



Resort Advisory Commission
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RESORT ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES

DATE: November 2, 2017
TIME: 3:00 pm
PLACE: Virginia Beach Convention Center, Room 3AB

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Kristina Chastain
BJ Baumann
Bill Gambrell
Billy Almond
Bobby Melatti
Bryan Cuffee
Craig Roback
Keith Ireland
Michael Cloud-Butler
Preston Midgett
Randy Thompson
Russell Lyons
Sam Reid
Sylvia Strickland
Tyler Brown

OTHERS PRESENT

Capt. Mike Ronan, VBLE
John Uhrin, Council
Stacey Parker, The Pilot
Brad Van Dommelen, CVB
Teresa Diaz, CVB
Emily Archer, Planning
Kristine Gay, Planning
Terri Booth, VB Citizen
Mike Eason, CVB/Resort Mgmt.
Robin Hart, CVB/Recorder

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Laura Habr
Gerrie West
John Hawa
Nancy Creech

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

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

CVB Reorganization – Tiffany Russell

Tiffany Russell, VP of Marketing Communications, reviewed how the marketing team had grown and been restructured over the last seven months. In an attempt to increase the advertising budget, some functions were brought in house, such as the Visit Virginia Beach website and social media management. Other functions are still handled by an outside agency for the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). BCF still plans their leisure media buy and provides account management. The amount of money saved annually by the restructuring is now available and better redirected by BCF to strengthen their out-of-market advertising.

The CVB is now better able to manage their in-house marketing functions, such as sports marketing, meetings and conventions and group tours, and the SEO is transitioning in-house as well.

Tiffany provided an overview of the Marketing Plan, which includes the media strategy and the brand campaign (generating awareness). The Plan focuses on identifying the target, selecting the right timing (cool-season and warm-season promotion) and using the most effective tactics. They are working closely with the VTC on a project called "Crush Friday" which encourages people to take the Friday off and have a three-day weekend.

The Brand Strategy Lifestyle Campaigns target niche groups in order to drive shoulder season visitation, and tie in to the Virginia Is For Lovers Brand. The Lifestyle campaigns started in September and will run through May. The homeschool community is another untapped market they are trying to reach and is in development. Overall, the target approach in this campaign is less invasive and more subtle.

Tiffany is looking forward to the impact that the target strategies and partnership with credible sources will have on future tourism, because they now have the budget and the reach.

QUESTIONS

BJ Baumann asked what the comp set budgets are looking like, and Tiffany replies that Myrtle Beach is running about ten to every one ad that Virginia Beach runs. The Outer Banks has a smaller budget than Virginia Beach, but not by much. She has heard that Ocean City does not have that large a budget, but Virginia Beach's key market is in their backyard, and they have amenities similar to ours: they have the ocean in their backyard. They appear to be a close competitor for Virginia Beach as far as clean beaches, separate adult and family entertainment, amusement park, bay, etc. It tells her that Virginia Beach's message has to have that emotional pull and they have to be confident that they are offering something that the other destinations do not have. She encourages the Commissioners to visit these areas to see the similarities and differences to understand the importance of advertising.

Kristina Chastain asked what Tiffany sees as our biggest reasons as to why someone might choose another destination over Virginia Beach, and Tiffany cites familiarity and awareness. People need to be shown who we are, and what we have to offer. We also need to keep pushing ourselves to have a year-round product so we have more to say, in the winter, particularly. Golf in Myrtle Beach, versus Ocean City's proximity to the beach and Outer Banks' perceived seclusion are reasons why others choose to go to these places. She thinks that we need to celebrate that we have a lot in a small space and is hoping to do some of that through our entertainment program. There are people looking for that, and Virginia Beach needs to find them.

Craig Roback asked how data tracking has been affected by the increase in the budget.

Tiffany replies that their partner, ADARA, a company that analyzes historical and real time data, gives them daily reports on their levels of optimization, which is especially important in digital space where there is so much opportunity for refinement.

The City also participates with the State co-ops to maximize their advertising dollar, and they are trying to strengthen that.

Sam Reid asked about the sports marketing campaign efforts, and Tiffany says that it is a huge market that has a completely different campaign with a lot of opportunity that could serve as a presentation alone.

He asks where other cities are targeting, and Tiffany replies that Myrtle Beach, for example, targets the lower south, and a lot of their business comes from that area as well as Ohio and Michigan. They are in 70 markets versus Virginia Beach, who is in 13 markets. For the Outer Banks, Virginia Beach is one of their top three markets.

Amendments to Chapter 9 of the City Code for Creative Markets – Kristine Gay

Kristine Gay tells the Commissioners that she started working with VB Flea (19th & Baltic) about a year ago and they had a small event with folk artists, out-of-town guests, and it was a fun event. She realized that the City did not have a permit in place to have that use to happen, as it does not fall into the SEO or CUP categories.

She worked with Emily Archer and all the review agencies, and came up with the idea of the Creative Market as an amendment to City Code that would serve as a placeholder for the events instead of having to go through all of the hurdles each time.

Some of the requirements are that it must be located in the creative district, on private property, use less than 3,000sf., and last no longer than four hours.

They are in the review process. They want to taper the scale of the market so it would not require a heavy review. She show examples of the VB Flea with smaller eclectic items; there are not the typical tourist-related items in the Creative Market.

The Creative Market amendment is comprised of two components. The Creative merchants (artists, hobbyists) and the Creative Market Sponsor (the brick-and-mortar building that hosts the market). The responsibility is with the Host. They are required to notify the Commissioner of Revenue to alert them as to which artisans are there for each event.

There are no new review processes, and the Zoning Administrator addresses noncompliance issues.

They are taking the proposed amendments to City Council meeting at the same time as the form-based code amendments, in December.

QUESTIONS

Billy Almond asks how they know what is actually permitted and Kristine replies that the SGA Planning Office would review plans for the event before it occurs at the District.

Russell Lyons asks how they regulate how many events can occur at the same time, and Kristina replies that so long as they can prove that an event is not negatively affecting the surrounding area and meets the requirements, separate 3,000sf. spaces may house simultaneous events.

Billy Almond makes a motion to support the creative market initiative. Seconded. **Motion carried to support the amendments to Chapter 9 of the City Code for Creative Markets as presented.**

Committee Reports

Transportation, Parking, Pedestrian Committee (TPPC)

Preston Midgett updated the Commission on the Cavalier Shores Special Exemption Request to Council for the RPP Program. They pulled the request and will revisit in one

year, after they have had a chance to evaluate how the opening of the Cavalier Project will affect the neighborhood. The TPPC had suggested that they still consider joining the RPPP as it is written.

They had an HRT trolley update, with ridership up four percent. They have the new Bayfront Trolley route this year and although it has been successful, they are considering some suggested changes to expand it for next year.

Planning & Design Review Committee (PDRC)

Billy Almond reports that the PDRC did not meet this month.

Oceanfront Enhancement Committee (OEC)

Chair Sam Reid updates the Commission about OEC representation at the Atlantic Avenue Consultant study meetings scheduled for next week. They will emphasize the need to interview the locals for input on the topic.

They discussed problem-solving tactics brought forth by another OEC member that the committee might implement in future meetings.

Bobby Melatti provided updates on Beach Street USA and Holiday Lights.

For the summer, the 19th and 20th Streets will try closures for carnival-type activity, and they will bring back the umbrellas and life preserver lights on the poles. The Witch of Pungo is coming back; The Wreck of the Dictator is going away, and they will bring in a monologue story about the 400-year Old Point Comfort anniversary. Lastly, they will add more music at 17th Street, keep the Beach Street All-Stars, and retire Beach Street USA branding for a new brand tentatively to be called Live! On Atlantic Avenue.

The City will hold Holiday Lights this year, to include a number of displays for a 20-block event, running from entrance on 2nd Street to exit on 22nd Street. The prices were reduced to match the downsized event, and they have offered the hotels discounted tickets again.

Resort Investment Committee (RIC)

Kristina Chastain told the Commission about their meeting with Councilman Bobby Dyer where they discussed the Process Improvement Task Force, which assists small businesses. The RIC meetings with Councilmembers is part of an effort to better familiarize Councilmembers with the RAC and its individual subcommittees and their operations.

They reviewed the J1 visa program and North End Pedestrian Experience draft letters that were generated from motions at the last RAC meeting on October 5, 2017. Kristina asks the RAC Commissioners to review them for approval to forward to City Council.

Motion carried to approve the J1 Visa Program letter of support as written and forward to Council. One abstention noted.

Motion carried to approve the North End Pedestrian Experience project letter of support as written and forward to Council.

Oceanfront Strategic Growth Area Committee (OSGAC)

BJ Baumann reported that they had a similar discussion on the Atlantic Avenue Consultant study as that of the OEC.

They also had a conversation regarding the microbusinesses they discussed at RIC and what Economic Development might be able to do to assist.

G.R.E.E.N. Report

BJ Baumann reported for Chair Laura Habr that they had a speaker on the Virginia Green Program, Tom Griffin, Executive Director, who announced the next Virginia Green conference on March 1st and 2nd in 2018 at the VBCC. They discussed how they might maximize exposure for the Virginia Beach Chapter at the upcoming conference.

The ODU resilience study is complete, and if RAC members would like a copy, to let them know.

They also had Clean Beach Program and Recycling Updates.

Other Business

Sylvia Strickland updates the Commission on the Human Rights Commission/RAC meetings. The next meeting is Friday November 3, 20217 from 3:00 to 5:00pm at the CVB Board Room.

Staff Report

Mike Eason reviews the City's upcoming Special Events, as they just finished the Wicked Race.

The horse riding franchise, which has been operating at the oceanfront for about 8 years, was filmed for two television events, "The Bachelor" and another for HGTV.

Mike announces the upcoming State of Tourism luncheon next Wednesday and encourages people to attend.

Old Business

None

New Business

Randy Thompson mentions the Virginia Craft Sprits event at the VBCC on Saturday, November 4, 2017.

Public Comment

None

Meeting adjourned at 4:14p.m.