



Meeting Summary
Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC)
February 20, 2019

TAC Attendees: Joe Marinelli, Charlie Brazil, Mark Dana, Michael Owens, Daniel Carey, Melinda Allen, Michael Ambrose, Vaughnette Goode-Walker, Clinton Edminster, Steve Brenneman

TAC Absences: Nichelle Stephens, Bill Lovett

City Staff: Susan Broker, Edward Grant & Lida Coleman

Chair's Report

Chairwoman Melinda Allen opened the meeting by asking for any comments on the January 2019 minutes. No questions. The minutes were subsequently passed with no objections.

Chairwoman Allen introduced Clinton Edminster and Steve Brenneman Mr. Brenneman is attending in Bill Lovett's place who is currently out for medical reasons. Mr. Edminster attended for Nichelle Stevens.

Tourism Management Plan

Susan Broker, stated the City Manager asked all City departments for 2 priorities for 2019. The OSEFT priorities are the development of a Special Event Ordinance and moving to a system to process all permit applications on line. Ms. Broker would like the support of TAC. The members discussed the process of creating the ordinance and noted it will be presented to Council for approval in sections. Chairwoman Allen stated the ordinance may not be perfect but it is important to have something on hand in order to start implementation in the 1st quarter of 2020.

Ms. Broker stated work needs to be done on the Tour Service for Hire Ordinance. All tourism-related ordinance should be under one umbrella – to include pedicab, carriage tours and others. The Special Event Ordinance will be passed in sections. Mark Dana suggested that an effective communications source on events would be helpful. Chairwoman Allen stated that events pop up late or applications are submitted late and there is not enough time for notifications. Event organizers need to plan ahead so notices can be provided.

The majority of permitted parades use East Broad or Abercorn Street as the staging area. Based on citizen complaints, staff is reviewing alternative areas for staging. Vaughnette Goode-Walker wanted to know where the staging area might be moved. Eddie Grant replied President Street. Chairwoman Allen stated all parades should stage in the same area.



Ms. Broker stated that the City has EnerGov and OSEFT is making improvements to the permitting process. Mr. Grant is working on this project. Staff is hoping to have the system up and running by July, 2019. Mr. Grant stated EnerGov will be more robust than Film App, the program that the Savannah Area Film Commission wanted to purchase for the City. EnerGov will allow on-line applications, review and payment for permits falling under the umbrella of OSEFT – Park and Square, Block Parties (Right of Way), Films, Food Trucks, etc.

It was moved by Joe Marinelli and seconded by Mark Dana that the Tourism Advisory Committee will support the City's proposal to create the Special Events Ordinance. Motion carried.

City Council Agenda Items

Pedicabs and Quadricycles

Temporary Suspension of Permit Issuance – Races and Runs

Ms. Broker announced that the following items will be on Council's February 28th Agenda. The St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee will request their parade permit, Resolution for Sunday Alcohol Sales on March 17, Pedicab and Quadricycle Ordinance modifications and temporary suspension of permit issuance of races and runs. The suspension for races and runs are for new applicants only. There is currently no mechanism in place that allows staff to deny a permit request. Mr. Grant stated that there is a Special Event Review Committee, comprised of City staff, that meets bi-weekly to discuss applications for permitted outdoor events. This process allows staff to meet with applicants early in the process and provide feedback on how an event might have the least amount of impact on the community.

Michael Owens stated there is case law in Georgia that limits a municipality's ability to impose a moratorium. This was reviewed in detail when staff was working on the hotel moratorium. Mr. Owens further stated that any moratorium or suspension must be applied across the board to any new run or parade. Joe Marinelli agreed with putting new runs and races on hold but wants to ensure this is done equitably and fairly.

Chairwoman Allen reiterated that the suspension would only impact new races and runs. Mr. Grant stated that, as an example, the Best Damn Race (BDR) had been trying for the last 2 years to come to Savannah and there was no mechanism for the office to deny the request. Daniel Carey stated that the process for permitting needs to be audited and other state laws should be consulted to ensure legal authority to temporarily suspend issuance of these permits. Mr. Owens stated a lot of event promoters have learned to partner with a nonprofit in order to have alcohol. If they use this status, then the State Law requires them to give 80% of the proceeds to charity. Chairwoman Allen suggested adding a 30-day application requirement to give time for notifications and that runs and races should be charged fees. Ms. Broker stated a recommendation was made in 2018 to charge events fees for 2019 but that it did not pass Council. Another attempt will be made during the next budget cycle. Ms. Broker also stated that there were multiple events this past weekend that generated a lot of complaints. Mr. Marinelli stated the City was pretty vibrant this weekend with walking tours, hotels and etc. Ms. Broker



added that Parking & Mobility reported that parking fees were within 20% of a peak season weekend.

Tour Small Group Report

Ms. Broker – The Tour Small Group Report reviewed following:

1. Guidelines for Tour Guides and Visitors – The group set several expectations for Tour Leaders. Please see attached list.
2. Trash Can Placement along Popular Tour Routes
3. Communication with Code Compliance Marshals in Real Time – Kevin Milton, Director of Code Compliance has agreed to allow our 311 Evening Call Center (Pump Room) to have the Code Enforcement officer's cell phone numbers. The Center will contact the officers to address issues.
4. Extend Code Compliance until Midnight - The officers will be available until 10:30 pm. Ms. Broker is working on asking for officers to be available until midnight.
5. Ordinance Cheat Sheet – The sheet will consist of key points on ordinances. We have 2 to 3 tours that are violating the ordinances.
6. Secret Shopper Program – TAC members agreed that this would help reveal some of the issues. Mr. Brazil indicated that it might be best to use a professional outfit to conduct this program.
7. Overlay of Tour Routes to Determine Saturation Points
8. Review Restricting Number of People in Tours based on Time of Tour

In summary, the residents and tour companies are working together to make improvements. The next meeting is March 30, 2019.

Recognition of former TAC Member David Richards – Please see attached obituary. Vaughnette Goode- Walker reviewed Mr. Richard's obituary. Mr. Marinelli suggested they have a moment of silence at the next Council meeting.

Other Business

Clinton Edminster suggested that CAT should be a part of the Special Event Ordinance process. It was suggested that Susan Broker email the job description for the Tourism Management Coordinator position.

A meeting to discuss the Horse Drawn Carriage ordinance will take place after St. Patrick's Day.

Meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 19
8:30am – 9:30am
Trade Center – Room 200