



Resort Advisory Commission  
 2101 Parks Avenue, Suite 302  
 Virginia Beach, VA 23451  
 (757) 385-4800  
 FAX (757) 422-3666

RESORT ADVISORY COMMISSION  
 MINUTES

**DATE:** August 7, 2014  
**TIME:** 3:00 pm  
**PLACE:** Virginia Beach Convention Center, Meeting Room 1D

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT**

Billy Almond  
 Ken Taylor  
 Gerrie West  
 Preston Midgett  
 Bobby Melatti  
 Diana Burke for Joe DaBiero  
 Laura Habr  
 Nancy Creech  
 Sam Reid  
 Kristina Chastain  
 Craig Roback  
 Bill Gambrell  
 Randy Thompson  
 John Hawa  
 Michael Cloud-Butler  
 Sylvia Strickland

Jim Davis

**COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT**

Tom Brown  
 Bryan Cuffee

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Dannette Smith, Human Services  
 Capt. Sean Adams, VBPD  
 Bill Reed, BEACON  
 Stacey Parker, The Pilot  
 Mike Eason, SGA/Resort Mgmt.  
 Robin Hart, SGA/Recorder

Chair Billy Almond called the meeting to order at 3:00p.m.  
**Motion carried to approve the minutes from the July 3, 2014 with changes as noted.**

Oceanfront Initiative – Enhanced Pilot Outreach Program – Dannette Smith,  
 Director of the Human Services Department, City of Virginia Beach

Dannette has held the Director’s position for approx. one year, and she comes to Virginia Beach from Seattle, WA.

About three months ago, they began talking about the status of working with the folks who live on the oceanfront and habituating on the boardwalk.

This project is a collaborative effort between the Departments of Human Services, Housing & Neighborhoods, and the Virginia Beach Police Department, as well as the community providers who have been providing services at the oceanfront. They want a collaborative strategy to move those who experience chronic homelessness toward services. One of the ways of providing services is to assess how they engage them, as well as ways of possibly doing things differently, such as the way benefits are

distributed, how assistance can become more mobile, etc. The packet presented to the Commission contains a description of participating services, the steps required for getting someone to a facility for assessment, the job description of the outreach worker, and a timeline.

The project began July 14, 2014 as a pilot. The outreach workers on the boardwalk are nicknamed "Pinkies", for the pink shirts they wear. Formerly homeless themselves, the Pinkies' role is to (1) engage the homeless, and (2) get them into services (i.e. PIN, JCOC, Stand Up for Kids, the Lighthouse, etc.). The outreach workers work Wednesday through the following Tuesday, from 6:00am to 9:00pm. They are also partnering with law enforcement when they have disruptive behaviors that extend beyond an outreach worker's strategy.

They are reviewing data and determining strategies that are working. They understand that the homeless (1) must get into recovery, if necessary, (2) must get identification in order to receive services, and (3) must be able to look at housing.

Dannette notes that they meet every Thursday from 3:00pm to 4:00pm to auto-correct their strategy. At the end of the pilot, they will be able to talk about what they need and how they need to adjust for the program to become a permanent situation.

Captain Sean Adams says they started the conversation about this type of program a year ago, with a proposal from law enforcement for one full-time worker; they received six Pinkies instead. From a police and public safety standpoint, they could not be happier.

#### QUESTIONS:

There were questions from the Commission on how businesses could get involved, what role they should play when coming in contact with the homeless, the subset within the homeless population, the comparison and outcome of a similar program in Seattle, and to what extent the program may become part of the city infrastructure.

Zeros Subs on 17<sup>th</sup> Street works with Stand Up For Kids, engaging the youth and young adults, and providing a place for assessments, along with a free meal.

When business owners encounter people loitering around their establishments, Dannette advises to call their offices (she will provide contact information), if they feel as though it has something to do with substance abuse or homelessness. She advises to call law enforcement if they feel as if the person simply will not leave the premises. Dannette would prefer that they call her offices first because sometimes the workers know them, or already have a relationship with them.

There was a comment about a subset of the population, that appears to be more transient than homeless.

Sean notes that they are seeing folks that are new, but the main services do not see them at their locations. They have also seen people who like hanging out in that area, with the homeless.

Others members mention that it does seem like there is an increase in the population of folks at the oceanfront who either are homeless or appear to be homeless, Cheryl Molinet, with Human Services, will be identifying those new contacts to see if

there is a net increase in the people they are discussing. Mike Eason requests that the contact information for the outreach workers to VBHA and VBRA.

Dannette says that they are being selective based on data, as to where they concentrate their efforts, mentioning 24<sup>th</sup> Street and 18<sup>th</sup> Street. They are focusing on the boardwalk and moving out from there. They are not trying to spread themselves too thin.

When a similar program was started in Seattle, the city council gave them \$134K to them to start their program. The downtown area of Seattle has the same demographics of homeless as Virginia Beach. The downtown business association in Seattle already had ambassadors, similar to the Pinkies.

In order for the program to move forward to become Dannette replied that the decision will be based on data collected at the end of the pilot, which should be in October 2014. If the program moves forward, it has to be part of the program to end homelessness that Andy Friedman has started, so they do not create two different plans.

Second, she says that if the program is very successful, meaning not only are they able to mitigate the situation, but that homeless people begin to see the value of it, then they will have to figure out how to not have the homeless have to go to the boardwalk for the service.

The private assistance groups sometimes start rethinking their missions, but these were very ginger topics in discussion, as found out in Seattle. They try to help the service organizations see how they could still be faith-based and serve people who may be in need, yet consider the economics of the city. When people do not feel safe, that is a problem.

One-day homeless counts done in Seattle consisted of identifying who they can count on the street; who they see, and Dannette imagines that the count is done similarly in Virginia Beach.

Mike would like to have Dannette come back when results are available, and seek RAC's support.

Joe DaBiero reports that the hotels are in support of the program.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Transportation, Parking, Pedestrian Committee (TPPC)**

Preston Midgett reviews the Crash Data Report (drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists) provided by Mike Shahsiah at the last meeting in July. Data collected from 2008-2012 and includes Atlantic and Pacific Avenue in the resort area with the exception of the boardwalk (which is not considered a roadway) revealed that 64% of the 85 pedestrian crashes were pedestrians' fault, and 76% of the 103 bicycle crashes were the cyclists' fault.

They discussed varying traffic laws from this area to the northeast, as well as the State of Virginia.

They reviewed implementation of a public education program, police

enforcement, as well as safety/protection devices and stand-up signs during heavy traffic, changing the markings at intersections, and fences in the median.

Preston asks for any recommendations from the RAC. It was observed from one member that many cyclists have the impression that they always have the right-of-way, suggested from another member that the speed limit on Pacific be lowered to 30mph from 35mph, and noted by another member that some intersections have markings with no signal. Trolleys also can block drivers' views.

Nancy Creech asks if the surreys are legal now on Atlantic Avenue. She has not seen them on Pacific.

Mike Eason explains that the trolley lane was designated a bike lane a couple of years ago. You cannot differentiate between a bike and a surrey, so the surreys started showing up in the bike lanes. The surreys operate by permit (not franchise agreement), which requires operators to have a plaque on the front of the surrey specifying the area where it is allowed to operate. The resort management office does not currently have the manpower to enforce the requirement.

Preston says they can look at the number of surrey franchise rentals and see if they can narrow it down to just the boardwalk and bike path at the next TPPC meeting.

The update for the trolley design committee was that they are getting a group of people together on Monday morning to see what these new trolleys might look like, and make some decisions. He urges that any interested parties please contact him.

### **Planning and Design Review Committee (PDRC)**

Billy Almond reports that the PDRC met Tuesday morning.

They discussed the sandwich boards in the resort area. The decision was made to allow the season to end, the zoning and inspections office would send copies of regulations to merchants to reiterate their responsibilities with the signs, and PDRC would review it for next year.

An update from Gerrie West on the building at 501 Virginia Beach Boulevard. The design was approved, and is heading on to the CUP process.

They did start a discussion on the Atlantic Avenue cafes and the regulations disallowing awnings. Giovanni's made the request for an awning, PDRC thought it was appropriate, and they may have another pilot to see how that works.

The Old Coast Guard Station fencing may be resolved. They are using a new product that will last a long time before any maintenance work might be required.

### **Oceanfront Enhancement Committee (OEC)**

Jim Davis reports that the OEC met on Friday. They gathered some of the homeless service providers to get the conversation going on what some of the concerns were that the residents had about people going through the neighborhood.

The committee asked the providers to take the lead on looking at some of the concerns and issues from some of the residents.

Alot of people shared information on how the providers provide the service and cleared up some of the misconceptions of what was believed by some to be enabling without concern for the impact.

### **Resort Investment Committee (RIC)**

Ken Taylor reports that the RIC met this month, and Doug Smith, the new Deputy City Manager replacing Steve Herbert, also attended. Doug met the members and discussed projects.

They made a final revision to the Subcommittee Guidelines that the subcommittees *may* meet once a month. The scheduling and frequency of meetings will be determined by the committee chair, which makes it less burdensome that the committees meet every month. **Motion carried to amend the subcommittee guidelines as noted.** The revised guidelines will be distributed to all RAC and subcommittee members.

### **Oceanfront Visionary Committee (OVC)**

Kristina Chastain reported that the OVC did not meet. The plan is to resume meeting in September 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 was not available to provide a report; however, Billy Almond reports that some of them were in a meeting last week with Peterson Company. They are working on a process for what they might come up with for the Dome site. They discussed things that have proven successful as well as not successful in their operations.

### **Staff Report**

Mike Eason reviewed the ice rink proposal, showing some pictures from another location to see what the rink might look like. The rink will be open air, have portable restrooms, a compressor, a warming tent, some concessions. There are discussions about a Christmas Village, etc.

The rink is 120 feet by 60 feet, with a tropical theme. There will be benches and palm trees inside the rink for skaters to rest.

They have to go to the Planning Commission in September for alternative compliance requirements. They will go back to Council for the CUP in the first part of October.

The owner will be back in town soon and Mike would like for him owner to meet Joe DaBiero and Bill Gambrell to discuss marketing.

They will start opening in mid-November and the agreement will run through the first week in February. They will decide to stay longer based on success.

Billy Almond had one suggestion that, based on the property that is there, to have a CUP for entertainment, and each year, when they have another business come in next summer, they just have to go through an administrative review rather than go through the long process that the ice rink is in now. Mike agrees, and has discussed it with the proper departments.

**Old Business**

Bobby Melatti comments on the ice rink, and he is aware of the successes and struggles of rinks. He did suggest that the rink and Holiday Lights work together and has some ideas. One member suggested increasing the carolers/choirs.

Nancy Creech mentions the Neptune Festival, and that they are trying to hit all demographics. She welcomes ideas, thoughts and suggestions for the festival.

Craig Roback asks if there have been any solicitation programs from businesses, similar to what Dannette mentioned. He has contacts that might be interested.

Billy Almond says that they have done something similar with contacts walking the resort area. If Dannette comes back in October and says that they need "X", his hope is that we can contribute and identify some funds.

Mike says that the HRC and social services incorporated this into their program with no money. To Billy's point, if anyone can contribute money, please do.

**New Business**

None

**Public Comment**

None

Meeting Adjourned at 4:16pm.