



Resort Advisory Commission  
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## RESORT ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES

**DATE:** November 7, 2019

**TIME:** 3:00 pm

**PLACE:** Virginia Beach Convention Center, 2nd Floor, Rm 4AB

### COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

BJ Baumann  
Randy Thompson  
Billy Almond  
Bobby Melatti  
Bryan Cuffee  
Keith Ireland  
Kristina Chastain  
Laura Habr  
Michael Levinson  
Michael Cloud-Butler  
Preston Midgett  
Sylvia Strickland  
Russell Lyons  
Tyler Brown

### COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Craig Roback  
Gerrie West  
John Hawa  
Phil Boyer  
Sam Reid

### OTHERS PRESENT

Guy Tower, City Council  
Michael Ronan, COVB LE, Ret.  
Ron Kuhlman, CVB  
Ron Williams, Deputy City Manager  
Rita McClenny VA Tourism Association  
Debra Bryan, City Attorney's Office  
Emily Archer, SGA Office  
Stacy Parker, The Virginian-Pilot  
Mike Eason, CVB / Resort Mgmt.  
Sheri Higgason CVB / Resort Mgmt.

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

### **Locals Campaign and Market Update – Ron Williams, Deputy City Manager / Ron Kuhlman, CVB**

BJ Baumann stated there have been requests over the years for regional advertising to increase business and tourism in the surrounding areas. BJ invited Ron Williams to speak on the City's new marketing program "Rediscover Virginia Beach" that is now underway.

Ron Williams indicated the pilot program will be a multi-year platform advertised through local news, digital and social media, and the rediscoverVB.com website. The Campaign was produced exclusively in-house through the efforts of the CVB Marketing and Communications Departments.

Ron Kuhlman shared the warm weather occupancy data comparing March through September in the 2018-19 seasons. He reviewed the AirDNA data which is the measurement for the shared economy Airbnbs used to monitor short-term rental trends. March through June Airbnb occupancy was strong while July through September dropped off.

Ron shared the purpose of the new Marketing Campaign is to reacquaint locals with what there is to see and do in the Resort area and surrounding areas in the City.

It is directed towards age groups ranging from 25 – 65 in their prime spending years to take advantage of the myriad of activities within the City.

The Campaign will be rolled out in four Media Flights throughout the year. **Media Flight #1: runs Oct. 23–Nov. 30. Media Flight #2: runs Jan.-Feb. 2020. Media Flight #3: runs March-April 2020. Media Flight #4: runs April-May 2020.** The video episodes for the Resort area feature the Oceanfront corridor, Central Beach, and the Marina/Rudee Loop area. There will also be a custom website landing page, blog articles, email blasts to reach 33,000 residents and digital ads. Local media running the advertisements include: WTKR-News Ch.3, WAVY TV10, VEER magazine, and Coastal VA magazine sponsored by VistaGraphics. Social media video running on Facebook and Instagram feature Mary Kathryn who is known locally as Woo Woo from 94.9 The Point.

The rediscovervb.com landing page features the Town Center area, Sandbridge, Chesapeake Bay, and Pungo. The site also includes updates on the 19<sup>th</sup> Street Construction project, businesses in the ViBe District, the free parking on Atlantic Avenue this fall, and an events calendar. Ron stated the businesses in the ViBe District remain open during the construction phase and are accessible to please visit them.

The City plans to measure the success rate of the campaign in terms of web traffic, time on the site, page views, and foot traffic. The use of Visa credit card expenditures by Norfolk/Virginia Beach DMA in the 23451 zip code will produce data on spending trends to determine if future media adjustments are needed.

#### Questions/Comments

There was discussion on the last intercept studies with Continental Research for end of summer expenditures in 2016 and if this one would include visitor activity data. The focus right now would be broad to gain a foot count of where people are from in Hampton Roads.

It was commented future features could include the local surf culture and the mural guided tour. There was discussion on the viewing area remaining limited to within a 25-mile radius of the oceanfront.

#### State Numbers for the 2019 Season – Rita McClenny, VA Tourism Association

Rita McClenny gave a recap of 2018 as being a year to remember for Virginia. Four of the indicators they looked at from the regional prospective were Defense Spending, Travel and Tourism, the Port of Virginia, and the Airport. All of those indicators were up. In 2018, visitors spending for Virginia Beach was \$1.6 billion, up 4 percent from 2017. On a state level in 2018, there was \$5.1 billion in visitors spending, \$184 billion in local tax revenue, and \$1 billion in personal income and salaries. Hotel revenue exceeded \$880 million in 2018 with a 63% occupancy rate. Accommodations and Lodging are up \$78.5 million this year from \$70.4 million in 2018. There was a low unemployment rate of 3.3% in 2018. The Virginia Port Authority is increasing revenue at \$537.1 million in 2018. Military spending is on the rise. These are all positive from a regional prospective.

Rita indicated advertising, food and beverage and great products are all driving forces in attracting visitation to the area. Recent studies show that, 84% of people who come to Virginia are first time visitors and 87% are repeat visitors. There is a need to increase advertising to new markets. The State has requested a budget increase that would allow for 17 new media markets if approved in the upcoming proposal on December 17.

Marketing campaign videos were shared of a family on a beach vacation and Pharrell Williams describing “Something in the Water” as being an opportunity to bring the best of what he has encountered around the world back to Virginia Beach.

Discussion led to weaknesses in the area such as slower population growth and private sector job creation being slower compared to areas like Charlotte. Other indicators show the median sales price of existing homes is higher than it was before the recession and the number of business establishments has not reached the pre-recession level.

Ratings on marketplace factors for Virginia versus competitor destinations and ratings on destination factors were shared. Cost and personal finances are listed among the top barriers for travel. Tourism plays an important socio-economic role in the region and locally. There is room for growth

through increased small businesses and investing in development of the area and new products.

### **5G Update – Debra Bryan, City Attorney’s Office / Emily Archer, SGA**

Debra Bryan with the City Attorney’s Office stated she gave a presentation to RAC in July and a lot of direction and discussion came out of that meeting. Debra’s focus today is to review the 5G small cell infrastructure, Federal and State regulations, and the current permit state in the City. Emily Archer will provide updates on small cell infrastructure guidelines.

Debra stated 5G is not here yet. It will be an addition to the macro cell towers that the City currently has. The four service providers are AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile and Verizon. AT&T is boasting the most 5G sites in the country. Sprint and T-Mobile have stopped putting in permits due to a pending merger and litigation. AT&T and Verizon are the ones the City is involved with the most.

Debra discussed State and Federal regulations. The State of Virginia along with 21 other states passed Small Cell Ordinances in 2017-2018 taking away localities rights to do anything unless it is safety related or causing interference. The City met with Verizon and AT&T to inform them of the pending small cell guidelines and they have been cooperating with the process.

The poles require a permit cell application from the City of Virginia Beach. To date, 170 permit cell applications have been received from Verizon, 61 from AT&T, and 37 have been installed. Once the applications are permitted, inspectors follow up to make sure the structures have been installed properly. There are current pole location permit requests at the Resort area.

Verizon has been working with the Police and Public Works departments on installing police camera poles in areas where there is a high volume of people. In 2018, twenty-five police camera poles were installed across the Resort area including the Boardwalk. The installation of these police camera poles is part of a City program that will install 50 more camera poles in the Resort Strategic Growth Area. This is a 3- phase project. Costs of the police cameras range from \$2,500 - \$3,500. The poles cost up to \$30,000 for design and installation. There are negotiations with Verizon to pay for the design and engineering of the poles allowing them to get put up to city specifications.

Emily Archer reviewed a draft of the Small Cell Infrastructure Design Guidelines. It is a 14-page document that covers guideline goals, placement preferences, aesthetic preferences and co location. The document draft will be briefed by City Council and the Planning Commission in December and up for approval in January or February. They plan to have information on the Planning Department’s main website soon for public input. BJ stated Emily has done an incredible amount of work and thanked her and Debra for their presentation.

### **Questions/Comments**

There was questioning on the pushback from several sources and litigation involved, and if there has been any progress moving forward. It was indicated there has not been movement and the providers are working more with the local government. It was inquired if there is any course of action for the General Assembly to take. There is not. They need to start first at the FCC level.

Discussion led to any new information on the radiation levels. There has been movement from the Federal Level to push the FCC to come up with new guidelines. The last guidelines were updated in 1996.

### **Chairman’s Report – BJ Baumann**

BJ stated the RASAP committee met today and are down to the final draft to have out in December / January. That presentation will go before City Council for approval.

BJ announced Mike Eason is retiring effective January 1, 2020.

A motion was carried to approve the Chair and Vice Chair for the 2020 RAC Commission.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Transportation, Parking, Pedestrian Committee (TPPC)**

Preston Midgett reported the committee met last week on an application for a hotel overflow and commercial parking lot on the north side of 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. Approval needs to be obtained through Alternative Compliance due to restrictions in the form-based code. There is concern for the proximity to

the residential area. There was no representation from the residences or the Civic League. The committee did not take a position on it as developments are still in progress with the lighting, landscaping, and fencing. The representatives will come back to PDRC on December 3 with an update.

Elaine Linn and Walter Camp from Parks and Recreation presented "Bike Buddies", a new bike rack placement program in the City. Locations for the bike rack installations include Atlantic Avenue and Mount Trashmore. The program is still in the planning stages.

HRT Update – The City, Fort Story and HRT have come up with a solution for the Route 35 buses to turn around and this service will be able to be reinstated next spring to get people to the Cape Henry Light House. Route 35 has doubled in ridership since last year.

The scooters program is going before City Council. Emily Archer gave a presentation on the Pacific Avenue median project scheduled to be done this winter on 34<sup>th</sup> to 39<sup>th</sup> Streets. Project plans including replacement of the pedestrian lights. There is a proposed seasonal speed limit change on sections of Pacific Avenue.

#### Planning & Design Review Committee (PDRC)

Billy Almond reported the committee met Tuesday morning and had a review with representatives for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Street parking lot that had presented to TPPC last week. The committee made recommendations for review when representatives return on December 3 with a refined plan for fencing, lighting and attendant status.

The committee reviewed the revised proposal for the Rockfish Open Air Café. The group is returning to the December 3 PDRC meeting with refined plans for their request.

#### Oceanfront Enhancement Committee (OEC)

Randy Thompson gave an update in Sam Reid's absence. The committee met Friday and had a presentation from Nina Goodale of the Cultural Affairs Office regarding public private art, how the process worked, and the City's role in maintaining the art. The committee continues to keep the SOA as a priority. The American Association of Architecture is proposing to do a global design competition for this area. The OEC committee will continue in their efforts to support the Sense of Arrival.

#### Resort Investment Committee (RIC)

BJ Baumann reported that RIC had met this morning and reviewed a presentation from Emily Archer and Jessica Blackburn on the 19<sup>th</sup> Street construction project and the impact on area businesses.

There will be a meeting with Bill Hanbury, the CVB Consultant on November 13 to gather information on the best plan for the City. There will be a speaker for the December RAC meeting on the Mobility Plan Development process.

#### Oceanfront Strategic Growth Area Committee (OSGAC)

BJ Baumann announced OSGAC meetings will resume on January 8, 2020.

#### GREENE

Laura Habr stated the committee did not meet last week. Laura will be in Washington D.C. next week.

#### Staff Report

Mike Eason encouraged the Commissioners to attend the November 13 meeting with Bill Hanbury and the location is the CVB Board Room, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor.

This weekend is the Live on Atlantic's final party at the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum. Preparations are underway for the Holiday Parade. The Holiday Lights are near completion except for the Christmas Tree and the 31<sup>st</sup> Street Park.

City Council passed a new ordinance on short term rental permits for parties that exceed 50 people. The process is being finalized by the end of the week.

Mike announced a special 2-hour segment on PBS entitled "In the Age of AI (Artificial Intelligence) he highly recommends watching. 5G is going to be the epicenter of AI moving forward.

The program can be reached at [PBS.org\frontline](https://www.pbs.org/frontline).

**Old Business**

Laura Habr thanked everyone for their support of her Campaign for the Treasurers Office. There is more information about the Treasurer's Office available through the City Attorney's Office.

**New Business**

There was a reminder the Development Agreement for the Dome Site project will go before City Council for public comment at the November 12 meeting. There will be a public hearing for the acquisition of additional parcels related to the project. The meeting will be formal session and starts at 6:00 p.m.

Ron Williams announced Something in the Water ticket sales and line-up announcements have been delayed due to Live Nation continuing to sign up the artists. This year there were 38,000 in ticket sales and sales are expected to cap at 60,000 for 2020.

BJ indicated they have asked for an update on SITW when that is ready. Providing information on Something in the Water to the business owners this year as early as possible is a priority.

**Public Comment**

Kathy Warren announced the City is in the official first stages of public input for the Comprehensive Plan Update for the City. They hope to have the plan adopted in 2021. A survey link is available for public input. Sheri will send the link to subcommittee members.

Meeting adjourned at 4:22 p.m.