



Resort Advisory Commission
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RESORT ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES

DATE: June 4, 2015
TIME: 3:00 pm
PLACE: Virginia Beach Convention Center, 2nd floor

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Billy Almond
Bobby Melatti
BJ Baumann
Kristina Chastain
Laura Habr
Sam Reid
Sylvia Strickland
Michael Cloud-Butler
Randy Thompson
Joe DaBiero
Tom Brown
John Hawa
Nancy Creech
Bryan Cuffee
Bill Gambrell
Gerrie West
Jim Davis

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Craig Roback
Preston Midgett

OTHERS PRESENT

John Uhrin, Council
Emily Archer, SGA
Matt McInerney, 2nd Prec.
Bill Reed, BEACON
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 May 7, 2015 meeting as written.

Connector Parks / Stub Streets - Inventory and Analysis – Emily Archer

Barry Frankenfield tells the Commission that their goal will be use this presentation as an aide to develop guidelines by which to evaluate any changes in the future as well as use this as an opportunity to make some changes needed now. They hope to do this in the next six months or so.

Emily provides an analysis of the connector parks between Atlantic Avenue and the boardwalks. In her assessment, she developed a detailed inventory table with maps. The table includes such items as which streets accommodate emergency vehicles, which are vehicular versus pedestrian-only, which meet ADA requirements, have restrooms, access street, paving description, etc.

She specifically noted a lack of bike parking, how the paving changed at almost every street, streets with numerous signs versus lack of signage, and the variety in ADA and vehicular access points.

Positive items of note were a lot of great shared spaces, great place making

features and welcoming scenery. Emily mentions the use of woonerfs in some of the connector parks that are vehicular. A Dutch word that translates to “living street”, woonerfs are typically curbsless and lack crosswalks because they are short blocks where vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists share the space. In Europe, they are used for smaller, alleyway streets. They are becoming popular for commercial areas.

NACTO (the National Association of City Transportation Officials) calls them “very small streets” in their urban street design guides, and can provide some good guidelines if we start designing these. Shared street spaces currently exist at 4th Street, 20th Street and 37th Street.

Emily believes that we might want to address some curb access requirements, and look into new schemes and colors while keeping the guidelines flexible.

DISCUSSION / QUESTIONS

Members made suggestions to paint the pump stations and had requests to make the restroom areas less menacing and more comfortable for others.

Emily replies that placing art in the areas near the bathrooms, or redoing the space might help, but there is limited space for the building, and lighting is an issue.

Billy explains that they made the exterior on the pump stations rough on purpose to deter graffiti artists, but there are always options.

Kristina Chastain asks if other forms of vegetation specific to Virginia Beach could be planted, and if so, what Emily might suggest.

Emily said discussions with landscape management indicated that landscape is very difficult to grow in the wind tunnels created between the hotels.

Billy adds that the proximity to the ocean that is also a major factor. Continuing the boardwalk all the way up to 89th Street, the first tree you will find that is native is the live oak, which is another 100 yards away from the extended boardwalk line, approx. 250-300 yards off the primary dune. That distance is almost to the west side of Atlantic Avenue at the resort area. Live oak and native black cherry trees are the only ones you can have in this area. The hotels that choose to are treating the palm trees almost as annuals as the only way of getting vertical vegetation to grow in the resort area. They have tried trellises with native vines as a substitute.

Joe DaBiero suggests having a higher-growing tree versus a lower-growing juniper that allows for hiding, and encourages rats and other varmints.

Tom Brown comments that, during the presentation, he viewed the parks and streets more through the eyes of the people versus them serving as guidelines for development. Artwork, lighting, entranceways and pavers are the important things to him, and he feels that they do not have to be identical, but they do have to be inviting.

Billy reminds the Commission that this design was developed in the 1980s and says that 65-80% of the theme is still out there. He asks if there is enough still in place to warrant using those designs as the basis for the guidelines.

Mike Eason says that one of the issues they have with the pavers is that they do not make those colors anymore, and we might have to create another color palette. He agrees that the junipers have gotten huge and agrees that we do need to do something. Mike does state that Frank believes that the junipers are some of the only things that

will survive that close to the boardwalk.

Billy believes that we can push the palette makers to match the colors.

Emily says they did throw around the idea of shade structure versus trees, noting Grommet Island as an example with their blue tarp.

John Hawa believes that the ADA compliance is the number one thing we need to address.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning and Design Review (PDRC)

Billy Almond reports that at their last meeting, Emily Archer presented the connector park summary that we saw here today.

They also had presentations on the Sense of Arrival. Multiple schemes were presented, with the preferred alternative involving a place for public art with enhanced grading and design, plantings, street trees, and surfboards coming down the side of I264, backlit. In the evening, uplighting and lasers would create a memorable entrance as you come across the overpass at Birdneck.

The next step with that is the hope to talk with those that control the road, the VDOT. This is the inbound and outbound area next to the Visitors Center, and is a huge space, with different views at different speeds as you travel by it eastbound and westbound.

Transportation, Parking, Pedestrian Committee (TPPC)

Sam Reid reports for Preston Midgett that the TPPC reviewed two projects for roadwork, one was presented by project manager Josh Holt, as part of their "Proper Repair Find and Fix" in the Public Utilities contract. There will be a sanitary sewer replacement at the 600 and 700 block of 24th Street. There will not be any road closures at 24th Street; only single lane closures and temporary flags used when needed, for the dump trucks. The project was due to start in mid-June 2015 and will be complete by the end of August 2015.

Phil Hubbard, of HRSD, presented the other project. It is a pilot Infiltration and Inflow (I&I) project in the 24th Street, Barberton Drive, and Birdneck Village areas. For this project, they have to take care of one pipeline along 24th Street and rehab some manholes in the same area. The only road closed may be Barberton Drive, and roads will otherwise be flagged and have one lane access. They will start by the second week of June 2015, and be complete no later than December 2015.

Brian Chenault, of HRT, gave a presentation exploring the options of changing the WAVE Route 32 to avoid the Barberton area due to resident concern for safety, while maintaining service to MOCA and The Heritage Store.

The TPPC carried a motion to eliminate using Barberton this year in view of both safety for the residents and upcoming construction, and let HRT work out how to accommodate both Heritage and MOCA, with consideration given to the TPPC's recommendation to ask the Heritage shopping center owners for permission to travel

through the lot.

Concerning what to do with next year's route, HRT was asked to discuss on how the Shoppers Express will operate in the future. Updates to be provided at the next TPPC meeting.

Oceanfront Enhancement Committee (OEC)

Jim Davis met last month, and reports that they had a conversation that was an extension of the Sense of Arrival idea, on touch points. Ron Kuhlman and Chuck Applebach came in to talk about the type and quality of information offered to visitors headed into the area. They are looking at how they can influence the mindset of someone coming to the resort area.

The other conversation had to do with the changing, or emerging, profile of the oceanfront visitor. We were analyzing who they are, what they want, and whether the resort is aligned with what this emergent visitor might want. The OEC is discussing looking at that to see if we can grasp what the profile looks like and see if what they come up with would be an enhancement.

Resort Investment Committee (RIC)

Billy Almond reports that there was general conversation about what is going on about in terms of the Commission.

They did talk about speakers. Billy asked the Commission if there is a topic for discussion or there is person that they want to come to RAC to make a presentation regarding the resort, they would like to know about it.

On September 2, 2015, Patti Phillips will address the RIC on the TIP fund.

They discussed some major projects, such as the arena and the dome site. John Uhrin says that the attorneys are still finishing the agreements for Council to have a formal vote for the arena. They want to get it done before they break for summer, as the developers are eager to break ground this fall.

On the dome site, Peterson has asked for a one-year extension on their agreement so they can secure their plans. They are aware that entertainment needs to be their primary focus. They will consider that at their next meeting.

John notes that in terms of that whole corridor, staff is working hard to determine who is going to do what and there are parts that have not been thoroughly vetted, and they are refining those parts, as well as talking about parking, traffic, and shared usage.

Oceanfront Visionary Committee (OVC)

OVC did not meet last month.

G.R.E.E.N. Committee

Laura Habr reports that the Beachy Clean program is moving along. Stickers will be arriving soon.

Mike Eason says that the cigarette butt campaign is also moving along. Christina Trapani's group has received a grant, and Mike has put receptacles for the program between 20th and 24th Streets, where it has been noted that the area has the highest concentration of cigarette butts.

Laura says that Brad DeLashmutt, of the VB VDH, reported that the first round of water sampling from the ocean in May looked good.

Economic Development Report

None

Staff Report

Mike Eason reports a successful Wounded Warrior Week, and senses that it will only get bigger and better.

John Uhrin had asked the USO to brief Council on the event, and the new event for this year was racquetball for the disabled vets. Maybe the USO could brief RAC, and if not, at least view the Powerpoint presentation at RAC. He tells the Commission that the City hosted 500 wounded veterans for a weekend, and the Patriotic Festival gave access to all the chalets. John believes that this is what we need to be doing.

Mike adds that this is gaining momentum, and not only here but in Washington D.C. as well. The USO was able to get the Marine Corps Silent Drill Team here, which he understands is not an easy feat.

Mike notes that this is Sand Soccer weekend, and advises anyone getting to the beach to be there before 10:00am, as there will be 500 teams, and many international visitors to what is known as a premier soccer event.

Mike mentions that he would like to have someone from Cirque du Soliel at the next meeting.

Other Comments

Bill Gambrell asks if we could have someone from the Bayfront Advisory Commission to speak for the Shore Drive area, another gateway.

Jim Davis says that Kal Kassir had come to several meetings about the Sense of Arrival, and suggests inviting him to the RAC.

Bill says that maybe we can do something to connect the Shore Drive and Resort areas. He says that the call for artists is going out for the bridge they are building there.

Billy asks Mike Eason to invite Kal to the RAC, to fill us in on what the Bayfront Advisory Commission is working on, and maybe visit the RIC.

Sylvia Strickland mentions a Lets Open Doors presentation given at a Virginia Beach Mayor's Commission on Human Rights meeting in May.

She distributed brochures and postcards on the Lets Open Doors Program, which focused on assistance with installation of ADA-compliant hardware on commercial business doors to allow the disabled equal access to goods and services by making it easier to access the commercial buildings in which they are housed.

She says that the Sheriffs Department says if you buy the ADA-compliant door, they will install it for you at no charge. The web address is www.letsopendoors.net.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00p.m.