtain input from outside the RAMP committee and they will hear those results at the next RAMP meeting, scheduled for December 17.

The TPPC has been jointly meeting with the RAMP but did not meet since the last RAC meeting. They are awaiting feedback from the City's traffic engineer regarding an incident at 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Pacific Avenue.

#### Planning & Design Review Committee (PDRC)

Billy Almond reported that they reviewed an expansion to the Fish Bones outdoor café near 13<sup>th</sup> Street, which involves the connector park area across from Legends Walk on the other side of Atlantic Avenue. They approved the project and believed that it would be an enhancement to that area.

Billy extended an invitation to Phil Davenport to attend the next PDRC for insight on how they review projects.

#### Oceanfront Enhancement Committee (OEC)

Randy Thompson reported that they met on November 19, with a parking presentation from Rob Fries. They learned that as an enterprise fund, they are often not coming close to breaking even. They are looking at possibilities for free parking, but it is going to have to come with some other solution. The key for him is that parking is a tool in their toolkit to get locals to the resort and is something of which they should be mindful.

They had an update from Brian Solis on the opening of the Resort Management Office.

#### Resort Investment Committee (RIC)

BJ reported that they had a presentation on the TIP Fund from Kevin Chatellier. This past year has stressed the Fund and they are diligently reviewing funding sources for short-term goals.

They had an open discussion with the new Chief of Police, Paul Neudigate and he expressed support for the Resolution and Block by Block program. The committee was happy to hear his hands-on approach to law enforcement and management.

BJ announced that future RAC speakers includes Mayor Dyer's attendance at the next RAC meeting on January 7, 2021 and she requested topics for discussion to provide to the Mayor.

#### Oceanfront Strategic Growth Area Committee (OSGAC)

Kristina Chastain reported that they met with another property owner about plans and their challenges for their properties. Their vision is for a thriving and unique business and he faces challenges with parking and requested additional police visibility.

#### G.R.E.E.N.

Laura Habr reported that they did not meet in November, but they will have a meeting on December 16. They will talk about encouraging RAC members to serve on the subcommittee, and environmental bills currently under review.

Other issues include addressing PPE wear found in the waterways, and concerns over how the pandemic may affect both the dining experience and urban planning.

They will have their monthly green updates and re-examine priorities for the upcoming year.

She also wants to further explore the Sustainability Plan and reiterate that idea to the City

Manager's Office. **A motion was carried to support the idea that the City Manager's Office reconsider the Sustainability Plan and form a sustainability committee to assist the G.R.E.E.N. committee in its sustainability efforts.**

**Staff Report**

*Resort Management Office (RMO) Update – Brian Solis*

Brian congratulated the RAC on the adoption of the Resolution and added that they will be rolling out communication information in concert with Kathy Warren soon. Looking at the new RMO space yesterday, there is an option for design space to share with the ambassadors that will be part of the RMO at Virginia Beach Boulevard.

*Resort Special Events & Programs – Jamie Capps*

Adding to what Bobby Melatti announced about Holiday Lights, they are working to alleviate traffic issues they are experiencing this year.

COVID restrictions have impacted running events, generating a need for creativity with respect to in-person and virtual participation and traffic plans. Polar Plunge will also be held as a virtual event in 2021. There is ongoing discussion on how the Shamrock Marathon will be handled.

Guy Tower added that City Council agreed to provide some funding for reimbursement to organizers for security typically required of organizers for their events.

**Old Business**

None

**New Business**

None

**Public Comment**

None

Meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.