



Resort Advisory Commission
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RESORT ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: February 2, 2017

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Virginia Beach Convention Center, Room 4AB

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Kristina Chastain
Billy Almond
Sam Reid
Bill Gambrell
BJ Baumann
Jim Davis
Russell Lyons
Randy Thompson
Preston Midgett
Bobby Melatti
Tyler Brown
John Hawa
Bryan Cuffee
Craig Roback
Sylvia Strickland
Michael Cloud-Butler
Laura Habr

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Nancy Creech
Gerrie West

OTHERS PRESENT

Kevin Hershberger, Zoning
Kathy Warren, SGA
Rob Fries, Parking
Kristine Gay, Planning
Emily Archer, SGA
Rob Hudome, VBDA
Barry Frankenfield, Planning
Tiffany Russell, CVB
Brad Van Dommelen, CVB
Capt. Ronan, VBLE
Officer Matt McInerney, VBLE
Mariah Pohl, Southside Daily
Mark Shea, SGA
John Uhrin, Council
Diana Burke, VBHA
Bill Reed, BEACON
Stacey Parker, The Pilot
Mike Eason, CVB/Resort Mgmt.
Robin Hart, CVB/Recorder

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

Motion carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the January 5, 2017 meeting as written.

Resort Entertainment Report – Ron Williams, Jr.

Ron introduces himself as the Deputy City Manager, charged with economic vitality for the city, which includes planning, economic development, the strategic growth area office, housing and neighborhood preservation, cultural arts, the convention and visitors bureau and agriculture. He is a native of the area and served as a Deputy City Manager in Norfolk for 14 years.

His presentation is a review of the collective efforts of the departments mentioned above. He wants to talk about what they see happening in the Central Beach Entertainment

District this year, which is essentially a preview of what they plan to say to Council at the next session.

Ron Williams emphasizes the importance of investment in the resort area and revisits the plans, studies and goals that have been established and why they continue to come back to the projects that they believe make sense for the City. He discusses new modeling and talks about the work they need to do to make that happen.

The five strategic goals have been the same for the last 20 years, and he points out that just over 1% of the city's real estate generates a tremendous amount of revenue for the City. This sustainability is probably not a reality and they need to provide new product to help with that. The dome site and other hotel amenities can be catalyst projects for focusing on a year-round resort. In reviewing the 2017 Work Plan, March 7 will be a big day concerning the arena, and determine where we stand with our projects and how we will move forward.

The ViBe District recognizes the importance of art in culture and it is a great activity of programming and incubation for small businesses and development, and weaving the network of the residential neighborhoods with the entertainment districts. The City is committed to investing in infrastructure improvements for this area on Parks Avenue and 17th through 19th Streets. It is almost completely funded.

The Dome Site encompasses more than 10 acres, and Ron reviews the negotiations associated with the site, and one that included closing 19th Street. He says that placemaking is critical to ensure the sustainability of the resort area, so where they can take whole districts and build for several blocks is key. Active and attractive streetscapes, integration with the surrounding community, diverse mixes, programmed activities, and inclusion of a performance arts venue are also key to the mix, with the flexibility to close 19th Street. A public-private partnership will make this work. An experienced operator will continue to keep the area fresh and relevant with the right mix of uses that fills a void in the area and encourages our locals as well as tourists to come to enjoy. If Council allows the release of a Letter of Qualifications, in order to receive submissions with the mix that can pull off the project. They expect to have those returned in March and get that started this year. This is the big ticket item that they are working on for this year, along with the arena.

Brad Van Dommelen and the CVB staff have been working on how to get that 365-feel at the resort area and studies indicate that they need to bring new product in to enhance the convention center. It has expansion ability, but needs an anchor hotel. The sports marketing team is looking at all the interests that they can capture but they want to be able to provide the amenities for those parties, so they are focusing on a new field house. They are looking at a 120- to 150K s.f. facility. They will continue to work on the siting for the next 90 days. Other convention centers can attract groups that have specific meeting planner needs, which are rooms, having an anchor and headquarters for the association or group, and what package they can sell.

The Planning & SGA staff have been working with Kimley-Horn on parking and the developments on the horizon. We need to build to what the demand should be, understand the existing demand and consider the goal to which we want to grow.

He uses a model that looks at land use, the infrastructure, pricing changes that can be made during changes demand, and shared parking arrangements. They have a tool that can help them make good decisions as they consider these developments in a compact area. The tool can also be applied to private parking ownership.

Other goals that will build our 2017 work plan, in addition to looking for year-round attraction to the resort, will be to have cost participation in the Dome site, complete the CIP projects in the ViBe District, construct a field house facility, cost participate in a new convention center hotel and develop additional parking structures.

The next steps are to release the RFQ through the Virginia Beach Development Authority, await the decision on March 7 with the arena, await the responses to the RFQ by March 10, and continue to analyze options through the first quarter and see what the market is ready to produce.

QUESTIONS

John Uhrin asks about whether they used Park Plus in Norfolk.

Ron replies that this model was developed by Kimley-Horn for Virginia Beach; however, there was a similar one in Norfolk, that their Parking Director may have used, but it was not used for development planning.

John feels that as a community we have to get away from this concept that we have to park right in front of our destination and not share it with other users. Not overbuilding is critical.

Sam Reid asks about the siting and Ron asks to wait until after the 7th on the siting and says that they are working on the scope, size and the costs, and making sure that they fully understand market demand. Once they get that, then they can site it.

Bill Gambrell asks about discussion concerning parking north of 27th Street and Ron replies that the area is under discussion but today's presentation dealt mainly with the 19th Street corridor.

Bill asks if there is support from the hotel business for the convention center hotel and Ron replies that they are in discussion with them.

Presentation for Service

John Uhrin presents Jim Davis with a plaque for his service and getting through some challenging issues for the resort and the city as a whole.

RAC Speakers

Kristina Chastain reviewed the upcoming Speakers for RAC.

Committee Reports

Transportation, Parking, Pedestrian Committee (TPPC)

Preston says that on the same day as their last meeting, the City had their legislative development group going to Richmond so they did not have a quorum for their meeting.

One of the things that RAC wanted them to review was the Atlantic Avenue Redesign presentation and they have been unable to they were unable to do that.

They also had requests for two ordinance changes. One change would disallow wooden split rail fences and instead have fences that are maintenance-free. The other ordinance change would be an administrative adjustment to make the oceanfront ordinance agree with the ordinance for the rest of the city concerning parking allowances for establishments that don't need the space allowed by the ordinance. Since the TPPC could not make a motion due to lack of a quorum, they did agree on the changes and are presenting their findings to RAC today so RAC can have a voice on the changes.

Motion was approved unanimously to approve both ordinance changes.

The HRT report showed that the Atlantic Avenue trolley is up 7% from last year. The other two trolley routes will be reviewed to see if there is still a need, as many of the retail shopping centers no longer express a desire for the trolleys to be in the shopping centers. They also reviewed the Virginia Aquarium and campgrounds routes, and are trying to find out why their ridership was down.

A new service, the Bayfront Shuttle is being reviewed and they would like to try it out for this year. It would run from the campgrounds area at State Park, all along Shore Drive and ends up in the Chix Restaurant area.

Megabus is a tourism-direct express service that runs to here from the New York, D.C., Philly areas. They wanted to have an area where they could drop off and pick up twice a day in the resort area. They looked at a way to accommodate them.

Planning and Design Review (PDR)

Billy Almond reports that they met and reviewed several projects, one of which was an update on the 16th Street stormwater pump station repaving project. The PDR reviewed and approved the design and they wanted to see if they could address the section of asphalt street that goes back in the area to make the entire connector park look finished. They asked them to review their budget to see if they could overlay that.

The development plan for the JCOC was presented, and it is an aggressive redo of the entire site. They are talking to the community about that and will be submitting a CUP application in the future. The PDR approved the plan from a design standpoint.

They were briefed on the upgrade and modernization of the Chix Beach Café at 5th and Atlantic.

The Hyatt tower is up between 27th and 28th Streets and the north side of 27th Street interim use will be an outdoor recreational area with outdoor benches and seating and an outdoor café. The PDR requested an updated fence that will more closely mirror the modern appearance of the hotel.

Oceanfront Enhancement Committee (OEC)

The OEC did not meet last month.

Resort Investment Committee (RIC)

Kristina Chastain reports that they are still refining the subcommittee priorities and working on securing RAC speakers. For the third priority, Resort Facility Management, they included the arena, dome site and field house and related parking and traffic plans. The other four objectives, to review, were (1) Enhance Aesthetics of Publicly-owned Streets and Corridors + Add Public Art; (2) Sense of Arrival; (4) Supply Information and Provide Education on Offshore Drilling and Wind Energy to local and state officials, and (5) To understand and advocate growth and further enhancements through redevelopment of Central Beach, Laskin Gateway and the Marina District.

OSGAC

They continued discussion on The Block and what other cities have done in similar circumstances.

GREEN

Laura Habr provided an update on the Beachy Clean Committee activity.

Staff Report – Mike Eason

Mike tells the Commissions that the City's Holiday Lights are still up and turned on because building maintenance will be converting all receptacles in the resort to GFI this summer. They are trying to determine whether these fixtures will operate on GFI. They are waiting for a great rainstorm to test them. They will report their findings to the city manager and will do everything to make this work.

John Uhrin comments on Holiday Lights. Because the RAC has discussed the Holiday Lights over the years and the fact that the Holiday Lights provides a sense of "We're Open" for the resort, the lights help make us viable in terms of a resort destination. The attraction brings people from other parts of the city to our area to provide them an opportunity to take ownership of "their beach" even though they might do anything directly at the beach at other times of the year. In light of having the current electrical components issue of it and refinishing the attraction, if we could reaffirm RAC's longstanding position on the importance of this program it might be important in terms of arguing any issues associated with it.

Billy Almond makes a motion that RAC continue to support the Holiday Lights. He hopes that the electrical engineering component can be worked out. As long as he has served on the RAC, the Holiday Lights have always been a critical piece of the resort. Bill Gambrell seconded the motion. **Motion unanimously approved for the RAC to continue to support the Holiday Lights program.** RAC to send letter of support to the mayor, city manager and balance of city council.

Billy asks if the electrical engineering consultant, Pace, involved in the review and Mike says that only the city electricians in cooperation of Bobby Melatti's staff are involved

right now. Dialactic grease is being used to try to compact some of these connections so they don't reach the ground from the frame. Everything that will be tried to remedy the situation will be documented and reported on after that.

Kristina asks for clarification that due to age that the light fixtures need to be converted and Mike says that some of the fixtures are nearly 20 years old and it has to do with the insulation and salt contamination, rain, water; any little bit of moisture will cause the breaker to trip and they are trying to find out how they can keep turning the lights back on again.

Billy hopes that they can continue to lights and there has to be a solution somewhere from other light shows in the country. Mike says that they have contacted their counterparts in the business and they are not dealing with the same issue they are at this time.

Sam Reid asks about the turnout for this year and Mike says that they were down slightly, down to 24K from 26K. Mike says that the new lights were so good this year that people would stop on the boardwalk and they had to go out and keep them moving.

Other Business

None

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Public Comment

None

Meeting adjourned at 4:15p.m.