



Resort Advisory Commission  
4525 Main Street, Suite 710  
Virginia Beach, VA 23462  
(757) 385-2900  
FAX (757) 493-5439

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## RESORT ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES

**DATE:** August 6, 2020  
**TIME:** 3:00 pm  
**PLACE:** Virginia Beach Convention Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Room 1BCD

### 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  
Michael Levinson

### OTHERS PRESENT

Bill Hanbury, Hanbury Associates  
Tiffany Russell, CVB  
Nancy Helman, CVB  
Jamie Capps, RMO  
Billy Almond, PDRC  
Preston Midgett, TPPC  
Guy Tower, City Council  
Rosemary Wilson, City Council  
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 July 2, 2020 RAC minutes as written.**

### Virginia Beach Economic Recovery Report – Bill Hanbury

Bill briefed the Commission on his assignment to step in to provide executive leadership for the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) over the next several months, focusing on the marketing and sales in order to bring some continuity and improvement to the organization through a recovery plan.

He announced the 15-person Task Force that will be assembled to review the structure and governance of the CVB and named at some point in August. The Task Force will represent a cross-section of the community and make decisions about the governance and structure of the CVB going forward, ultimately making recommendations to City Council.

He shared that there will be an eventual transition to a new CEO. There is an RFP that has responses from search firms. Decisions for the RFP will be made in collaboration with the Task Force.

The immediate goal for the CVB is to focus on recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Bill reviewed hotel occupancy and average daily rate with competitors, pointing out that Virginia Beach could have fared much worse in the pandemic, in comparison.

Tiffany Russell provided information about a new research tool that will help the CVB optimize their media campaigns through hotel booking data analysis. The marketing department has shared

information with the Advertising Advisory Committee will be providing information monthly.

Data indicates that visitors are primarily concerned about safety and cleanliness when they travel, and the City of Virginia Beach is working with the City of Norfolk on tourism efforts. Recovery messaging is based on the four pillars that (a) we are a beach destination, (b) the regional value is important, (3) health and safety is a priority, and (4) Virginia Beach is the preferred choice within driving distance. Families will be traveling this fall, with remote schooling, and in the AAC meeting in August will focus on that market and generate some ideas that will hopefully lead them through the fall and into spring of 2021.

A new partner with the CVB, Finn, is a public relations firm from New York with an office in Washington, D.C. Finn is one of the preeminent tourism and public relations firms in the country. Orange142, a demand generation and digital advertising group, and Robbie Wells of IAMOther are partnering with the CVB marketing team with the potential of becoming a world-class team.

The presentation ended with Nancy Helman, Director of the Sports Marketing Team, providing an update on the new sports center. A Certificate of Occupancy is expected at the end of September with business beginning in December. BJ Baumann requested a tour as soon as safely possible.

#### QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Nancy elaborated on plans to provide a safe environment and adhere to current restrictions regarding COVID-19.

Bill Hanbury responded to an inquiry on whether the ongoing protests were affecting tourism for the area, and he replied that they have not been able to tell whether they are having an impact at this point. He and the Finn PR firm will keep tabs on the complaints and are prepared to respond accordingly.

Laura Habr asked for more information about the restaurant numbers cited by Bill Hanbury, asking if they included meal tax, grocery stores, or solely restaurants. Bill replied that the numbers represented solely restaurant data from the Commissioner of Revenue's office (COR). Tiffany will verify whether caterers' data may be included. The COR is having difficulty in separating restaurant sales from grocery store sales. Bill will research, and report to the Commission.

There was also concern expressed about what restaurants and hotels will be able to do for outdoor activity with fall approaching, and Laura requested information on what the VB Economic Development Office was doing about any possible grant money to help ensure that restaurant and hotel businesses will remain profitable.

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

##### **Resolution – BJ Baumann**

BJ showed a presentation that provided a lead up to the Resolution for action on which the RAC will vote later in the meeting. She provided a historical background of the resort area as it has developed over many years, problems that they have faced and how they have dealt with those problems. She concluded the presentation by reading the proposed Resolution to the Commission.

A motion was made to adopt the Resolution. Seconded by Bill Gambrell. BJ verified that they will be making a presentation to Council at an upcoming informal session. **Motion carried unanimously to support the Resolution.**

BJ recognized Sheri Higgason for her administrative support of the RAC and Subcommittees and that this meeting will be her last. She wished her luck moving forward with her new responsibilities.

#### **Committee Reports**

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

Preston Midgett reported on discussion at their last meeting about the Mobility Plan as the first key to moving the RASAP forward. It is expected to be between a 12- to 18-month process, and they are

going to try to expedite its execution to 6 months or less, by holding bimonthly meetings. He invited all with ideas for the Mobility Plan to participate as soon as possible.

He also mentioned plans to keep the resort at capacity for busy events, such as July 4. Currently the police have an email chain for notice to the community when crowds are growing and traffic will have to be turned away, and some of the responsibility will be transferred to the community to act accordingly.

Due to a contract dispute, the scooter operations will not begin this year, but they are looking forward to next year.

The RASAP Plan is fully funded.

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

Billy Almond reported that the PDRC did not meet.

#### Oceanfront Enhancement Committee (OEC)

Randy Thompson reported that they discussed the streetscape demonstration project. The project targets 21<sup>st</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, one of the gateways of the resort. The OEC requested that outdoor cafes be included as part of the demonstration elements.

#### Resort Investment Committee (RIC)

BJ Baumann reported that RIC discussed the Resolution that was to be presented today, as well as future speakers that could be brought to the RAC. Coincidentally, they have someone scheduled for the September RAC to discuss revisions to the outdoor café regulations.

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

Kristina Chastain reported that they had a presentation from Planning on the history and current status on the Short Term Rental program. Councilman Guy Tower is presenting an ordinance to Council help guide the development of the program.

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

Laura Habr reported that the G.R.E.E.N. committee did not meet, but they are conducting two-hour recycling can stickering events from 8:30am to 10:30am every Friday morning.

#### **Staff Report**

Kathy Warren introduced Jamie Capps from the Resort Management Office for an update on upcoming events.

Jamie advised that they are working in accordance with the Governor's Executive Orders for holding events and working with Norfolk's Events Division to ensure a common message regarding protocol. The City is going forward with ECSC as a surfing-only event, to preserve their reputation as the longest-running surf contest on the east coast. Other musical events, as well as the Oceana Air Show, will be held virtually, and the CVB marketing department is working to promote that idea for maximum exposure. Future events are moving forward as the current situation develops; however, the Holiday Lights event on the boardwalk will occur.

#### **Old Business**

None.

#### **New Business**

None.

#### **Public Comment**

None.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.