



Resort Advisory Commission
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RESORT ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES

DATE: July 3, 2014
TIME: 3:00 pm
PLACE: Virginia Beach Convention Center, Meeting Room 1D

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Gerrie West
Preston Midgett
Bobby Melatti
Diana Burke for Joe DaBiero
Laura Habr
Nancy Creech
Sam Reid
Bryan Cuffee
Kristina Chastain
Craig Roback
John Hawa
Michael Cloud-Butler
Sylvia Strickland
Jim Davis
Tom Brown

Ken Taylor
Bill Gambrell
Randy Thompson

OTHERS PRESENT

Matt McInerney, VBPD
Barry Frankenfield, SGA
Mark Shea, SGA
Brian Solis, SGA
Mike Perez, HRT
John Uhrin, Council
Bill Reed, BEACON
Stacey Parker, The Pilot
Megan Shearin, CVB
Mike Eason, SGA/Resort Mgmt.
Robin Hart, SGA/Recorder

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Billy Almond

Vice-Chair Kristina Chastain called the meeting to order at 3:00p.m.

Motion carried to approve the minutes from the June 5, 2014 meeting as written.

HRT Trolley Presentation – Mike Perez, HRT

Preston Midgett introduces Mike Perez, Director of Rolling Stock for HRT.

Mike explains that, in an effort to recreate the excitement that the vintage trolleys brought when they ran at the oceanfront years ago, the City requested HRT look into bringing the trolleys back. In advance of that meeting, a small subset of people met with the vendor and discussed what they wanted the trolley to look like and what they wanted it to be.

Mike Perez reviews the presentation given to TPPC on June 26, 2014, saying that although the trolleys look like vintage trolleys, they are built to the highest safety standards, meeting all federal requirements for a transit mode.

The general plans are to have an open air coach in the back, with climate control in the front, special service with storm panels available for the off-season; a maximum

versatility with year-round capability. The trolleys are ADA-compliant, storm curtains for summer pop-up showers, and more. Preston adds that there will be a bike rack and more brightly colored wheels.

Pending approval and recommendation from this Commission to Council to move this forward, the next step is to have half of the trolleys arrive at the end of this fiscal year and the second half arrive in the first part of the next fiscal year, so all trolleys will be in Virginia Beach for next season. They would then want to move forward by the end of July, and finalize the scope of work and advertise by September.

Preston adds that they want the materials to be low maintenance and long-life, so they are opting for a composite material. There will be another group to work on design (colors, paint schemes, wood/non-wood, interior colors, vinyl, etc.). Mark Shea says that they hope to have something by early August. The dates are critical, and the City risks partial delivery if dates are not met as specified.

Mike Eason reiterates what they are looking for today is approval to proceed with (and recommend) a low-floor vehicle, that is ADA-compliant, with two doors (one midway and one in front), Altoona-tested (to receive additional funds), rear diesel powered, open back area and the rest will be the design amenities of color, scheme, etc.

QUESTIONS

Since an HRT survey showed that about 20% of the base riders were not going to ride the hybrids because they preferred the trolleys for the entertainment, they expect these "new vintage-style" trolleys to increase ridership.

The change to hybrid was made because, at that time, the trolleys were old and the City needed something more reliable. The ridership that they had for the wrapped vehicle they had end of last summer (2013) had an increased ridership because the windows were a lighter tint and the bus was painted differently.

Mike Eason reiterates that not only will the trolleys increase ridership; they will bring a higher level of service. Although the trolleys will not accept credit cards, HRT is hoping to be able to make it easier to purchase tickets, have better scheduling, and more. Preston discusses the apps and Mike Perez says that HRT shares that desire to utilize apps, but it comes down to cost, as it is a significant infrastructure change. They do have five TVMs and will replace them, in the interim, similar to what they have with light rail. They have also requested additional TVMs for Atlantic Avenue. They can also make fare media and passes available at hotels, grocery stores, 7-11s, and other places.

Other members agree that the replica trolleys are part of the beach experience. Many things can be added to enhance the entertainment piece of the trolleys. Mike Perez mentions that the trolleys have a power supply, so they can be lit up, have television monitors, etc.

Motion carried unanimously that the RAC recommend that the City go forward with the ADA-compliant, low-floor, open end in the back, air-conditioned in the front, trolley presented today.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Transportation, Parking, Pedestrian Committee (TPPC)

Preston Midgett reports that in addition to the trolley presentation, the TPPC also discussed the Subcommittee Guidelines. He instructed the committee to review them and bring any issues back to TPPC (and RAC if necessary).

Planning and Design Review Committee (PDRC)

Gerrie West reports for Billy Almond, unable to attend the July 1, 2014 meeting.

They had a second presentation on the Chicho's business that wanted to put a second seating area outside. There was no objection to them moving forward and no additional information requested. Motion carried unanimously.

The committee had a presentation on a vinyl fence suggested to go around the perimeter of the Old Coast Guard Station to keep people from loitering after hours. Although the price was acceptable, the PDRC wanted the fencing to look nice within the context of the building's historic structure; they felt that the fence that was priced out was shiny and plastic. The committee asked that they go back and price out some other options. Wood was not available as a material because of the maintenance issues of it, but there are some composite materials that look more like wood than plastic. The committee asked for some alternatives and they will be brought back to PDRC for review.

The committee discussed the idea of limiting or banning sandwich boards on Atlantic Avenue. The resort guidelines overlays prohibit them, but they have begun popping up, obstructing the crowds in some areas and promoting products for other boards. The motion was carried unanimously that PDRC pursue signs (sidewalk sandwich boards) in the public right of way. Mike Eason to work with Kevin Hershberger and they will make the changes available for review at PDRC.

Kristina suggests fine-tuning the quality of the boards allowed, rather than eliminating them, as some of the boards lend a tasteful flair to the area.

Parking lot owner Mr. Corbell wants to put in portable bathrooms and changing rooms in his commercial parking lot between the Raven & Legends Walk. Kevin Hershberger had reported that the bathrooms they are looking at are pods, with minor foundation, similar to port-o-pottys on private property. The PDRC's role is to judge what they look like. Gerrie had asked for more information on design, exact location, screening, and security; no formal presentation needed.

Oceanfront Enhancement Committee (OEC)

Jim Davis reports that the OEC met on June 20, 2014, continuing their discussion of some of the behavioral issues at the resort. They did discuss the efficacy of designing the benches at the boardwalk, and decided to gather more observations and other material that can help bring the proposal to the Commission on funding for the redesign of the benches.

Another dimension of the behavior issue had to do with homeless individuals who received some of the services, and how sometimes that spilled over into the neighborhoods. They hope to get representatives from the neighborhoods and service providers in the same room to brainstorm how to address some of those concerns.

The Sense of Arrival committee had the second of the design meetings on the 264 Expressway area on June 23. They are looking for design concepts and he hopes to hear more from them down the road.

Resort Investment Committee (RIC)

Ken Taylor reported that the RIC did not meet.

Oceanfront Visionary Committee (OVC)

Kristina Chastain reported that the OVC did not meet. The plan is to resume meeting in August 2014.

G.R.E.E.N. Committee

Laura Habr reported that the G.R.E.E.N. Committee did not meet.

Economic Development Report

Bryan Cuffee has no report for July 2014.

Staff Report

Mike reports that they did move the fireworks to Saturday night, and they are hoping that the storms goes out to sea. There is another briefing scheduled for 5:00pm.

They have had very successful events in the last month: Latin Festival and the Boardwalk Art Show. The crowds were good, the weather has been ideal, and he had no negative news from law enforcement.

Old Business

John Uhrin asks if law enforcement was going to have a finite time of restricting traffic coming in for July 4 this year.

Matt McInerney responds the law enforcement will watch parking lots and will shut down I-264 if it becomes necessary. He says that as of this meeting, there is no public announcement of a road closure.

John also mentions that they will be getting the infrastructure report from Kimley-Horn regarding the arena proposal. The consultants are communicating what they will need to facilitate that development Tuesday. Those negotiations are ongoing.

Nancy Creech announces that they will be kicking off their free summer concert series at Neptune Park. They are in their fourth season and attendance has been very good.

New Business

None

Public Comment

None

The meeting adjourned at 3:57pm.