



Resort Advisory Commission
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RESORT ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: June 11, 2020
TIME: 3:00 pm
PLACE: Virginia Beach Convention Center, 1st Floor, Ball Room

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

BJ Baumann
Bill Gambrell
Bryan Cuffee
Chuck Cayton
George Kotarides
Keith Ireland
Kristina Chastain
Laura Habr
Lori Overholt
Michael Ronan
Mike Eason
Page Miyares
Randy Thompson
Russell Lyons
Tyler Brown

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Michael Levinson

OTHERS PRESENT

Billy Almond, PDRC
Preston Midgett, TPPC
Guy Tower, City Council
Michael Berlucchi, City Council
Mark Stevens, HRC
Chris Neikirk, AAA
Tony Zuccaro, VBPD
M.D. McInerney, VBPD
Scott Wichtendahl, VBPD
Brian Solis, CMO, RMO
Kathy Warren, SGA/RAC Staff Liaison
Sheri Higgason, Recorder CVB/RMO

BJ Baumann called the meeting to order at 3:00pm. **Motion carried to approve the March 5, 2020 RAC minutes as written.**

Beach Ambassador Program Update – Brian Solis

Brian Solis reported Virginia Beach beaches were the first in the Commonwealth to reopen for activities other than fishing or exercise. Sixty Ambassadors are participating in the program at beaches along the Resort Oceanfront, Bayfront, and parts of Sandbridge. IMGoing (formerly Beach Events) was awarded the contract. The city posted a total of one hundred eighty-five signs for the program. Signage will be adjusted according to updated guidelines.

Questions/Discussion

BJ Baumann inquired what the role of the Beach Ambassadors' involved and what they provided. The program focuses on four components: Cleaning, Distancing, Education and Enforcement. Beach Ambassadors are trained to engage the public with social distancing and direction to COVID-19 related guidelines. Educational signage is posted at each beach access point.

Beach Reopening Strategies utilized to support Phase One:

- Divide the Oceanfront, Bayfront and Sandbridge into manageable “zones,” or areas of engagement and enforcement including the bike-path and boardwalk.
- Deploy Clean Teams to work in shifts to disinfect “high-touch” areas and to replenish sanitizing stations.
- Deploy Beach Ambassadors to serve as frontline for enforcement of safe distancing on the beaches.
- Post collateral education materials throughout the resort area, with emphasis at all beach access points

The Clean Teams are comprised of universal teams that clean high touch surfaces, such as the boardwalk railings, showers and foot washes.

Phase Two Guidelines included groups of no more than ten, no speakers, large coolers, alcohol, tents or grouping of umbrellas. Deputy City Manager Ron Williams has requests to Governor Northam’s Office for formal clarification on the relaxing of several restrictions, including groups of fifty or less, adjusting cleaning team schedules from 10-12 hours per day to 8-9 hours per day, and to allow tents and speakers.

The Beach Ambassador Program has been successful and a seamless collaboration between the Police, EMS, Fire and Rescue, Lifesaving Services, and for the Supervisors and Ambassadors.

RASAP Update and CIP Projects – Kathy Warren

BJ stated the majority of the Resort Advisory Commission (RAC) priorities have been included in the Resort Area Strategic Action Plan (RASAP) for 2030. City Council has approved the RASAP Plan. Councilman Tower has been the RAC’s advocate in those efforts.

Kathy Warren stated with City Council’s adoption of RASAP last week, the city can move forward with priorities to include funding in the CIP for the Resort Mobility Plan. Kimley-Horn will be the consultant to move the plan forward with the draft scope. The Transportation, Parking, Pedestrian Committee (TPPC) will be involved in the process with a presentation from Kyle Williams of Kimley-Horn on Phase One and Phase Two Scopes in the upcoming year.

The Atlantic Avenue Street improvements are an initiative the city is planning to have funding for in the CIP this year at \$1 million per year over a six-year period starting July 2021.

Questions/Discussion

BJ requested a presentation from Kevin Chatellier from the Budget and Management Services Office for an update on direction of TIP Funds moving forward.

BJ opened discussion on Atlantic Avenue improvements. George Kotarides is a stakeholder, and President of Atlantic Avenue Association (AAA). He recognized several AAA Board Members who showed support for the RASAP Plan. He shared photographs of sidewalks and infrastructure on Atlantic Avenue that need attention. George emphasized the amount of work and urgency that needs to be done, especially between 15th and 25th Streets on Atlantic Avenue.

Discussion led to the city’s plans for items that were subject to elimination during the City Manager’s original budget. They will be a priority for City Council to push forward. Councilman Tower added that the RASAP Plan extends to 2030. The items in discussion regard starting on or before FY20-21. He will continue to collaborate with Council members to address issues and support for items that are priority.

Chairman's Report – BJ Baumann

BJ advised spending time reviewing the Committee Reports on pre-pandemic and post pandemic priorities and clear steps moving forward.

Committee Reports

Transportation, Parking, Pedestrian Committee (TPPC)

TPPC Chair, Preston Midgett indicated the committee's last meeting was in February. He stated the median upgrade project has been funded and is moving forward for this winter. Speed limits are reduced in the core section of the resort. The new speed signs will change the speed limits as the season changes. More discussion will follow for when and where they will change. The Mobility Plan will be the top priority this summer. Trolley lanes will not be open for the summer. Scooter use is restricted until Phase Three and they are working out details to keep them clean.

Planning & Design Review Committee (PDRC)

PDRC Chair, Billy Almond stated the PDRC committee met in March. Progress has been made on the development of the Outdoor Café Guidelines. A package was sent to PDRC members for review. There will be a meeting next Tuesday to receive an update. This program will allow for renovation designs on cafes to be done differently than in the past. The PDRC Committee will share a role in the Mobility Plan as it moves forward.

Oceanfront Enhancement Committee (OEC)

OEC Chair, Randy Thompson stated the committee met last in early March. They will focus on updates on the 17th Street Art Installation, the Projection Art Installation on 24th Street, new restroom facilities, and 24th Street Park upgrades. Two members of the committee serve directly with involvement for the Mobility Study.

Resort Investment Committee (RIC)

BJ stated RIC is focusing on a preliminary report for the TIP Fund to present to RAC.

Oceanfront Strategic Growth Area Committee (OSGAC)

BJ indicated OSGAC had only met once before the pandemic. Their focus will be the RASAP and helping in initiatives that do not fall under the other subcommittees.

G.R.E.E.N.

G.R.E.E.N. Chair, Laura Habr reported there have been some great Legislative initiatives that occurred in the Commonwealth. Recycling bins purchased through joint efforts with Public Works and Fishing Line containers in the Rudee Loop area are getting a lot of use. The committee meets the last Wednesday of the month at 10:00 a.m. and Laura encouraged guests to attend meetings.

Staff Report

Kathy Warren provided an update on the Outdoor Dining Program. The SGA Office was able to provide oversight for restaurants to utilize outdoor dining on public sidewalks. There were three at Town Center, fifteen at the Oceanfront, and they are reviewing seven at the oceanfront for approval. Feedback has been very positive.

All Subcommittees will meet this month. G.R.E.E.N. TPPC, OEC, PDRC will meet at the large conference room at the Virginia Beach Rescue Volunteer Squad to allow for social distancing due to the size of these committees. The OSGAC and RIC committees will meet at the CVB on the 5th Floor. The PDRC will move to June 30 in order to meet prior to the July 2 RAC meeting.

Old Business

There was none

New Business

George Kotarides approached the Commission to consider the Atlantic Avenue Association having a seat on RAC, like the Virginia Beach Restaurant Association (VBRA) and the Virginia Beach Hotel Association (VBHA).

BJ stated this would require a Bylaw change. A Bylaws Committee would need to be formed. She proposed for Kathy Warren and Sheri Higgason to coordinate a meeting this month. Bylaw changes would need to go before City Council for approval.

Public Comment

Councilman Michael Berlucchi, serving the Rose Hall District addressed the Commission. He expressed his support to the Commissioners for their dedication and service to the Resort.

Meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.