



Resort Advisory Commission
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RESORT ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: June 6, 2013
TIME: 3:00 pm
PLACE: Virginia Beach Convention Center, Meeting Room 2AB

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Billy Almond, Vice-Chair
Art Webb
Bryan Cuffee
Craig Roback
Gerrie West
Nancy Creech
Joe DaBiero
Bobby Melatti
Sam Reid
Kristina Chastain
Randy Thompson
John Hawa
Laura Habr
Ken Taylor
Tom Brown

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Preston Midgett
Jim Davis
Sylvia Strickland

Michael Cloud-Butler

OTHERS PRESENT

Tom Ippolito, OEC
Diane Ippolito, OEC
Chris McCorley, BCF
Danya Bushey, BCF
Greg Ward, BCF
Bill Reed, BEACON
Harry McBrien, VB 2nd Prec.
John Uhrin, City Council

CVB STAFF PRESENT

Jim Ricketts, CVB
Chuck Applebach, CVB
Mike Eason, SGA / Resort Mgmt.
David Fairbaugh, SGA / Parking Mgmt.
Robin Hart, SGA / Recorder

Vice-Chair Billy Almond called the meeting to order at 3:00pm.

Motion carried to approve the May 2013 minutes as written.

Presentation on City of Virginia Beach Advertising Campaign - Jim Ricketts / Art Webb
Jim Ricketts provides the introduction for the presentation of their marketing program with RAC. He notes that it is an integrative campaign, involving the trade show market, the international market, the leisure market, the convention market, ecotourism, web activity, etc. all supported by Public Relations. All decisions are made based on extensive research,

Art Webb with BCF Advertising introduces Greg Ward, who will provide presentation on "Virginia Beach Marketing and Advertising Overview". They are here to update new members and describe what they are trying to do when they create a brand, such as

Live the Life, which must resonate with emotion, be malleable, and be able to change over time.

The agenda included presentation on the Hotel Performance, the *Live the Life* brand, the Campaign Overview, and Public Relations.

PRESENTATION

Jan-Apr Hotel Performance:

In overall comparison and occupancy, year-to-date, we are leading the “competitive set”, which is Virginia Beach, Myrtle Beach, Ocean City, Coastal Carolina, and Williamsburg.

The *Live the Life* Brand:

Developed 6-8 years ago, the brand is the hub of all the marketing and public relations activities. Sticking with the chosen brand is essential for success.

The Campaign Overview:

Leisure Transient (overnight visitors / domestic):

- Media markets tend to be from the mid-Atlantic upper northeast corridor and their data is analyzed to target these audiences in the best way possible.
- We deploy advertising throughout the year through regional magazines, 45% in the digital space, radio and television spots. Advertising amounts and sources vary throughout the year.
- Print media is geared toward *Live the Life* and centers around *Love the Moment*, capturing special moments that revolve around nature, family, culinary and situational experiences. All print ads have videos and contain QR codes.
- The same elements from the print media are in digital executions. The digital component takes people to various designated landing pages that are nature-oriented, family-oriented, etc.
- Out of Home advertising tends to be billboard ads.
- Radio – Virginia Beach partners with MIX 107.3 from the D.C. market, and they also simulcast events down here.

Love the Moment: The ideas for this are creative, and targeted to boomers and couples, which also have print executions for the same concept.

Niche Campaigns: take the form of fishing, off-season activities, vacation rental homes, all drawing the viewer to a landing page on our website. Splash pages are directed to specific potential visitors to the beach.

Virginia Beach Mobile Site: Mobile device activity has grown exponentially over the years. The 2013 Vacation Guide is available online and is promoted within various sections on the website as well as the mobile site.

Virginia Tourism Corp (VTC) Co-op Program: we ensure that there is available information on the va.org website.

Social Media: we work closely with the CVB to ensure a strong social media presence for the City. We have a Facebook page, we work with them on the Twitter page (there is a Twitter page in conjunction with MIX 107 radio). We have a Twitter

page for public relations, as there are many travel writers that are looking for story ideas.

Leisure International:

- International visitors will outpace domestic visitors in the next few years. The City is being very proactive in this respect. This is a huge growth area.
- CVB has contracted with a sales representative in Belgium.
- We have web pages German, French, Spanish as well as a brochure in Mandarin Chinese. We still maintain a presence in Canada (10% of our visitors).

Group Tour: Targets not only the older generations, but also school groups. *Live the Life Adventure* was one idea promoted to tour planners. Tours focus on nature, and historical aspects of Virginia Beach.

Meetings & Conventions: They have had to rethink strategy due to current lack of a convention hotel, so we promote our outstanding client services. We developed a group of ads as well as a digital execution that speak to the service aspect.

Sports: This will continue to be a growth area. We have a facilities guide online so people can see what is here for sporting events, and we advertise in sports planning publications.

VisitVirginiaBeach.com Overview: Everything eventually drives people to the website, because it houses all the information to allow people to plan their trips to Virginia Beach. We track web traffic data daily and weekly. April and May have had high web traffic. Mobile traffic is up 84% and many people are accessing the website from tablets.

Public Relations Update: 2013 initiatives

PR - There have been 10 press visits to the area to-date. We go to travel conferences, and keep the online pressroom updated for writers' access.

International - PR efforts included having a Canadian Discount Card (for Canada Week), Metromedia Partnership, a Facebook contest, Mother's Day promotion, and overseas sales missions examining such markets as China and Brazil.

M&C / Sports – Danya and Al go to different markets with travel writers, lately in NYC and D.C.; there is a familiarization (FAM) tour in town now.

Accolades / Accomplishments – Promoting our accomplishments gets the message out that Virginia Beach is a great place to visit. Greg notes that it is very important to have third party endorsements of Virginia Beach, as it would have cost \$2M to purchase all the press coverage they've had so far this Spring. Danya and her team from BCF have had approximately a 4-to-1 return on investment for their efforts.

Upcoming (and ongoing) PR to include: Conferences / Trade Shows, Fishing FAM tour, Individual Leisure Visits (families, wedding, food international), NYC Desksides and a New Media Kit.

Questions:

Kristina Chastain asks if the cottage rental market is different than other stays, in relation to the average hotel-goer. Greg replies that they tend to have a higher income,

stay longer and spend more money. That part of Virginia Beach has grown in the last 10 years.

No changes have been made in any attempt to reach the Jersey Shore areas this year versus any other year. They have always been a strong market for the City.

Resort Investment Committee (RIC) TIP Fund Presentation – Ken Taylor

Ken reviews the Tourism Investment Project (TIP) Presentation with the Committee.

Preston Midgett had wanted the RAC to weigh in on shepherding the TIP fund, compared to their responsibility when the fund was TGIF. Part of our bylaws read that we are to monitor the tourism growth, investment and special revenue fund to ensure that the expenditures are consistent with Council policy. It holds true with the TIP fund today, so the bylaws are still accurate with the fund structure.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Transportation, Parking, Pedestrian Committee (TPPC)

Preston Midgett not able to attend June 6, 2013 meeting. Sam Reid to give presentation in Preston's absence.

The commercial parking lots and the related ordinance were discussed. Some amendments were suggested and what steps need to be taken to start that process.

The Farmers Markets Franchise Agreements and related fees were discussed. The motion was carried that TPPC support the franchise agreements.

The parking strategy update was provided by Mike Eason. Mike says that the list was extensive, but for the most part they were centered around signage in the neighborhoods, policies regarding business parking passes, etc. The list was divided in the short-, medium- and long-term goals, with 80% of the short-term goals completed.

Mike spoke with Andrew from Seven Cities Rickshaw and they have come to an understanding of the responsibilities of his operations. Mike requested an endorsement from RAC to move forward and take the one-year agreement to City Council on June 25. They would be in operation the next day if approved.

John Uhrin approves with a caution not to impede the existing trolleys' routes.

Andrew comments that the locals are their priority, and their contract is very similar to their operation in Norfolk. They have been in operation for seven years, and have had no problems at either Norfolk (Ghent) or Town Center.

Kristina Chastain asks how much the operation costs to ride. Andrew responds that it is tip-based, especially since they are in competition with free services in Norfolk (FRED). The oceanfront covers a lot more distance, so over time, the pricing strategy may change with that.

There was a question raised on how picking up a fare will work with the trolley lane.

Mike Eason suggests Andrew work with some key private hotel operators, and he may be able to get into some connector park areas, but, in a word, they are just going to have to work it out because each street is different.

Motion carried to approve the pedalcab franchise agreement as written.

Motion carried to approve the Farmers Market franchise agreements as written.

Resort Investment Committee (RIC)

TIP fund presentation given earlier in the RAC meeting by Chair Ken Taylor.

Planning Design Review Committee (PDRC)

Billy Almond reports updates from the meeting last Tuesday.

The plans for 612 21st Street were approved for additional parking at the corner of the two bank towers at 21st and Cypress.

The Voodoo lounge sign was approved upon the condition that if the property where Peppers used to be were to be developed, then that sign would be removed.

Discussion about the Street Art & Lifeguard stands project is ongoing.

There were updates on Cirquesa at Rudee Loop.

PDRC is waiting for the Virginia Beach Fishing Pier sign group to return to the committee.

On the 19th Street closures and design, they are waiting for more information in July.

The Commercial Parking lot committee has been formed, and it includes representatives from RAC and PDRC, and will be moving forward.

Communications Committee (CC)

Billy Almond notes that Sylvia Strickland is not in attendance.

Oceanfront Enhancement Committee (OEC)

Billy Almond reports that Jim Davis is not in attendance, but that John Uhrin will speak about an issue concerning OEC.

John notes that the OEC is continuing to work with us on the items on which Jim Davis briefs the commission, but one new thing that OEC has been asked to review is late night behavior on Atlantic Avenue. The behavior has become negative and they have been asked to come up with ways to try to curb that. So far, he has a rolling list of possible solutions to be used as a template for discussion. John will pass the list to Mike Eason for distribution.

G.R.E.E.N. Committee

Phil Davenport of Public Works spoke to G.R.E.E.N. last week and updated the committee on the recycling program and other programs such as boardwalk shower stations, and lighting at the resort area.

Staff Report

Mike Eason reminds the commission that the Cirquesa VIP show is tonight.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:24pm.