



Resort Advisory Commission
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RESORT ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: September 7, 2017
TIME: 3:00 pm
PLACE: Virginia Beach Convention Center, Room 4AB

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Kristina Chastain
Billy Almond
Bill Gambrell
Russell Lyons
Bobby Melatti
Bryan Cuffee
Preston Midgett
Sam Reid
BJ Baumann
Laura Habr
Randy Thompson
Keith Ireland

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Nancy Creech Sylvia Strickland
Michael Cloud-Butler
Tyler Brown
John Hawa
Gerrie West

Craig Roback

OTHERS PRESENT

Rita McClenny, VA Tourism Corp.
Eric Terry, VRLTA
Ken Taylor
Capt. Mike Ronan, VBLE
Charli Sharp, CVB
Lauren Townsend, CVB
John Uhrin, Council
Stacey Parker, The Pilot
Kathy Warren, SGA
Brad Van Dommelen, CVB
Dee Oliver, PDRC
Diana Burke, VBHA
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 August 3, 2017 meeting as written.

Tourism Update - Rita McClenny, Virginia Tourism Corporation

Rita McClenny reviews the VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS brand, vision and mission.

She reviews the Six Diamonds - tools that they use to create value to the industry, focusing on leveraging the dollars they receive from various sources.

Productivity from 2016 has grown 5.3% from 2015, beating the national average. Tourism is the fifth largest employer in the Commonwealth of Virginia (the other four are represented by agriculture forestry, mining, business services and military). Ratings on residence shows Virginia Beach third amongst large cities in terms of lifestyle, population, transportation and infrastructure. Outdoor and adventure opportunities ranked high.

Travel trends indicate that people are looking more for meaningful experiences versus what they may see. Learning is the new luxury. People want to be more of a “traveler” than a “tourist”, and tend to seek out local flavor.

Virginia is a drive destination and people come for our top five attributes, which are fun, relaxation, beaches, excitement, and food/cuisine. Many come with families, a lot of it due to an urge to convene, connect and build memories.

QUESTIONS

Rita mentions that she and Brad Van Dommelen are working on Project Time Off, which works with other localities to encourage employees to take their vacation days. They start with Crush Friday and work to add one day each week until employees take more of their time off.

Tourism Update - Eric Terry, Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association
Eric tells the Commission that the VRLTA has two primary roles, one of which is to encourage tourism and protect the budgets of the VTC and its localities, and bring new product and development to the area.

He provided statistics and information on AirBNB. They anticipate being successful with most communities in enacting the legislation, which became effective July 1.

Currently there is \$1B in new hotel construction in the Virginia hotel industry today. Virginia Beach is leading the charge, along with Norfolk and its redevelopment.

Eric clears up some misinformation on salary in the industry, citing that the industry helps to develop soft skills, which helps the average salary turn out to be around \$80K/year for those who start out in the industry.

Virginia Beach has a higher occupancy rate in its hotels than occupancy/rate (rev par) growth in comparison to the state overall. That is due to changes in product and other dynamics in the Virginia Beach market, for example, a \$5 drop in Virginia Beach’s peak per diem rate, the DOD Integrated Lodging Pilot Program and the school year schedule surrounding Labor Day this year.

Their Governor’s Conference on Tourism Summit is in Norfolk starting on November 12, 2017, for three days.

Real Sports Video

Mike Eason shows a video forwarded from the CVB Director, from Real Sports concerning Youth Sports Programs and what effects they are having on other cities who have implemented those programs.

Committee Reports

- Kristina announces the Joint HRC/RAC Workshop meeting at 3:00pm on Friday September 8 in the CVB Boardroom for interested RAC members to attend.
- Kristina recognizes former RAC and RIC subcommittee chair in the audience, Ken Taylor, thanking him for years of service.

Transportation, Parking, Pedestrian Committee (TPPC)

Preston Midgett reports that they had a presentation on the Pacific Avenue Safety Concerns from approx. 37th to 42nd Streets from Bob Gey. They will have a review of alternatives to determine the most viable options.

They reviewed the past summer's ridership from HRT for the trolleys. They will continue the new successful Bayfront route into next year.

They discussed the enforcement of the illegal pop-up parking lots, and many of the offenders have been identified. Kevin Hershberger, Mike Eason and Capt. Ronan are trying to keep that under control.

Preston Midgett discusses the letter that the TPPC wrote and sent to Council at their September 5 meeting.

At the last minute, the TPPC found out about an ordinance that was going to Council the following week. They scrambled to get a letter written concerning an RPP request with a special exemption from Cavalier Shores.

After describing the RPP program and what it is designed to do, Preston tells the Commission that the Cavalier Shores group, whose neighborhood runs approx. from the old Cavalier to about 44th or 45th Street, wants to participate in the RPP program, but change the start time of the restricted parking from 8:00pm to 5:00pm. They also did not want to allow business passes to be purchased for the neighborhood. The Cavalier Group has assured the city that they have elected not to participate in the RPP program, either for the Cavalier Development or for any other of their businesses in the area.

Preston feels that if the City is going to be consistent on the RPP program, then the other neighborhoods participating in the RPP will most likely get the exemption if Council approves this one. It will change the way the people use the beach, in that the result will end up as if the city is privatizing the beach. The other concern in allowing the 5:00pm parking cutoff is that other neighborhoods, i.e. Chesapeake Beach, to request the same. In addition, any of the sports events held in any neighborhood parks that have attendees park in front of residents' houses to attend those events could be affected.

They have recommended to Council not to accept this request and John Uhrin explained this to Council at the last session. They received a 60-day deferral, and City Staff and the TPPC will review it again. They need to educate more of the Council on what the RPP program is and how it has evolved. Preston feels that they have been dealing with this for 20 years and have come up with a program that works pretty well for everyone.

If Cavalier Shores wants to join the RPP program, as-is, they are within the requirements of the program to do so. For them to make changes exclusive to their neighborhood would undermine the work that the TPPC and the city has done, and put them on the path to privatizing the beaches.

Preston would like to have the RAC review the letter that the TPPC drafted and sent to Council and approve it. It has been approved by the TPPC, but has not been approved by the full RAC.

Bill Gambrell will make the motion and states that he wrote a letter on behalf of the VBRA and also noted that he had served as Chairman for a couple of years for the Parking Commission for the City of Virginia Beach. He also believes that Council approval would be a bad idea because it will ultimately privatize beaches in Virginia Beach.

Bill makes the motion that the letter be forwarded to Council with the full recommendation of the RAC. Billy Almond seconded. Sam Reid seconded, stating that there is a need to avoid the appearance of favoritism.

Bryan Cuffee abstains because of his relationship to the Cavalier Hotel, located at 4200 Atlantic Avenue, Virginia Beach VA 23451.

Motion carried unanimously to forward the letter to Council with the full recommendation of the RAC, with one abstention.

Planning & Design Review Committee (PDRC)

Billy Almond reports that they reviewed and approved the renovation of 505 18th Street, to be turned into a brewery, Vibrant Shore Brewing Company, in the ViBe District.

They had an update on the changes to the Form Based Code, and Ashby Moss will provide an update to RAC on October 5, 2017.

John Hawa spoke to the PDRC about the state of Atlantic Avenue, and whether it is time to refresh the area; the beautification project was 30 years ago. Many have noted that the traffic has been down and although there is a focused concern between 25th and 17th Streets, there is concern from 28th Street all the way south to 5th Street. From a streetscape design, Atlantic Avenue is antiquated.

Oceanfront Enhancement Committee (OEC)

Bobby Melatti reviews the discussion with George Kotarides concerning Atlantic Avenue at the last OEC meeting. George had held a meeting before appearing at OEC where he tried to identify things that were different on Atlantic Avenue now as opposed to the past.

The question was also asked if Beach Street was still relevant, funded well enough, and if it still functioned as it was intended to.

Bobby thinks that the OEC is the type of forum to address these issues. They agreed to move forward independently and jointly. OEC Chair Sam Reid agreed, and will secure representatives from OEC to attend George's meetings as they become available.

Resort Investment Committee (RIC)

Kristina Chastain reviewed the speakers who are either confirmed or under consideration for the upcoming RAC meetings.

The Atlantic Avenue discussion was also a topic at their committee meeting.

Oceanfront Strategic Growth Area Committee (OSGAC)

BJ Baumann reported that they committee has moved from meeting with city individuals to meeting with property owners, resulting in good dialogue on what has happened in the past and what could happen in the future.

She is also a part of George Kotarides' Atlantic Avenue meetings.

The speaker at this meeting referred to 17th through 24th Streets as the "heart" of Atlantic Avenue and the need for a "healthy heart". She feels that the analogy is a good one, as the committee has had lengthy conversation agreeing that the OSGAC will broaden their review of what is happening all along Atlantic Avenue as a whole.

G.R.E.E.N. Report

Laura Habr reports that G.R.E.E.N. did not meet last month; however, the Beachy Clean stickers have been refreshed over the summer and they put stickers out on the Sandbridge Beach cans, with the assistance with the J1 students.

Laura also reports that letters on stances about offshore drilling have been submitted within their timeframes, and she will update the Commission on the overall plan at the end of the year.

Staff Report

Mike Eason thanks Kristina Chastain for recognizing Ken Taylor, as Ken has contributed a lot to the City through his years of service.

Mike reports that last week was the second time that they have had to cancel the AMF and related events, but they did manage to have a successful weekend, thanks to the Beach Events staff and the VBCC staff moving events indoors when necessary.

This weekend, the Shriners are in town.

They are watching Irma storm closely and will make the appropriate calls.

Old Business

None

New Business

Russell Lyons briefed the Commission on the J1 Student Work-Travel Program, and how the resort relies on the program. There has been talk about the program potentially being cut, and he would like for the InterExchange Eastern Regional Director, Nancy Perry, to appear at RAC in October for an overview and discussion about the program.

Public Comment

None

Meeting adjourned at 4:41p.m.

September 7, 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 Resort Advisory Commission's vote to support a letter written by the TPPC urging City Council to deny the request of the Cavalier Shores neighborhood participation in the RPP program with the stipulation that the restricted parking hours begin at 5:00pm instead of 8:00pm and that there be no employee parking allowed in that particular neighborhood under the program.
2. I have a personal interest in the Cavalier Hotel, which is located at 4200 Atlantic Avenue, Virginia Beach, Virginia.
3. I have chosen to abstain from voting on this matter.

I respectfully request that your staff record this declaration in the committee's official records.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,



Bryan D. Cuffee
RAC Member