



Resort Advisory Commission
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RESORT ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: February 6, 2020

TIME: 3:00 pm

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

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

BJ Baumann
Bobby Melatti
Bryan Cuffee
Chuck Cayton
George Kotarides
Keith Ireland
Kristina Chastain
Lori Overholt
Mike Eason
Michael Levinson
Michael Ronan
Russell Lyons

Randy Thompson
Sam Reid
Tyler Brown

OTHERS PRESENT

Bill Gambrell, VBRA
Christina Trapani, KIBC
Kyle Williams, TPPC
Preston Midgett, TPPC
Guy Tower, City Council
Rosemary Wilson, City Council
Stacy Parker, The Virginian-Pilot
Brian Solis, CMO/Interim RMO Administrator
Jenizza Badua, SGA
Kathy Warren, SGA/RAC Staff Liaison
Sheri Higgason, Recorder CVB/RMO

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Laura Habr

BJ Baumann called the meeting to order at 3:00pm. **Motion carried to approve the January 9, 2020 RAC minutes as written.**

RASAP Plan Update – Kathy Warren, SGA/RAC Staff Liaison

BJ Baumann introduced Kathy Warren to present the Resort Area's Strategic Growth Action Plan (RASAP). Kathy thanked the Resort Advisory Commission and City Council members who have attended public meetings and contributed their efforts in this long planning process. This has been fifteen months of work. Kathy stated the plan was presented to the Planning Commission and they will vote on it at their meeting next Wednesday. City Council was briefed this past Tuesday. March 3 will be the public hearing for City Council and the final vote will take place March 17.

The presentation encompasses an overview of the Strategic Growth Areas, structure of the Steering Committee, plan priorities, and next steps and schedule moving forward. There are eight Strategic Growth areas in the City designated through the Comprehensive Plan to absorb future growth. The Plan was adopted by City Council in 2008 – 2013. Then, in the Comprehensive Plan between 2009 and 2016.

Each Strategic Growth Area (SGA) is unique and has its own master plan. They all have common themes to include higher densities, connectivity, multi-modal transportation, open space and trails, parking systems, and are pedestrian friendly.

A map of the SGA's was reviewed and the make-up of the Steering Committee. The 2008 RASAP priorities accomplished or Underway include:

- Develop the Dome Site as a major entertainment venue
- Build the Convention Center Hotel
- Completion of the Laskin Gateway project
- Conduct EIS for Light Rail extension
- Design and build Rudee Walk
- Streetscape improvements for 19th Street and Central Beach
- Form a management entity
- Develop zoning revisions for the Resort Area.

There were three phases of the process led by City Staff and the Consultant, WPA. Debbie Zwyna of the SGA Office has been the project manager. Public engagement consisted of public workshops and online surveys to reach over 3,000 people to provide input during the process. It was decided to expand the boundaries of the RASAP from 2008 to include the Aquarium through General Booth Boulevard. The Steering Committee's Vision for the Plan update and a detailed overview of the new 2030 RASAP Priority Action Items include:

- Adopt the best practices of a Central Management Entity
- Develop a comprehensive Mobility Plan
- Design and implement Streetscape Improvements
- Enhance and develop connected Green / Open Spaces
- Design and construct a Gateway at 21st Street that provides a sense of welcome
- Support Impact Projects that benefit the Resort Area and City of Virginia Beach
- Support Residential and Mixed-use Development in the Resort Area

Questions/Comments

The Project Matrix Schedule, timeline of the process, and budget were discussed. Funds have been requested for the Mobility Plan and Streetscape improvements. Central Management support is through the operating budget. There was an inquiry on the status of new restrooms at the Resort. They are in the design process and are being funded through the CIP and additional funding will be available after July 1.

George Kotarides made a motion to approve the RASAP Plan and send the letter of Intent to City Council. A second motion was made. All were in favor. The Motion was carried.

Chairman's Report – BJ Baumann

BJ stated she has been involved at the State Level to address the minimum wage tip credit issues which have tremendous impact on the Resort Area. She indicated it is a long process, but some progress has been made.

RAC Speakers Update

March - Gary Ryan, Executive Director from MOCA to present plans on their Strategic Planning Process. A tentative request for Consultant, Bill Hanbury to present results of the study for privatizing of the CVB may not be ready for the March meeting.

April - Delegate Glenn Davis to present a 5G update.

May - Budget update for 2020-2021.

June - A strategic planning meeting from 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. is being planned to include a facilitator.

Committee Reports

Transportation, Parking, Pedestrian Committee (TPPC)

Preston Midgett stated the TPPC Committee met last week. Emily Archer provided an update on the Pacific Avenue Pedestrian Safety Crossings. The median from 32nd Street to 34th Street will be extended to 39th Street this winter. There will be seasonally adjusted speed limit signs installed in the core sections where they are needed. There will also be new crossing pedestrian signs with flashing lights and push button signs to alert motorists that pedestrians are crossing. Other improvements include updating the crosswalks to make them more visible and additional lighting.

Something in the Water – Preston indicated the event organizers were invited to provide an update on the festival traffic pattern. There will be a dedicated lane traveling north from General Booth Boulevard along Atlantic Avenue with shuttle drop off points for festival attendees. All traffic on Atlantic Avenue will be northbound from 1st – 17th Street with a dedicated lane for shuttle service. Shuttle operations will be in service at the Amphitheater, Tidewater Community College and the Sports Plex. Rideshare opportunities will be available at the 19th Street Municipal Parking lot, Star of the Sea Church, and the Holiday Travel Park. Uber and Lyft will provide “Taxi mode” service. Trolley service will run throughout the festival. The Convention Center will host VIP parking and resort employee parking.

The festival is double in size this year with 60,000 attendees. It includes education symposiums at the Convention Center Monday – Thursday with the music component on the beach Friday – Sunday.

Planning & Design Review Committee (PDRC)

Kathy Warren provided an update on behalf of PDRC Committee Chair, Billy Almond. She stated the PDRC Committee met on Tuesday and there was no quorum to approve minutes or take any action on items. Harmony Hospitality gave a presentation on the new Homewood Suites Development at 3108 Atlantic Avenue. The hotel will have 144 rooms and 153 spaces in the parking garage. Estimated completion is for 2022.

There were three existing outdoor cafes that presented to make changes to their property. They were invited to return to the March meeting since they did not have enough information to present. A check list was suggested for future applicants, so they know what is required when they review before the PDRC prior to approval. The SGA Office is putting together that check list. Kathy Browning announced Seaside Harbor Apartments located on 18th Street in the ViBe District was awarded the **2019 Multifamily Pillars of the Industry Award for Best Affordable Apartment Community.**

Oceanfront Enhancement Committee (OEC)

George Kotarides provided an update on behalf of OEC Committee Chair, Randy Thompson. The first presentation was for art projection mapping from Wireframe co-founder, Steve Blanchette, a public art agent and producer based in Montreal, Canada, along with Nina Goodale of the Cultural Affairs Office. Steve has seen our market and can provide content curation. The average cost is approximately \$200,000 This does not include content art fee. Steps in the process involve a projection evaluation layout to determine achievable objectives. The initial step fee is \$4,200. Sources of funding could be acquired through grants, private funding, and public monies. The committee is working with Nina to advise of next steps.

The committee reviewed a best practice slide presentation from Richard Maddox centered around homelessness and the growing issue at the Resort. Richard owns Dairy Queen on 17th Street. The best practices in place at 17th Street to deter homelessness has not been utilized at 24th & 31st Street parks. Mike Ronan cautioned the committee on the legality of the practices being recommended.

A meeting is being planned with the City Attorney to weigh in on the matter concerning practices being recommended. With the City Attorney’s approval, the committee will present recommendations at a future meeting.

There were ideas presented for seasonal uses of Rudee Loop to include a Ferris Wheel

operated by Skyview. The Ferris Wheel will be available for pursuing locally in 2020-2021. A farmer's market was also discussed. Ideas are welcome. Committee member, Mike Mauch suggested the 24th Street Park should be a site reviewed for aesthetic improvements and to be an item on the Agenda at next meeting. The OEC Committee welcomed new members - Stacy Shiflet, Lynn Hightower and Mike Ronan.

Resort Investment Committee (RIC)

BJ stated RIC met yesterday and spent most of the time on discussion for upcoming speakers and moving forward from RASAP and the Strategic Planning Sessions.

Oceanfront Strategic Growth Area Committee (OSGAC)

BJ indicated OSGAC did not meet for the past year due to the RASAP process. The focus moving forward will be the priorities from the RASAP, getting the Mobility Plan underway, and implementing the Central Management Entity. The meeting structure will concentrate on updates for projects in each area district - 31st Street, Central Beach and the Marina Area.

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

Christina Trapani reported on the Green committee for Chair, Laura Habr. She stated the committee had a special guest at last week's meeting, Evan Nied. Evan is a sophomore at Kempsville High School and started a non-profit organization called Planting Shade. His goal is to plant one thousand trees in the Hampton Roads Area. Evan would like to be involved with the committee's efforts.

Christina informed the Commissioners of upcoming projects the *Keep It Beachy Clean* (KIBC) program is involved with to include placing fishing line recycling containers at Rudee Loop. The Parks and Recreation Department has the recycle bins and have offered to install them upon City approval. The SGA Office will help to facilitate that request.

The committee is proposing to do a pilot program at the oceanfront for beach toy recycle containers. The Girl Scouts are interested in getting involved in the project. The initiative would be volunteer based to oversee the maintenance of the containers. An inquiry was raised on the threshold required for placing recycle bins for permitted events in the parks. Kathy Warren will reach out to the Special Events office on the process for lowering the threshold.

The Virginia Beach Hotel Association (VBHA) has started a Virginia Beach Green Committee to promote hotels becoming Virginia Green certified.

Staff Report

Kathy Warren introduced Bryan Miller, Acting General Manager of the Convention Center in place of Courtney Dyer who has retired. There was nothing additional on the staff report.

Old Business

There was none

New Business

Russell Lyons provided background on the J1 Student Visa Program for international college age students that work at the oceanfront during the summer. The program fosters good will with young students abroad and provides employees for resort businesses. There are approximately 1,200 students per year from June – September. The later half of September and October they travel around the country as the program allows thirty extra travel days.

Recently, available housing for J1 students has declined due to demolition of those condos and apartments utilized by the program in the resort area. Code enforcement also shut down violators for excessive occupancy. Consequently, the J1 Visa Sponsors that partner with the State Department to facilitate the program have mandated that employers in our market provide housing for the students if they continue working in the resort area.

There have been efforts to look at additional housing for J1 students, but not on the level needed. The current zoning ordinance code allows for up to four unrelated individual occupancies per dwelling unit. An amendment was added to the code to allow up to eight J1 student workers per dwelling, if it complies with state building code regulations.

Russell stated there will be a special session in next week's City Council meeting to address the issue. A motion was made to approve a letter endorsing the zoning ordinance change. The motion was carried. A vote was taken to approve the letter for review by City Council. All were in favor.

Public Comment

There was none

Meeting adjourned at 4:49 p.m.