



Resort Advisory Commission
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RESORT ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES

DATE: May 3, 2018
TIME: 3:00 pm
PLACE: Virginia Beach Convention Center, Room 4AB

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Kristina Chastain
BJ Baumann
Billy Almond
Bobby Melatti
Craig Roback
Gerrie West
John Hawa
Michael Cloud-Butler
Sam Reid
Sylvia Strickland
Keith Ireland
Laura Habr
Preston Midgett
Randy Thompson
Ron Villanueva

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Tyler Brown
Nancy Creech
Russell Lyons
Bryan Cuffee
Phil Boyer

OTHERS PRESENT

John Uhrin, Council
Joe Dillard, HRT
Brian Solis, Planning Dept.
Capt. Mike Ronan, VBLE
Offr. Matt McInerney, VBLE
Diana Burke, VBHA
Stacey Parker, The Pilot
Kathy Warren, SGA
Mike Eason, CVB/Resort Mgmt.
Robin Hart, CVB/Recorder

Kristina Chastain called the meeting to order at 3:00pm. **Motion carried to approve the minutes from the April 5, 2018 meeting as written.**

HRT Core 20 – Joe Dillard & Brian Solis

Brian Solis, the City's Transportation and Transit Planning Manager, introduced Joe Dillard, the External Affairs Liaison for Hampton Roads Transit. Joe works with the General Assembly and the federal legislative branch to establish connectivity in our region. As part of the proposed light rail extension to Town Center discussed in 2016, parties both for and against the project cited a need to double the bus transit service, as a large part of Virginia Beach is considered relatively suburban.

HRT, with about 60 bus lines across the six cities it serves, worked to come up with a multi-tier plan called the Core 20, which could bring a bus on a major corridor every 15 minutes. Joe wanted to begin a dialogue to generate support for this program across Hampton Roads.

They are not currently asking for any funding. There is an existing HRT fund, which gathers a portion of the sales and fuel tax for the construction on the interstate and will fund the HRBT expansion. They would like to adjust the scope of where that funding goes to include transportation, which would be about 10% of that money.

Although the bus system was to have with the light rail extension, the point remained that the bus system is broken, and needs repair. They want to make our region competitive, and currently 1-2% of regional travel is happening on transit.

They are working with VDOT for a program called "Bus on Shoulder", which would provide a dedicated bus lane in the HRBT for better headway.

Joe Dillard reviewed the benefits of bettering transit, ranging from alternative transportation for congested roads to reducing costs and emissions.

The barriers to great transit today are poor fleet condition and outdated technology, which will not be able to make the times designed for the Core 20.

He is proud, however, of the pilot app for the oceanfront being implemented this summer, in which the fare box revenue technology will be available on the phone. That pilot came through the RAC.

Adequate amenities (shelters) and accessibility to them are needed in order to better the transit service.

The Core 20 plan will have 20 routes that operate on 15-minute frequencies, instead of the current 5 routes of a total of 60-70 bus lines on the Peninsula and Southside. The Core 20 will ask for some type of state funding where localities will not have to pay a certain portion of it. They want to give opportunities for community input, and Joe showed the Commission the 20 routes and the areas they would serve.

Joe stated that 42% of their budget comes from local general funds. Cities like NYC, Washington D.C., and Charlotte have not used local general funds as a major source for transit funding in at least 20 years. Under the new model, if there existed some type of dedicated funding, probably only approx. 9% of their budget would have to come from local general funds, and the savings could go to other sources such as law enforcement and education.

They cannot specify how they would receive the funding; they can only express the need. They need local input to tell the government how they would like to see it funded.

This year they are asking that they talk to different groups and get feedback, get legislators on the buses to generate energy on getting a program like this developed and implemented. On May 14, they are doing a tour with Jason Miyares, who represents this district. He will ride the Route 20 all the way to the oceanfront. He welcomes the Commissioners to come out and talk to him about the importance of the Core 20 for improved transit service for their businesses, as well as what transportation does for them, he will be able to arrange that.

The next steps involve getting the fleet to a state of good repair. If the oceanfront pilot program is a success, they will want to expand it system-wide. The estimate is that the service will take approx. \$35M to maintain annually and the \$15M to maintain the state of good repair may result in them having to implement the Core 20 in stages, which would mean putting their busiest routes in place first. Virginia Beach's Route 20 is one of their busiest routes.

Joe asked for a resolution or Letter of Support for the concept of the Core 20, as it is something that HRT and the city see that will advance their network and advance public transportation to a competitive nature.

Kristina Chastain asked how likely it is that they will receive state funding, and Joe believed that they have been asking for about four years, and were close when Ron Villanueva was in there, but they have been trying to get their new rep fully informed. They are still hopeful. It was under a plan called Connect Hampton Roads and they are building on that momentum. With RAC support it is more likely that the request goes through this year than not. Richmond received

their transit with a grass roots movement, going through the Chamber of Commerce, and the like.

BJ Baumann asked the costs of the shelters.

Brian Solis said Council has one of the more robust programs in Hampton Roads for improving those amenities and that the shelters are popping up around the city at about \$15K each without the right of way (which includes the curb, sidewalk, roadway plus 5 to 10 feet outside of that).

They use the city funding to ask for a match from federal and state funding.

It is a comprehensive program to bring a relocated oceanfront transit center in coordination with the Dome Site redevelopment. They want to consolidate year round HRT bus routes, the Amtrak bus and Megabus all into one location as well as shared ride services.

Ron Villanueva added that the RAC has the influence and suggested they put forth a resolution toward Council and toward the General Assembly as a reminder that groups like ours want to continue to pay attention to this Core 20 program. Projects can get lost in session, and you have to keep the project in the forefront. Billy Almond seconded. **Motion carried to support the HRT Core 20 program.**

Preston Midgett said that the reliability required for the service is a must to be effective, for our riders as well as our by-choice riders. HRT needs our assistance in keeping this momentum and believes that all the cities need to contact their government. Changing from city funding to dedicated funding will save the city money and allow them to focus more on making the system better with the local funding.

College Beach Weekend Update – Capt. Mike Ronan

Capt. Ronan thanked the RAC and all associations that worked with them in planning for the weekend. He pointed out that two motivating factors this year came from City Manager Dave Hansen and Deputy City Manager Steve Cover.

He summarized that this year they had a lot more communication than in the past. They had a lot of significant training, and do so every year. They focus on equipment purchases and out-of-the-box thinking.

He reviewed charges compared to years past, and where the visitors came from. Since 2012, the stats have been relatively consistent in the resort area. They still police the rest of the city: Chicks Beach and Sandbridge were quiet.

BJ Baumann read the draft thank you letter from RAC to VBLE concerning their gratitude for their professionalism over the weekend, and expressed continued support. She made the motion to approve the letter and sent it to City Council. Seconded. **Motion carried unanimously to forward the RAC letter of thanks and support to Council.**

On that note, John Uhrin expressed gratitude for the same, and he thought that the policy to provide a time for rerouting traffic each day was very effective. It is fair to the residents, businesses and visitors. It has worked in the past for July 4 and he believed that it should be a city policy, as law enforcement has to wait until there is an emergency in order to make that call. Giving the public that certainty or a reroute time helps with planning. Billy Almond made the motion to endorse the concept of rerouting traffic headed to the resort area as determined as a public safety issue at a predetermined time.

Laura Haber pointed out the fine line that Virginia Beach remain a welcoming city while preserving public safety.

The motion was seconded. **Motion carried to endorse the concept of rerouting traffic headed to the resort area at a predetermined time as determined by public safety.**

BJ Baumann mentioned the May 8 follow-up meeting of the Joint Oceanfront Committee (JOC) and urged members to complete the online survey if they visited the oceanfront over the weekend.

Committee Reports

Transportation, Parking, Pedestrian Committee (TPPC)

Preston Midgett mentioned that the TPPC received the presentation on the Core 20 just heard by the RAC.

The HRT app will be up after the first of July and a rider will be able to purchase their trolley ticket online and show it to the driver. Right now, HRTB.us is available to see the app.

The TPPC is looking for new members for whoever is interested, third Thursday of each month.

John Uhrin said that there has been a request from Fort Story to be able to get people bussed into the gate to visit the lighthouse and other historic buildings. Leave your car outside the gate and be able to get on the bus.

Preston said that had that idea with the Bayfront Shuttle and the security was tight. If this shuttle will be inside the gate, then all a rider has to do is to ride the Route 35.

Brian says that you would have to work that out with the neighborhood at 89th Street with a turnaround.

Planning & Design Review Committee (PDRC)

Billy Almond reported that they had a presentation on the refurbishment of the 16th Street pump station. A nice outcome of when the SGA office works with public works and public utilities.

Their other presentation was from CBRE's Don Crigger and Jeff Fritz, who talked to them about how they market commercial, retail and housing for the oceanfront and what the outlook is for the next 30 years. They are scheduled to present at the June 7 RAC, after a legislative update from Barry Knight and Chris Stolle.

Oceanfront Enhancement Committee (OEC)

The OEC did not meet last month.

Resort Investment Committee (RIC)

Kristina Chastain reported that they reviewed the speakers schedule for the next few meetings.

Oceanfront Strategic Growth Area Committee (OSGAC)

BJ Baumann said that they had a presentation from Jeff Dobrow, who does projection mapping art, which is a relatively new phase now, but it can be applied to different sizes and shapes of buildings. They discussed its application on Atlantic Avenue and Kathy Warren is working with Jeff on that potential. She thanked John Hawa for bringing Jeff to speak to their committee.

John Uhrin said that this is what Bobby Melatti's group has been talking about with Holiday Lights.

Billy Almond added that this is a project with several parts, and trying to find the venue is the first step.

G.R.E.E.N. Report

Laura Haber provided the Commission with contact cards from Lindsay Usher concerning the conducting a needs assessment study of the level of resilience of tourism businesses in Virginia Beach. The study is now posted on the CCRFR website.

She updated the Commission on the recycling and Keep It Beachy Clean programs.

Laura provided updates on the offshore drilling project and BOEM activities after the November elections. Their BAPAC group met last week.

Other announcements included the opening of the Old Beach Farmers Market on Saturday June 2, the mural festival May 11-May 20, and that the Rudee Walk murals were unveiled yesterday. She encouraged the members to get out to visit the market and view the artwork.

Staff Report – Mike Eason

Mike reported that the June 7 RAC meeting will be held at The Cavalier, with details to follow. The special events season is getting heavy, with a lot of related post events. They are filling two new coordinator positions that were vacated.

Old Business

None

New Business

The July 5, 2018 meeting will be moved to July 12, 2018 due to the holiday.

Public Comment

None

Meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.