



Resort Advisory Commission
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**RESORT ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

DATE: April 6, 2017
TIME: 3:00 pm
PLACE: Virginia Beach Convention Center, Room 4AB

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Kristina Chastain
BJ Baumann
Billy Almond
Sam Reid
Bill Gambrell
Randy Thompson
Preston Midgett
Bobby Melatti
John Hawa
Bryan Cuffee
Craig Roback
Michael Cloud-Butler
Nancy Creech

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Laura Habr
Gerrie West
Sylvia Strickland
Tyler Brown
Russell Lyons

OTHERS PRESENT

Barry D. Knight
Brad Van Dommelen, CVB
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 March 2, 2017 meeting as written.

Legislative Update – Delegate Barry D. Knight

Barry reviewed some of the highlights from his 2016-2017 legislation. Some of it has to do with the resort area and some does not. He represents a horseshoe-shaped area from here to the Carolina line, on to Great Bridge, to Deep Creek, and touching Portsmouth, organized by communities of interest.

He is Chairman of the subcommittee on ABC in the House. Most all ABC bills originate there and are sent to the Senate full committee of Health, Welfare and Institutions. They passed legislation to sell hats and key chains to market Virginia in the ABC stores.

He was past Chairman of the Planning Commission and has experience with problem establishments. He got legislation passed for a “summary suspension of license in emergency circumstances” which has been used by the City. He also got legislation passed that allows one to show their legal proof to purchase beer or wine for pickup in the grocery store parking lot as well as having it delivered to a residence.

Legislation was passed that allowed residents in Sandbridge for a one-time generic permit to put clean sand blown onto their property back onto the beach. The City of Norfolk was later added into the legislation.

Barry serves on four committees and/or one of more of their subcommittees for: General Laws; the ABC; involved with the Rules Committee (a speakers committee); Agriculture, and Appropriations.

Barry moves on to discussion about the Virginia Beach oceanfront. They have a good property tax rate in Virginia Beach because half of all the tax dollars go to education and when visitors come, they pay the hotel gas and restaurant taxes; it is a tax-positive at the oceanfront and the Chamber of Commerce has recognized that with him.

He discusses the food ratio and selling liquor by the drink. He would like to see it opened up a little bit more and thinks it will happen more now that he is senior member of the subcommittee.

QUESTIONS

Kristina Chastain asked how the “summary suspension of the license...” program worked, and Barry replied that it happened the year before last. They had a problem establishment, and because it took so long through the ABC appeal process, that the City of Virginia Beach established a condition wherein if they met a certain criteria for problematic issues, they could petition to shut an establishment down.

BJ Baumann asked how they defined a “problem establishment”, and what happens while that definition is taking place. Barry recalls that the driving factor was the many complaints and police calls concerning an establishment. He would go to the staff attorneys at the General Assembly and ask how he can present legislation that is legal and that will pass that will fix the problem.

Preston Midgett asked what is being done about Airbnb and Barry replies that Airbnb came in a couple of years ago and got a couple of legislators to push Airbnb through. Originally, they wanted to have one tax rate for all of Virginia and when the idea went to the Senate, Virginia Beach said that they needed a level playing field. They established a special housing committee to study this. Barry attended the meetings, and they gave the locality permission for them to register and if they did not, they could be fined up to \$500 per violation. Some people wanted little to no legislation and others wanted a lot of legislation.

Not wanting to tread on localities’ rights, as a Dillon-Rule state, Barry wanted to allow local zoning the authority rather than have a generic overlay for the whole State. So they started with that, got it passed, and they will see where it goes from there.

Bill Gambrell asks what Barry thinks will be the next hot topic for the General Assembly next year.

Barry replied that McAuliffe vetoed a lot of Republican legislation, so if we get the same scenario, the same thing will happen and if we get a Republican governor, he feels that more things will get out.

Some folks are interested in the spirits to food ratio. Barry wants the ratio at 35% (instead of 55/45) and bring the requirement down to between \$4K and \$10K sales. If the establishment goes over \$10K a month, there would be no issue with the ratio. High drink prices make it hard to meet the food ratio requirement. They do not have problems with establishments selling over \$10K in business, which is about 90% of them. He said that they would have to see where the ratio bill goes. It typically is shut down in the Senate and if a Democratic senator leaves, the bill may pass.

BJ asks Barry if he sees any changes in the craft brewery laws.

Barry replies that they have a three-tier system between the sellers, warehousemen and servers. Beer and wine has always been treated differently than spirits. They put stipulations in the regulations that encourage craft breweries, and he believes that they have taken advantage a loophole (as businesses do) and he hopes they reign that in.

Kristina Chastain asks what the pulse on the decriminalization of marijuana and how his constituents feel about it being an economic driver in this industry.

Barry says that Kenny Alexander of Norfolk invited him and the Senate Majority Leader to his delegation meeting on the subject. Although there is a clash of cultures, he can see enforcement of it easing up a little bit, due to an attitude shift. He does not want us to waste all our resources.

DestinationNEXT Survey Results – Brad Van Dommelen

Brad reviews that the DestinationNEXT process is the result of a collaboration between Destination International (rebranded from DMAI) and Paul Ouimet and InterVISTAS, of Canada. The process is a self-assessment of a destination that helps a group to make decisions on moving the destination forward.

The process can focus on leisure, meetings and conventions, or both. It examines two sets of approximately 10 variables each for destination strength (of our “products”) and community support. Where the destination lands at the intersection of the X- and Y-axis of destination strength and community support, respectively, determines where the interviewees of the questionnaire process believe their destination to stand, within four quadrants.

Virginia Beach stakeholder responses fall in the lower left-center of the grid, which is called The Explorer quadrant, whose definition is that its “...organizations desire and aspire to a tourism vision and an activated community to make it happen.” On average, Virginia Beach falls slightly lower and to the left of the majority of responses, with city leadership and advisory groups (realistic) falling in their typical locations in the grid.

Brad reviews the strategic challenges of transformational change, and reviews our top variables for destination strength (attractions, brand, quality and mobility) and community support (workforce, economic development, industry support and advocacy programs). He compares our results with the industry average for our selected variables (i.e. attractions) and those comparisons tell us what we need to work on.

The takeaway from the process, our opportunities for developing a destination further, are to focus on marketing, mobility, accommodations and collaboration. Action items included developing a resort master plan, developing a community engagement group, and developing a brand strategy.

QUESTIONS

Bill Gambrell asks if we did the same self-analysis in three years or so, if we would find ourselves moving along the continuum the way we want, and Brad replied that we would. The developments and the results will change the way we see ourselves.

Sam Reid notes that Branson makes Missouri stand out.

Brad says that Paul talked about some of those trailblazer destinations and he mentioned Nashville, Austin and Portland. They are communities that have had serious

struggles over the years and they are booming now. The thing they had in common is that they took risks, and they had a music component.

Kristina Chastain asked what else the cities are doing well that we do not have and Brad relays that they have very well defined entertainment districts.

Discussion followed about PBS / Austin City Limits, and the publicity generated from that diversity.

Preston Midgett stresses that we should reiterate to the locals how much we need them involved, and how important tourism is for our community.

Committee Reports

Transportation, Parking, Pedestrian Committee (TPPC)

Preston Midgett reports that HRT has come up with a rack card that highlights the shuttle operation. They have the information out for review.

They had a report from Rob Fries on the parking meters and the technological changes concerning the ability to manage driver parking through their cellphone.

They wrote a letter to HRT about the need to press on about developing an app for the trolleys, for continuity.

Planning and Design Review (PDR)

Billy Almond reports that the PDR had a presentation for a development at 30th & Arctic for townhomes, which was reviewed and approved.

They also had a demonstration of repainting the sundial pavers at 20th Street. Fading pavers is something we will have to face over the years and this is an easy way to restore them.

Oceanfront Enhancement Committee (OEC)

Sam Reid provides some background of the attempt to establish a Sense of Arrival at the Visitors Center area.

Billy Almond then gave a presentation on the Sense of Arrival concept possibilities that he had presented to the OEC the week before on February 24, 2017. It was an updated version of a proposal that he had prepared from 2015 when working with the SGA Office. Billy advised the Commission that he has provided a letter of abstention to the Resort Management Office as his company, WPL, located at 242 Mustang Trail, Suite 8, Virginia Beach, VA, 23452 is involved in the idea.

After the presentation, Billy thought that John Uhrin was determined to get the perimeter done. With the arena coming, the center design can wait, as they may need it for stormwater or something else.

DISCUSSION

Craig Roback asked if there would be public access out past the Visitors Center and Billy replied that there would be.

Mike Eason tells BJ that the only thing that has been permanently sited is the Arena; the Fieldhouse has yet to be discussed. It will be a planning strategy that probably will involve Kathy Warren, and will involve parking drainage.

Kristina Chastain asks how we can get the first phase pushed to fruition, and Billy says that John has taken the initiative to meet with the Deputy City Manager and then you

have to have the CIP and get a funding stream. We have the architectural resources here. We have to talk it up to the Councilman.

BJ asks if we need a letter from RAC to Council and Billy suggests asking John Uhrin. Kristina says that we will find out and discuss how to proceed at the next RAC meeting.

Sam says that he made a motion at the last RAC meeting and asks what should be done next. He would like to be able to take a vote on the motion he made last month at the May RAC, and Kristina agrees that John will be contacted for his opinion on how to proceed.

Resort Investment Committee (RIC)

Kristina Chastain reported that they continued their discussion on the future of the beautification effort on Atlantic Avenue and scheduled speakers for RAC.

Oceanfront Strategic Growth Area Committee (OEC)

BJ Baumann reported that they continued talking about Atlantic Avenue, and where it is going and what it might be in the future.

G.R.E.E.N. Committee

BJ Baumann reported for Laura Habr that they did not have a G.R.E.E.N. meeting last month, but she reported that they spent three days in Washington D.C. last week as part of the BAPAC (Business Alliance for the Protection of the Atlantic Coast) group, specifically regarding offshore drilling and seismic testing issues. We need to be prepared to voice our opinion on the whole process.

Staff Report

Mike Eason reported on two upcoming events this weekend: She-Crab Soup Classic on April 8, and the first ever Virginia Beach Garden Club event on April 23 at 43rd through 45th Streets/Cavalier Shores.

Old Business

None

New Business

Sam Reid asked about the internet cable coming to the area and asks how it will benefit the resort area. Mike Eason replies that someone from Economic Development might be able to attend RAC to speak about it.

Public Comment

None

Meeting adjourned at 4:50p.m.

In Reply Refer to 0056469

March 29, 2017

Mr. Mike Eason
Resort Management Office
2101 Parks Avenue, Suite 302
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23451

Re: Abstention Pursuant to Conflict of Interests Act § 2.2-3115(F)

Dear Mr. Eason:

Pursuant to the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act (“the Act”), I make the following declaration:

1. I am executing this written disclosure regarding the SGA Sense of Arrival project at the eastern terminus of I-264. I am making this disclosure as a member of the Resort Advisory Commission and the following RAC subcommittees: Planning and Design Review Committee; Resort Investment Committee; and the Oceanfront Strategic Growth Area Committee.
2. I have a personal interest in WPL, which is located at 242 Mustang Trail, Suite 8 in Virginia Beach. WPL provided landscape architectural services with respect to the project.
3. I have chosen to abstain from voting on this matter. I respectfully request that your staff record this declaration in the official records of the RAC as well as the records of any of the above-referenced RAC subcommittees, from this date forward, whenever the matter is discussed during any meeting of any of those public bodies.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,



William “Billy” Almond
Committee Member

WA/RRI