



Resort Advisory Commission
2101 Parks Avenue, Suite 302
Virginia Beach, VA 23451
(757) 385-4800
FAX (757) 422-3666

RESORT ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: December 5, 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
Craig Roback
Laura Habr
Michael Levinson
Michael Cloud-Butler
Sylvia Strickland
Tyler Brown

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Bryan Cuffee
Gerrie West
John Hawa
Keith Ireland
Kristina Chastain
Phil Boyer
Preston Midgett
Russell Lyons
Sam Reid

OTHERS PRESENT

Guy Tower, City Council
Dr. Vinod Agarwal, ODU
Kyle Williams, Kimley-Horn
David Whyte, Kimley-Horn
Kathy Warren, SGA
Brian Solis, CVB/CMO
Stacy Parker, The Virginian-Pilot
Tara Reel, SGA
Mike Eason, CVB / RMO
Sheri Higgason CVB / RMO

BJ Baumann called the meeting to order at 3:00pm. **Motion carried to approve the November 7, 2019 RAC minutes as written.**

Something in the Water Economic Impact – Dr. Vinod Agarwal, ODU

BJ Baumann introduced Economics Professor, Dr. Agarwal from Old Dominion University to review the Economic Impact of Something in the Water. Dr. Agarwal indicated if there are questions during the presentation, he would address them. He acknowledged the support of the City of Virginia Beach and The Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy. His presentation included a survey of festival visitors, research from STR Data, and the economic impact on Hampton Roads, mainly in Virginia Beach.

Professor Robert Case of ODU implemented a paper survey for the event that received over 2,000 responses and an additional 600 surveys were completed on QR code. Event producers sent two email surveys out. A total of 8,083 were received in full. Some of the surveys were discarded due to lack of clarity or lack of response in all four survey categories, bringing the number of surveys utilized in the study to 5,692. Results showed 23% of ticketed visitors came from Virginia Beach, 34% were from other cities in Hampton Roads, and 43% were from outside of Hampton Roads.

A distribution of visitors from eight selected cities in Hampton Roads was viewed. Results indicated all cities were well represented at the Something in the Water festival.

The likelihood of festival return, if it was held in Virginia Beach again was 97%. Tickets for 2020

Something in the Water went on pre-sale to individuals who were Virginia residents or who had previously attended the festival. Within four hours, more than 25,000 tickets were sold. Expenditures per person by lodging, food, entertainment, and other was presented for the three-day festival. Visitors by race indicated a diversity in attendance. Gender results showed two thirds of visitors were female and one third were male. Age groups and select visitors by residence, gender and race was reviewed.

Discussion led to types of visitor lodging and costs involved. STR data was presented for Thursday through Monday of 2018 and 2019. Hotel occupancy increased in every selected sub-market of Virginia Beach and Hampton Roads. Virginia Beach hotels were able to charge increased rates after the event was announced.

Analysis by scale of hotels was viewed from the 4th week of April in 2018 and 2019 to reflect occupancy increases. Occupancy for just Friday and Saturday was shown from Virginia Beach and cities in Hampton Roads. Results showed there were significant lodging increases in Newport News and Hampton. Economists inquired if there were other events in those cities that weekend. There were none. Indications were most increases in those cities were due to this festival. Hotel fees in outlying cities were lower than in Virginia Beach indicating visitors were willing to commute to save money.

Economic impact in Virginia Beach showed the City collected more tax revenue than what it spent to support the festival. Dr. Agarwal stated the City of Virginia Beach provided him with all the audited expenses and the tax revenues are the economic estimates. In preparing the Economic Impact Analysis, expenditures were divided into three parts, direct impact, indirect and induced impact. Comments on expenditures and the Economic Impact Analysis were reviewed.

Based on the surveys, they were able to obtain visitors spending on lodging, food and beverage, entertainment and other. Entertainment included ticket sales which accounted for nearly half of the spending. The Economic Impact Analysis showed a total impact in Hampton Roads of \$24,114,572. The economic impact excluded expenditures by event producers that went outside of the area, as well as expenditures incurred by sponsors on behalf of the event. The study does not include expenditures by non-ticket holders.

Dr. Agarwal announced the 2020 Economic Forecasting Project Presentation is scheduled for January 29, 2020 at ODU in The Big Blue Room, Chartway Arena from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Tickets are \$40 per person and includes lunch. If anyone is interested in attending, please contact him. Dr. Agarwal will send a copy of his presentation to Sheri Higgason to share with the Commissioners.

Questions/Comments

There was discussion on restaurant sales during Something in the Water versus food sales inside the festival and a need to increase the local restaurant visitors during that weekend. There is data available through the Commissioner of the Revenue for monthly reported food sales.

There was discussion on the hotel data provided by SGR for actual performance on franchises and estimated performance based on franchised independent hotels.

It was stated the 2020 attendance for Something in the Water is expected to bring more visitors than last year. The hope is locals will stay in the area and some of the traffic issues will be resolved.

It was stated the event has some of the same event organizers involved this year, but there is a different producer.

Strategic Mobility Plan Development Overview – Kyle Williams, David Whyte / Kimley-Horn

BJ Baumann introduced Kyle Williams and David Whyte of Kimley-Horn to give the Commissioners an educational overview on the process for developing a Mobility Plan. The Mobility Plan will be a top priority from the RASAP Plan in 2020.

David Whyte stated he has been involved with mobility planning for a long time. These plans are different than transportation plans because they are a collection of multiple plans that integrate with each other. Their focus is on strategies for projects, programs and policies together that consider all the range of constraints and opportunities that exist in planning while seeking to advance the City's priorities. Elements of Strategic Mobility Plans for integrated modal plans include vehicles, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, curb space management, shared mobility, parking, transportation demand management and event management.

Strategic Mobility Plans are about reliability, choices, accessibility, navigating the trade-offs in the process, affordability and implementation. The plans focus on all ages and abilities from eight to eighty. Strategic Mobility plans appeal to a wide range of audiences to include residences, visitors, and business owners. In the past, bike lanes were the gold standard. However, they do not allow accommodations for protection from traffic on the roads.

Kyle Williams works in the Virginia Beach Kimley-Horn office at Town Center. He indicated modes of transportation will continue to evolve in the future. He reviewed slides of current transportation at the oceanfront and scenarios for options including a mobility hub to support visitors and resort worker transportation needs. It is important the mobility plan encompasses the different needs of all users trafficking the resort area.

Kyle gave an overview of steps involved in implementing a mobility plan to include data gathering, conducting an existing and future needs analysis, development of recommendations, and prioritization. The process involves development of goals, stakeholder meetings and testing solutions in various scenarios. Every plan is tailored to the needs of its community.

Timelines for developing a mobility plan can be 12 to 18 months. It depends on the goals and accessed needs determined for the plan.

Successful mobility plans from around the country were shared to include Crystal City, Arlington, Virginia and Sedona in Motion, Sedona, Arizona. Each had their own challenges and level of considerations in the process.

Discussion led to the reasons for investing in a mobility plan as it makes implementation easier, it clarifies priorities and considers funding, and helps achieve larger goals for the Resort Area.

In closing, a robust multimodal transportation networks that offers convenient, affordable, and reliable choices to residents, employees, and visitors can be an achievable vision in the Resort Area.

Questions/Comments

There was discussion on how to balance ongoing construction projects already underway in the Resort Area with the mobility plan. It was stated those projects are recognized for their investment to the city and can be incorporated in the plan process. There is not a need to wait for completion on ongoing projects before starting a mobility plan. In some cases where designs are underway, the consultants can implement a policy diagnostic to apply policies needed for different solutions to a project.

Conversation centered around plan designs for 17th Street, right-of-ways, complete street policies, complete corridors, and parking being a critical piece of the mobility plan.

Costs for developing a mobility plan can vary depending on the details of different transportation modes and the items needing to be addressed in the plan development. The mobility plan would encompass only the Resort Area and transition locations entering and exiting the area.

Kyle and David shared some of the diverse micro-mobility solutions that are being utilized more frequently in different areas around the country to include sit-down scooters, small scooters, golf carts and E-bikes.

Chairman's Report – BJ Baumann

BJ stated that several members are rotating off the Resort Advisory Commission (RAC), and she wanted to recognize them for their efforts in the community and on the RAC Commission. Billy Almond, Preston Midgett, Sylvia Strickland, Michael Butler and Craig Roback will be rotating off. They will remain active in their subcommittees and attend those meetings. Councilman Tower will provide the Commissioners with new candidate names and they will be announced at a future date.

BJ announced that Mike Eason is officially retiring after 18 years of dedicated City Service as the Resort Administrator and the RAC Liaison. He was presented with a service plaque.

BJ shared the final draft of the RASAP plan is almost completed and a briefing with the Planning Commission is scheduled for January. The mobility plan study will be one of the high priorities as improvements at the Resort Area are part of that.

Committee Reports

Transportation, Parking, Pedestrian Committee (TPPC)

There was none.

Planning & Design Review Committee (PDRC)

Billy Almond reported the committee met Tuesday morning and reviewed two projects and an initiative. Representatives for the 23rd Street Parking lot development located to the North of Jungle Golf were back for review. The committee met last month and gave them plan recommendations and ideas. **A motion was carried to approve the plan.** Representatives from the RockFish Open Air Cafe came back with updated plans for a request to develop a new café by combining the side street café and boardwalk cafe together. **A motion was carried to approve the plan** with recommendations and noting it was an exception to the Café Guidelines. City Council will have the final decision on that.

Billy shared the committee reviewed a presentation from Walter Camp with the Parks and Recreation Foundation on the Bike Buddies Pilot Program. It is a bike rack program to have bike racks placed throughout strategic locations in the Resort Area and Mount Trashmore. The first location is on 2nd Street near the boardwalk area. There are sponsorship recognition opportunities available that can be in memory or in honor of an individual or business. Suggestions were made to review the design and application of the bike rack sponsor plaques. Billy stated the committee looks forward to this initiative moving forward. Walter and Elaine Linn have been invited to the next PDRC meeting to provide updates and a site plan overview.

Oceanfront Enhancement Committee (OEC)

Randy Thompson stated the committee met the week before Thanksgiving. He announced Sam Reid will be stepping down as OEC Chair. Sam will remain an active member on the committee. The committee reviewed OEC priorities from 2019 moving forward into 2020. One item up for discussion in the January 2020 OEC meeting will be the projection art project. Nina Goodale of the Cultural Affairs Office has been invited to the January 31 meeting to provide updates and recommendations on the projection art. The Sense of Arrival is on hold until the architectural design competition takes place. Randy indicated the committee looks to RASAP for objectives the OEC will focus on. An item for discussion in the January meeting will be possible seasonal or temporary use for the Rudee Loop.

Resort Investment Committee (RIC)

BJ Baumann reported the RIC committee met yesterday and reviewed a presentation from City Auditor, Lyndon Remias on the TIP & TAP Fund Audit results. The presentation is available online at www.vbgov/audit. Lyndon has been invited to give this presentation at the January 9 RAC meeting. BJ stated there was a brief conversation of upcoming items that will be presented to Kathy Warren in inclusion in the budget.

Oceanfront Strategic Growth Area Committee (OSGAC)

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

G.R.E.E.N.E.

Laura Habr stated the committee did not meet in November and December due to the holidays. In January they will meet regarding updated recycling numbers and other important items. She indicated there are several legislative items in the General Assembly including clean water initiatives, plastic band issues, and offshore drilling to protect our state waters. She will keep the Commissioners updated on initiative as they move forward. On Nov.12 and 13, their coordinated group the Business Alliance for Protecting the Atlantic Coast met in Washington DC to voice their concerns for offshore drilling for Virginia and Virginia Beach.

They were joined by colleagues from Florida to Maine and by Gulf Coast and Pacific Coast states.

Laura stated the committee is always looking for new members to share in their G.R.E.E.N. initiatives and to please send any interested individuals her way. She indicated having the City and the Mayor join in the Global Covenant of Mayors is best practices. Laura handed out Pearl Business Programs for the Commissioners to share with any interested businesses.

Staff Report

Mike Eason announced the holiday parade is Saturday, December 7 at 5:30 p.m. He encouraged attendance. The holiday lights are running, and he encouraged the group's participation. In his closing remarks, he thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to serve in his position.

Old Business

There was none

New Business

There was none

Public Comment

There was none

Meeting adjourned at 4:36 p.m.