



Resort Advisory Commission
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RESORT ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: September 5, 2019

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Virginia Beach Convention Center, 2nd Floor, Rm 5D

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

BJ Baumann
Randy Thompson
Billy Almond
Craig Roback
Keith Ireland
Laura Habr
Michael Levinson
Michael Cloud-Butler
Sylvia Strickland
Tyler Brown
Russell Lyons
Sam Reid

John Hawa
Kristina Chastain
Phil Boyer
Preston Midgett

OTHERS PRESENT

Diana Burke, VBHA
Guy Tower, Council
Jenizza Badua, SGA
Nancy Helman, Sports Marketing
Bill Kelly, Sports Marketing
Ashleigh Nader, Sports Marketing
Ric Martinec, Parks & Rec.
Rosemary Wilson, Council
Stacey Parker, The Virginian-Pilot
Mike Eason, CVB / Resort Mgmt.
Robin Hart, CVB/Recorder
Sheri Higgason CVB/ Resort Mgmt.

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Bobby Melatti
Bryan Cuffee
Gerrie West

BJ Baumann called the meeting to order at 3:00pm. **Motion carried to approve the August 1, 2019 RAC minutes as written.**

Sports Center Update – Nancy Helman

Nancy Helman, Director of the Sports Marketing Program for the CVB, introduced members of the Sports Team that were present, Bill Kelly and Ashleigh Nader. Dani Timm and Kenneth Payne were out on site. Rick Martinec, Sports Center Project Manager was present.

The Sports Center is 285,000 Square ft. The project is on time and on budget. Opening is scheduled for November of 2020. First events are already booked. The shell of the building is up, steel is up, and it's almost enclosed. The new parking lot is complete and turned back over to the city of Virginia Beach. It is now 800 spaces back online and to be utilized for overflow parking as needed. There are 300 additional spaces still being held as part of the construction site.

The new BMP pond is 4 chambers and will include a fountain. The 17th Street elevation and back of the building were viewed. There is anticipation for easy walking access to area hotels and restaurants. The next milestone is to fully enclose the building allowing for preparation of electricity, air-conditioning, and the arrival of sports equipment.

The Courtside of the building is 120,000 sq. feet and home to 12 basketball courts that convert to 24 volleyball courts, wrestling mats, gymnastics equipment, Tae Kwon Do and fencing strips. The ceiling encompasses basketball hoops, volleyball stanchions, and netting for tournaments, allowing to convert from various sports in 5 minutes. This is a sports tournament facility to host a multitude of sports that get turned over quickly.

The 200-meter hydraulic banked track includes seating for 5,000 people. The track is all concrete. The ditches on the end will house the hydraulics. The sides of the track can be elevated to twelve degrees maximum. NCA regulation is eleven degrees. The world-class track will include press boxes, tv load-in, special doors for cables installation and tv truck accessibility. There are 2 blast-in meeting rooms overlooking the track for city meetings, entertaining and meet management.

Facilities for drug testing restrooms are included as well as swing restrooms to accommodate various sports. Virginia Beach will be branded inside the track. The colors of the track are blue and grey. Black is lined for basketball courts, blue is lined for volleyball courts, Temporary lines will be put in for field hockey and various events.

Twenty-two new events have signed letters of intent to be in this building, bringing in an estimate of 41,000 athletes, not including fans and spectators referred to as "blood for business". Twenty-four additional events are in development. The track is sold out except for New Year's Day. One event may move mid-week which would open a weekend.

Eastern Sports Management (ESM) is the operating partner keeping the facility running smoothly daily and keeping the Monday through Thursday business, which is so important for the financial health of the building. The Sports Center will offer league play to the citizens of Virginia Beach, bringing in additional revenue. The General Manager for ESM has been hired to facilitate the pre-opening details.

The Virginia Beach Communications Office reached out to the Green Run High School's advanced math class and provided raw data statistics about the building. The students created a Q&A segment that will be live streamed on the vbgov.com/sportscenter website and the Virginia Beach City site at: visitviriniabeach.com/sportscenter. Different video segments will run each week.

Questions/Concerns

The question was raised if plans included the facility to be a hurricane shelter. This facility is not built for shelter purposes. The Virginia Beach Field House was upgraded to become a hurricane shelter.

Goals were discussed indicating ahead of schedule with selling the track out so soon. It was clarified the twenty-two new events were slated for the first opening year.

There was discussion on the 41,000 athletes and how it translates to room nights. There are economic impact calculations that are generated from Destinations International, the parent company of DMOs throughout the country to obtain raw data. Data is available and will get shared with city council. There was discussion on the surface of the basketball/volleyball courts being maple. Additional basketball courts can be added by lowering track banks to gain six more courts.

There was discussion on the number of athletes per event being as many as 5,000 depending on the sport. Track runs from December through March, making Virginia Beach a year-round sports destination. The maximum occupancy for the Sports Center is being worked out with the fire marshal. Leed certification was directed to Rick Martinec for discussion. Rick explained LEED certification was not built for this building due to budget increases and efforts in other areas to include recycling materials, LED lighting, low VOC paint and energy efficiency. There is a recycling pad on the loading dock area. Nancy suggested tracking of efficiency in the food area can be talked about with the operator of sports management regarding materials brought to serve food in.

The commission members inquired about ticketing sales and gating of events. The event sets the ticket price. Field Hockey is open to the public. Some track events have a small ticket charge. Wrestling involves buying a weekend pass and wearing a wristband to attend events. Measures are being reviewed for the best way to sell tickets (online versus scan at the door). There will be a ticket box with onsite sales capability. Great ideas were rendered from the Philadelphia Convention Center. Nancy Helman explained they are researching how other venues are handling best practices for ticket sales around the country.

Outside the building there will be a festival area with multi-use space for overflow, award ceremonies and music events. Extra power is available for food trucks and vendors to keep participants on the campus venue. The existing BMP has been redesigned. BJ Baumann expressed the interest to tour the Sports Center soon.

Chairman's Report – BJ Baumann

Scooter Update - Brian Solis is working on plans for Scooter company negotiations. Brian will be invited to come back for an update when plans become more finalized.

5G Update - BJ discussed the 5G issues facing the resort area and the need for city staff to create guidelines to coordinate the plans. Emily Archer, with the SGA Office is putting together the guidelines to provide a future update.

RASAP update - BJ noted a letter sent to the RAC Commission from Bruce Thompson is included in member packets regarding Rudee Inlet. RASAP continues to work on many projects such as Rudee Loop, The Mobility Study, the Convention Hotel, Rudee Loop Park, the Marina District, 17th Street/Atlantic Avenue, Central Management Entity for the Beach, Street Skate designs, Sense of Arrival (SOA), key development projects and supporting mixed-use residential development. Two projects underway are the Dome site and The Aquarium expansion project. Planning was slated to be done by a November timeframe. More conversation will need to take place. The committee has really worked hard in looking at everyone's needs.

Committee Reports

Transportation, Parking, Pedestrian Committee (TPPC)

Mike Eason reported Chuck Cayton Chaired the TPPC meeting.

Parking on Atlantic Avenue last year was from Nov. 1st to April 1st. The proposal presented in the TPPC meeting was to move the dates back beginning Oct. to April 15th. The April 15th date may be too late in the season. There will be more discussion on the parking schedule.

HRT at 89th Street – The HRT route from Seashore State Park to Shore Drive turns down Atlantic Avenue to drop off visitors to tour the lighthouse. There is no turn circle on 89th Street causing them to have to turn left on 89th Street and use the feeder road where the bus can't back out. City engineers are working to get a better solution for drivers to make a U-turn and come back out.

Scooters will be looked at as part of the overall Mobility Plan. There will be further future discussion regarding the scooters.

Resort Investment Committee (RIC)

BJ Baumann reported that RIC met yesterday. They spent time developing new speakers for RAC meetings. BJ welcomed any input from commission members for topics they would like to hear more about. Potential speakers for future RAC meetings are Ron Kuhlman with the CVB to present on summer tourism numbers. Rita McClenny with the VA Tourism Association, Oceana-Navy Installations Command, and Donna MacMillan-Whitaker with Venture for SITW2020.

G.R.E.E.N.

There are no new reports on recycling numbers. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) State of the Bay event at the Aquarium for tonight with Congresswoman Elaine Luria has been cancelled due to the weather. Other events include The Surf Rider Foundation Paddle Out to Protect Our Coast to be held on 9th Street. The Aquarium has an upcoming Conservation Speaker Series - Making Sense of Climate Change with direction from Jim Cook.

Staff Report

Mike Eason reported that the American Music Festival and the Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon were this past weekend and successful events. There was discussion on the contract for the Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon having 1 year left.

City staff is preparing for "Dorian's" arrival. Most city events through the weekend have been cancelled or postponed. The Shriners may or may not hold the parade on Saturday.

Mike reminded members that the Nominating Committee needs to be formed for selection of new officers that would take effect January 1, 2020. Sheri Higgason was introduced as the new Office Assistant for the Resort Management Office due to Robin Hart being promoted into her new position.

Old Business

There was none

New Business

Human Rights Commission report was given. The Human Rights award meeting will be Oct. 10, 2019.

Public Comment

There was none

Meeting adjourned at 3:53 p.m.