



Resort Advisory Commission
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RESORT ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: January 10, 2013
TIME: 3:00 pm
PLACE: Virginia Beach Convention Center, Meeting Room 3AB

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Preston Midgett, Chair
Billy Almond
Art Webb
Bryan Cuffee
Sam Reid
Craig Roback
Laura Habr
Nancy Creech
Jim Davis
Michael Cloud-Butler
Sylvia Strickland
Joe DaBiero
Bobby Melatti

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Randy Thompson
Tom Brown
Gerrie West
David Groth

Kristina Chastain
Ken Taylor

OTHERS PRESENT

Barry Frankenfield, SGA
Leo Ortiz, Virginia Beach Events, Unltd.
Elizabeth Hewitt, Virginian-Pilot
Nancy Perry-Marscheider, VBHMA
Tom Ippolito, SEACOM
Bill Reed, BEACON
Matt McInerney, VBPD
John Uhrin, Council

CVB STAFF PRESENT

Tiffany Twine, CVB
Mike Eason, SGA / Resort Management
Robin Hart, SGA / Recorder

Chair Preston Midgett called the meeting to order at 3:06pm.

Motion carried to approve the December minutes as written.

Preston introduces newly appointed Resort Advisory Commission (RAC) member Joe DaBiero, newly elected President of the Virginia Beach Hotel/Motel Association, replacing Verne Burlage.

Preston reviews a list of the RAC members that serve as members of other committees, and requested that they share information from the committee meetings with RAC when relevant: Billy Almond / Green Ribbon Committee, Bryan Cuffee / Development Authority, Bobby Melatti / Arts & Humanities, Preston Midgett / MOCA, Sylvia Strickland / Human Rights, and Art Webb / Advertising Committee.

19th Street Corridor Presentation – Billy Almond

Billy gives an overview of what the 19th Street committee has been working on for the last year. The committee consists of RAC members, PDRC members, tenants, merchants, property owners, and residents of 19th Street, members of the convention center, staff, CVB and others. They are trying to create a “Great Street”, similar to other well-known streets across the country that have common themes, features, events, people spaces and street elements.

Locally, attractive areas such as Williamsburg (Merchant Square), Newport News City Center, the Hampton streetscape projects, and downtown Norfolk all show common simple elements: crosswalks, curb returns, benches, site lighting, banners, signage, street trees, public space, entertainment, public space, public horticulture, public art, etc.

There are two design principles being reviewed for 19th Street. One is the “green/blue” street (“green”, which involves vegetation, public horticulture, and “blue”, because it provides opportunities to treat storm water onsite, through rain gardens). The other is the “complete” street, which includes everything: vehicular traffic, light rail, bike, pedestrian walkways, street trees and storm water treatment.

There is currently a design for 19th Street that includes two 12-ft lanes, parking, and sidewalks on either side. That section could be retro-fitted in the future to receive the light rail transit line. The 19th Street Plan must fit in a city right-of-way of 80 feet. If we are going to have light rail on 19th Street, the committee wants the light rail to be flush, so there is no barrier. Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) needs two lanes for repair and maintenance. Bike lane, drive lane and sidewalk area designs are all affected by these requirements.

What is critical to the 19th Street committees is the parallel parking, as it creates a sense of separation between curb diners and traffic. Their goal, as a subcommittee of PDRC, is working from the convention center due east, on 19th Street, ending at the Dome site. This is an update as of yesterday, January 9, 2013.

For the future, thirty percent plans are due in late February, due back to us in March, public input meetings to be held in April, back to the drawing boards for detailed design, public information meetings to be held in October, and then final design a year from now. Bidding and construction begins after that, subject to funding.

Billy adds that it is a volunteer group, and there are other committees are within the 19th Street committee, including Brand & Theme (creates brand and name for the green destination that we would like this street to be) and Community Outreach (gets information to the public on project).

City of Virginia Beach 50th Anniversary Celebration - Leo Ortiz, Director of Programs and Entertainment

Current ideas to carry the 50th Anniversary theme include “Discover Virginia Beach”, “Fifty Ways to Live the Life”, and “Fifty Days of Fun”.

“Discover Virginia Beach” involves visitors and residents sending in their photos and stories of their experiences in Virginia Beach. Together with MOCA, we will incorporate this information in their exhibit.

“Fifty Ways to Live the Life” plays off the city slogan, “Live the Life”, and will provide quality of life pieces for Virginia Beach, i.e. what Virginia Beach has to offer for Health & Fitness, water sports, etc., and presenting that information on a website www.vblivingthelife.com.

“Fifty Days of Fun”, runs May 4 through October 12. Service providers and attractions (i.e. mini golf), are being asked to provide a value and/or service to the customer at a reduced rate, along with an editorial. Any business that can speak for quality of life and can provide value may participate.

Current marketing efforts include promotion with VBTV, the *Virginian-Pilot*, and the *Beacon* for segments and editorials. The month-end goal is in order to coordinate with *Hampton Roads* magazine publication.

In coordination with the *Virginian-Pilot*, a 40-page brochure will be published that will advertise the Fifty Days of Fun program, as well as other things to do to mark the milestone. They will be running ads in the *Virginian-Pilot* and the *Beacon*, in order to keep the celebration in the forefront of activities. The idea is also to emphasize the other activities that there are to do in the area that some residents may not know about.

Vendors are being asked to provide historical data for the city as a whole (Gold Key Resort is on board). We should see things out by month-end.

There has been some discussion on the schools’ participation, wherein students might be involved in creating and showing animated shorts during the movie nights, to get the word out about the 50th Anniversary celebration. There is also a suggestion that the celebration involve the military.

The oceanfront event will be on October 12, which will include a “marking of the moment”. Portions of Laskin Road, the corridor, and boardwalk are available for ideas, and there will be nodules of events. There will be headline entertainment at 31st Street. There will be some sort of exhibit at the boardwalk documenting the last 50 years, using images that people have submitted.

There was an idea about making everything that the city does for events this year be done as if it were “50 years ago”. The events would go on the same as before, but the script would be a little different. This will help brand the area as it was 50 years ago, and remind people of the full flavor of the area at that time.

Given the efforts of the Sense of Arrival committee, the idea was suggested to place big banners at the entrances to the city, or in large travel areas, during the anniversary year. Banners would be removed at the end of the year.

The city will also be working with the Virginia Beach Hotel / Motel Association (VBHMA) for the anniversary. VBHMA is also celebrating their 50th anniversary.

It was mentioned, on behalf of the Virginia Beach Restaurant Association (VBRA), that a 50-year celebration through food might be another idea.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Transportation, Parking, Pedestrian Committee (TPPC)

Preston Midgett reports that the TPPC did not meet in December.

Planning Design Review Committee (PDRC)

Billy Almond reports that PDRC spent the December meeting preparing for the March RAC strategic planning meeting. They reviewed 2010 goals, and discussed how PDRC planning processes fit into city procedures.

Oceanfront Enhancement Committee (OEC)

Jim Davis reports that the OEC did not meet in December.

Resort Investment Committee (RIC)

Preston Midgett reported for Ken Taylor that the RAC strategic planning meeting will be held on March 7 in lieu of the regularly scheduled RAC meeting. The facilitator will be Bob Trahan.

The possibility of making the Communications Committee an ad hoc committee was discussed. Preston asked for comments and suggestions on their role.

Communications Committee (CC)

Sylvia Strickland reports that the Communications Committee did not meet in December.

G.R.E.E.N. Committee

Laura Habr reports that the G.R.E.E.N. committee did not meet in December.

Staff Report

Mike Eason asks advice whether or not there is a desire to renew the option to have a waterslide operation at 24th Street. The previous operation is fully sustainable, the operators pay all the costs, and the city receives income that goes into the Tourism Investment Program account.

After further discussion on aesthetics, location, costs, nature of the operation and alternatives, the RAC is in favor of having an RFP for entertainment (or something similar) on the beach at the same location. It was recommended that the wording "aesthetics will be part of the evaluation" be included in the RFP language.

Mike provided some information on the LED lights that only come on when someone enters the crosswalk. There are questions on whether or not this system would be a better alternative to the blinking lights. The operation is "green", it's all wireless and all run with solar technology.

New Business

John Uhrin mentions that they working on a proposal with Breeden Company to provide parking for the 24th-25th Street area by using the value of the land. He would like to do a similar proposal for the 19th Street Treasurer's office site. They have identified the need

for structured parking, and he asks that if RAC thinks this has merit, that a letter be directed to the City Manager indicating same.

After discussion, it was noted that the 19th Street property can be leveraged to allow development with no cost to the city, satisfy parking needs, and bring development ideas for 19th Street. It was recommended that the city should explore the option.

A motion was carried to draft a letter to the City Manager to explore the options for land use at the 19th Street treasurer's office site.

Meeting adjourned at 4:25pm