



Meeting Summary

Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC)

May 22, 2018

TAC Attendees: Vaughnette Goode-Walker, Bill Lovett, Joe Marinelli, DeAnne Mitchell, Michael Owens

TAC Absences: Adam Wilkins, Eric Meyerhoff, Austin Hill, David Jones, Sandra Baxter, Charlie Brazil, Jamie Caskey, Mark Dana

City Staff: Susan Broker, Edward Grant, Amanda Hutson, Jonika Rountree

Special Events Ordinance

Chair Vaughnette Goode-Walker opened the meeting by asking Susan Broker, Director of Special Events, Film & Tourism (OSEFT), to introduce the plan to revise the current Parade and Public Assembly Ordinance. Ms. Broker began by stating that OSEFT has received both praise and concerns from participants, organizers, and residents about the management of special events in Savannah. Mr. Lovett asked how the office will define “special events,” to which Ms. Broker explained would need to be codified in the ordinance. In practice, special events include filming, parades, walks, runs, private events like weddings, and public events like Picnic in the Park.

Ms. Broker emphasized that public input will be a key component of the ordinance modification and requested two members from TAC to serve on a task force. Chair Goode-Walker appointed Bill Lovett and Joe Marinelli to serve on the Special Event Ordinance Task Force. Ms. Broker clarified that she would inform the full TAC board of any scheduled meetings to further encourage participation from any TAC members interested in crafting the ordinance.

Mr. Owens requested a general outline of the proposed changes to the ordinance. Ms. Broker stated that the only firm aspect of the proposed changes is a set of guiding principles and that the details are still being established. Proposed changes include: a tier system for classifying events; assessment of the event’s impact, services required from the City, and community response; route guidelines; limits on the number of events per year; encouraging events in districts outside of the historic district; determining saturation points; and revising the fee structure.

Mr. Marinelli explained the Sports Council’s method for assessing events based on four criteria: economic impact, hotel room sales, television coverage, and future business opportunities. Ms. Broker also highlighted the goal to set clear expectations for event organizers, especially for notification to residents. Mr. Owens suggested that any changes remain sensitive to nonprofits in the community that use special events to share their mission and fundraise.

Pedicab Ordinance

Ms. Broker asked for clarification on the intent of Sec. 6-2503 (purpose of pedicabs):



The purpose for the operation of pedicabs in the city is for transportation of passengers. No pedicab company may conduct sightseeing tours within the city unless registered as a tour company in accordance with Article R, Tour Service for Hire.

Staff had interpreted this to mean that pedicabs must register with full details on the routes, times, and rates of fare for tours. Mr. Owens explained that the intent was to require pedicabs to simply register with the Department of Mobility and Parking Services as a tour provider (similar to walking tours). If a pedicab driver is approached for transportation purposes, that driver would be able to provide information to the passenger without being cited for giving an unregistered tour. However, this type of fare would still be primarily considered as transportation. However, if a pedicab driver is approached for a tour directly or begins a pre-arranged tour, that fare would be subject to a preservation fee.

Mr. Owens and Mr. Lovett agreed that prohibiting pedicab drivers from sharing information with their passengers was unenforceable and potentially a first amendment violation. Ms. Hutson inquired about how this interpretation would accommodate the restrictions put in place to prohibit tours in certain areas downtown during certain times of day. Mr. Owens explained that flexible, late-night transportation is essential.

Jeff Brochu, a pedicab operator present at the meeting, expressed an objection to the section of the ordinance regarding uniforms. Mr. Owens agreed that the uniform requirement was “unsupportable” and requested it to be removed from the draft sent to Council for approval. Ms. Broker stated that she would send the ordinance in full to TAC via email for final approval and an electronic vote. The ordinance would then be presented to Mayor and Council.

Chair’s Report

Chair Goode-Walker asked Mr. Lovett to summarize the results of the TAC restructure meeting held on May 4, 2018. The committee, made of Alderman Bill Durrence, Alderman John Hall, TAC Chairwoman Vaughnette Goode-Walker, and TAC members Bill Lovett and Michael Owens, met with City staff to restructure the TAC into a ten member board made of equal representation of tourism and non-tourism interests (see table below). The most notable changes include organizational appointments (no longer Mayor and Council), notifications for poor attendance, and alternating the chair and vice chair between tourism and non-tourism seats. The changes to the Tour Service for Hire Ordinance will be on the June 7th Council agenda.

Definition	Representation	Appointment
Historic Savannah Foundation	Non-Tourism	Self-appointed
Downtown Neighborhood Association	Non-Tourism	Self-appointed
Downtown Neighborhood Association	Non-Tourism	Self-appointed
Victorian Neighborhood Association	Non-Tourism	Self-appointed
Thomas Square Neighborhood Association	Non-Tourism	Self-appointed



Visit Savannah	Tourism	Self-appointed
Tourism Leadership Council	Tourism	Self-appointed
Motorized Tour Company	Tourism	TLC
Non-Motorized Tour Company	Tourism	TLC & Visit Savannah
Lodging Industry	Tourism	Visit Savannah

Tourism Management Plan (TMP)

Amanda Hutson, Tourism Coordinator, updated the TAC on the status of second quarter projects of the Tourism Management Plan (see table below). Ms. Broker stated that only one of the City departments responsible for implementing the TMP was involved in determining the objectives. All of the TMP projects are additional responsibilities for each department. Mr. Owens cautioned staff to consider stakeholder input, especially the TAC, when completing these projects. Finally, Ms. Broker introduced Jonike Rountree as a new member of the OSEFT staff.

Topic	Strategy	Department	Status
Public Spaces/ Safer Mobility	Develop list of challenges and possible strategies to address existing challenges; create implementation schedule	Planning & Urban Design	TBD
Tourism Advisory Committee	Restructure to reflect neighborhoods, preservation, and tourism industry	OSEFT	June 7 Council agenda
Communications	Develop website to communicate with stakeholders	OSEFT	Under development
Safety & Security	Incorporate identification and safety standards for walking tours	OSEFT	Moved to 3 rd QTR
Motor Coaches	Establish alternative holding location for motor coaches outside of the Historic District	Mobility & Parking	Great Dane site under review
Sustainable Tourism Certification	Research and determine if participation in Global Sustainable Tourism Council [GSTC] is viable	Sustainability	Participation not recommended
Zero Waste Event Program	Develop sustainability standards for waste removal at special events	Sustainability	Moved to 3 rd QTR
Sustainable Business Training	Research and determine if participation in business sustainability practices and certification criteria are viable	Sustainability	Potentially viable with partner agencies

Other Business

Mr. Marinelli shared details about the upcoming Beta Club National Convention, which Visit Savannah pursued for many years. The convention will be held on June 12th – 20th and will be the largest convention ever hosted in Savannah, with approximately 25,000 people in 14,000 hotel rooms. Visit Savannah hosted a meeting with 85 community leaders to inform them of the impact of this group. Mr. Owens encouraged the TAC to promote safety during this period, as the majority of the visitors will be pedestrian school children. Mr. Marinelli concluded by stating that the Beta Club Convention would be closely followed by the Georgia Municipal Association, the Gulf Stream Convention, and Independence Day – a busy season for Savannah.



Mr. Owens spoke on behalf of the quadricycle industry and presented a solution to a recurring noise complaint surrounding 17Hundred90 on Lincoln Street. Savannah Slowride has offered to eliminate the tour stop at the restaurant in exchange for the ability to cross Bay Street to access Indian Street and the various breweries in that area. This proposal was previously rejected by the Tourism and Ambassadorship Department because the quadricycle would be required to turn left on Williamson Street, a one-way street (right turn only). Mr. Owens requested that the TAC immediately work to amend the Bicycles, Mopeds, and Skateboards Ordinance, which governs quadricycles, to allow the ten quadricycles in operation to cross Bay Street. Ms. Broker agreed to consult with other City departments and begin the process of amending the ordinance.

In conclusion, Ms. Broker introduced the topic of cut-off times for tours City-wide. However, in the interest of time, Chair Goode-Walker opted to defer that topic to the next TAC meeting. The date and time of the next TAC meeting will be finalized after the restructure is approved by Council. At that time, new members will be appointed and invited to the June meeting.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.