

ATLANTIC CITY TOURISM ADVISORY COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2014
Time: 5:00 p.m.
Location: 15 S. Pennsylvania Avenue
Atlantic City, NJ 08401

PRESIDING: Daryl Bulthius, Vice Chair

PRESENT: Derek Cason, John Exadaktilos, Joseph Kelly, Keith Mills, Ali Reynolds, Rev. William Williams

ABSENT: Joseph Maher, Sly Stankovic

CRDA STAFF: Susan Thompson, Elizabeth Terenik, Sharon Dickerson, Lisa Risteski

OPENING STATEMENT

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 5:00PM. Ms. Risteski read a statement of compliance with the notice requirements of the Senator Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act and called the roll.

RATIFICATION of MINUTES

The Chair requested a motion to approve the minutes of November 12, 2013. A motion was made by Rev. Williams and seconded by Mr. Mills. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote of the Commission.

DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Thompson briefed the commission with a year-end report:

- Development initiatives (\$225 million) completed or started:
 - Bass Pro
 - Harrah's Conference center
 - Atlantic Cape Community College
 - Work Force Training Center
 - Public Marketplace Analysis
 - Lighthouse District Park
 - Arts Garage at the Wave
 - South Inlet Development by Boraie
 - Steel Pier
 - Margaritaville
 - Bally's Atlantic City renovations
- Key indicators of economy health:

- Parking fees
- Luxury tax
- Sales tax
- Hotel room fee
- Difficult to compare with 2013 due to impact of Superstorm Sandy
- Clean & Safe Initiative
 - Homicides dropped 88% in 2013 but 2014 has not started out so positively
 - Ambassador's engagements with public – 2011- 17000; 2012 – 54,000; 2013 – 115,000
- Boardwalk Hall – new facilities manager, Global Spectrum
 - 100% employee retention with transition
- Atlantic City Alliance – committed \$1 million a year for 3 years to incentivize national groups to hold their conventions in AC.
- Convention Sales Staff is being restructured to privatize so they are not restricted by the policies of working for a public authority.
- Increases were seen in attendees (22%), room nights (10%) and delegate spending (29%).
- The Atlantic City Alliance has been tracking social media and has seen a major increase in hits to all social media pages.
- ACA is also tracking how the Press is covering AC to measure the positive and negative articles. They have seen a 95% increase in positive press and a 25% decrease in negative press.

Mr. Bulthius inquired about the number of employees with Global Spectrum and Convention Sales to which Ms. Thompson indicated 100-120 with GS and 6 with Convention Sales with an increase in sales staff anticipated.

Mr. Cason joined the meeting.

Mr. Exadaktilos inquired about the ACA purchasing a tour bus and questioned the goal stating the consensus of many longtime business owners is that this activity will not have a positive impact on local business. Ms. Thompson explained the charter of ACA is to market Atlantic City as a whole to outside visitors. After further discussion, Mr. Cason inquired if ACA held public meetings to which Ms. Thompson indicated no. Mr. Bulthius stated he would invite ACA President, Liza Cartmell to the next meeting.

Rev. Williams inquired how the state's concerns for the progress of the Tourism District tie in to the Authority's positive 2013 report. Ms. Thompson indicated major progress will be seen in 2014 including:

- Privatization of Convention Sales
- Opening of Single Point of Entry for social services
- Bass Pro opening
- Harrah's Conference Center
- Stockton Campus

Ms. Thompson also recognized Ali Reynolds for her work with the Single Point of Entry initiative.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Cason offered an update on the National R&B Museum which was presented at a previous meeting. The new owners of the Claridge will not be utilizing the gaming and showroom space so it may be an ideal fit for the R&B Museum. It may be another great non-gaming destination for Atlantic City. Mr. Bulthius inquired if the purchase of Claridge was a done deal to which Mr. Cason stated not yet.

Mr. Bulthius met with Ms. Thompson and Mr. Palmieri to discuss the goals of the Commission. Ms. Elizabeth Terenik, Director of Planning, will making a presentation on the proposed land use ordinance for the Tourism District.

Mr. Bulthius attended the Board meeting earlier in the day and suggested representative of the Commission should attend all the meetings.

Highlights of the Board Meeting:

- Bass Pro Boat Storage variance – would like to suggest requiring a boat ramp in the future
- Main Street AC funding
- ACA Entertainment Series - \$100,000 confirmed for 2013 events – the board will require attendance reports for future events.

Ms. Thompson suggested future developers present to the Commission and indicated Boraie Development would be invited to the February meeting.

Mr. Exadaktilos expressed his support to have a boat ramp installed to provide new boat owners the convenience of putting the boat in the water rather than trailer-ing home. Mr. Bulthius added Mr. Palmieri indicated at the Board meeting that boat ramp is part of their future plans.

Land Use Presentation

Ms. Terenik introduced herself and provided her background for the Commissioners and public attendees.

Ms. Terenik presented highlights of the proposed land use regulations for the Tourism District. The Tourism District Zoning Regulations will include improved standards for landscaping, architecture, signs and permitted uses. All new regulations will be based on the goal of the Master Plan. A suggested change in current code is to decrease the height restriction to encourage a spreading out of development to infill dilapidated areas. Mr. Cason expressed concern that changing the height restrictions might restrict future development. Also being addressed is development that meets with Clean & Safe guidelines, Family-friendly boardwalk, more diverse attractions, enhanced visitor experiences and design standards.

The JLL plan outlined zoning districts, desirable and non-desirable uses. It also suggests limiting the casino use which is deterring landowners that are in that casino permitted zone from selling to any other party. Ms. Terenik detailed the uses of each of the zones, the process of the developing a Land Use Plan and adoption of the Zoning Regulations. The adoption of the plan and regulations with require public input and public hearings. The timeline would have the plan adopted in July.

Mr. Cason expressed concern about removing the casino use. Ms. Terenik explained by removing the casino use, it opens the property for other uses and makes the property more marketable. She further explained how the detailed uses offer no flexibility in interpretation and are too restrictive. The commissioners and public attendees discussed the overabundance of low-end uses on the Boardwalk and how it is not a zoning but a market issue. Mr. Lamaine inquired what can be done to attract better businesses. Ms. Terenik explained it will be market driven. Mr. Cortez Martin inquired about the impact on small businesses if the zoning laws were changed. Ms. Terenik explained the main focus is to get visitors out of the casinos and from The Walk up to the Boardwalk. Mr. Exadaktilos stated people will not be more comfortable on the streets without continued Clean & Safe initiative. Ms. Terenik added she is also working on the code enforcement issue and working with City Code Enforcement and Commander Tom Gilbert. Mr. Kelly suggested tax incentives and stated it is important to pursue investment in the city. Mr. Mills stated there is a proposed ordinance to incentivize businesses to be Atlantic City-based. Mr. Mills further added he understands the idea of removing the casino use but the downside to this action is the reduction in tax ratable because the value of the land will go down. Rev. Williams expressed concern there were no businesses in the development pipeline. Ms. Terenik clarified the current zoning is not preventing development. The proposed zoning would attract better development through design standards, etc. Mr. Kelly suggested target market studies to which Ms. Terenik agreed. The Chair stated the suggestion of a target market study would be pursued at the next meeting.

Potential Skateboard Park Locations – Jason Klotz

Mr. Klotz presented his ideas for a location of a proposed Skateboard park in the Tourism District. Mr. Mills asked if the intention was to create a business from the skateboard park. Mr. Klotz indicated it would be the same concept as a public basketball court. The Commissioners and public attendees discussed the liability and the pros & cons of a fee-based park. Mr. Greg Simmons discussed the positive attributes of skateboarding. Mr. Lamaine expressed concern that a Tourism District location would deter the local youth from using the park.

Mr. Klotz stated a unique park in the city would attract visitors as the one in Philadelphia has done. Rev. Williams inquired to the boost in the economy if a park was built. Mr. Klotz stated those that traveled to it would be the ones that would spend in the city but it should still be free to the public for the good of the local community. Ms. Reynolds indicated an RFP had been released and bids have been received on a skateboard park however the location has not been decided on.

Committee Reports

Clean and Safe – John Exadaktilos

Mr. Exadaktilos reported that Dave & Buster's had been interested in developing in Atlantic City however the crime statistics have deterred them from pursuing the city.

Marketing and Promotion Agenda – Mr. Daryl Bulthuis

No report.

Education & Work Force Development – Rev. William Williams

No report

Economic Development Agenda – Mr. Joseph Kelly

Mr. Lamaine inquired of Mr. Kelly why he thought Dave & Buster's would not come to Atlantic City. Mr. Kelly indicated the clean & safe issue is definitely part of the problem but we should not be deterred by one 'No' and should continue to pursue. The Commissioners continued a discussion regarding the pros of developing in the area. Mr. Exadaktilos stated the D & B Board wanted to be nowhere near Atlantic City.

General Public Comment

Mr. Lamaine suggested the ACA advertise to the population within a 70 mile radius to bring visitors that may not be spending the night but will spend money. Ms. Cason stated he would invite the ACA to come to the next meeting and answer some of these concerns.

Mr. Tyrone Hart, local artist, stated the city should capitalize more on the popularity of Boardwalk Empire. Ms. Terenik added University of Penn architecture students are doing a presentation on the historic architecture of the city tomorrow night at Dante Hall.

Mr. Klotz suggested research on what it would take to attract the skateboarding community and how it would benefit the city. Ms. Reynolds stated many of these issues have been discussed previously.

Mr. Kelly stated it is about image building and it should be near the Boardwalk and beach. It could attract concessions and merchandising.

Ms. Reynolds reminded everyone about the rejuvenation of Harlem beginning with Bill Clinton opening up an office. It attracted others that wanted to have business near that office and people started buying property around it.

Hearing no further discussion, the Chair requested a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Mr. Mills and seconded by Mr. Kelly. Motion to adjourn was approved by unanimous vote of the Commissioners.