

ATLANTIC CITY TOURISM ADVISORY COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, November 12, 2013
Time: 5:00 p.m.
Location: 15 S. Pennsylvania Avenue
Atlantic City, NJ 08401

PRESIDING: Derek Cason, Chair

PRESENT: Daryl Bulthius, John Exadaktilos, Joseph Maher, Rev. William Williams, Ali Reynolds, Sly Stankovic

ABSENT: Joseph Kelly, Keith Mills

CRDA STAFF: Susan Thompson, Don Guardian, Jim Kutch, Sharon Dickerson, Kim Butler, Heather Walls

OPENING STATEMENT

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 5:00PM. Ms. Walls 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 October 22, 2013. A motion was made by Rev. Williams and seconded by Mr. Exadaktilos. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote of the Commission.

DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Thompson briefed the commission on recent events:

- The next CRDA Board meeting is November 19 at 2pm. Approval of the Atlantic Avenue Facades project is on the agenda. The first block to be renovated will be the 1600 block.
- On November 25, there will be a ribbon cutting at the WAVE Garage/Noyes Museum art space that will include studios, retail and museum offerings. All are invited.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chair did not offer a report due to the extensive agenda.

CRDA Budget Review

Ms. Thompson previewed the CRDA budget which consists of three different budgets:

- CRDA Operating Budget – funded by uncommitted CRDA funds
- Special Improvement District – funded from assessments of businesses in the Tourism District
- Convention Center Division – funded from taxes on hotel rooms and alcohol

Ms. Thompson then reviewed the major initiatives of the CRDA operating budget. Mr. Guardian will review the SID budget and the Commission is not tasked by legislation to review the Convention Center Division budget.

Mr. Cason inquired about the proposed non-profit through the Convention Center Division and its effect on SMG. Ms. Thompson stated both the facilities manager and the sales team (from the non-profit) will sell the venues.

Mr. Cason inquired to the location of the Public Marketplace. Ms. Thompson stated it was Block 157 where the Caesars Human Resources building is located. To Mr. Maher's question, Ms. Thompson stated the Public Marketplace is a proposed 35,000 square feet.

Mr. Exadaktilos inquired about parking to which Ms. Thompson stated there would be on-site parking. Mr. Exadaktilos also expressed concerns about deliveries and interference with the hospital to which Ms. Thompson indicated there would be a traffic study done to determine the best design to avoid these issues.

Mr. Kelly inquired when the privatization of the sales force would take place. Ms. Thompson stated it is a work in progress and they want it to happen as soon as possible. Currently there are seven sales representatives but we will be filling more positions soon. Ms. Thompson added the \$1 million sales incentive from ACA was a useful tool to bring more conventions to the city. Mr. Cason inquired who approved the final incentive deal. Ms. Butler indicated certain criteria needed to be met to qualify for the subsidy.

Rev. Williams inquired why the marketing budget decreased to which Ms. Thompson stated we are not spending less but it was moved to the Convention Center Division budget.

Mr. Exadaktilos expressed concern over return on investment with the luxury tax.

Mr. Cason inquired about the \$5 million for the Neighborhood Strategy Area. Ms. Thompson explained a district must be established in order to offer subsidies and rebates to developers.

To Mr. Cason's inquiry, Ms. Thompson indicated the revenue projection is based on the prior year.

Regarding the SID subsidy, Ms. Thompson stated current SID assessments do not support all SID programs. The substantial increase in the subsidy is due to the casino tax appeals.

Mr. Maher inquired why there was not funding for pocket parks in 2014. Ms. Thompson stated no further pocket parks are scheduled to be installed in 2014.

Mr. Cason inquired about the ERD/Walk Phase 2 revenue which was a correction of an error on state coding.

Rev. Williams asked if the project funding was included in this budget which it is not. Projects have separate fund reservations. Rev. Williams asked also if the decrease in project fees indicated less projects. It did not indicate less projects but more waived fees as most projects were now in Atlantic City rather than statewide.

Mr. Cason inquired if last year's budget was met to which Ms. Thompson stated it was under budget.

Mr. Cason inquired to the next step in the process. Ms. Thompson stated if the budget is acceptable, a resolution would be passed indicating the Commission's acceptance and presented to the Board. Mr. Maher made the motion which was seconded by Mr. Kelly and approved by unanimous vote of the Commission.

Special Improvement District Budget Review

Mr. Don Guardian reviewed the line items of the Special Improvement District operating budget.

Mr. Cason inquired about the financing for the boardwalk repairs. Mr. Guardian detailed the status of the various funding to rebuild the boardwalk.

Mr. Kelly inquired if there were any discussions to generate housing for the homeless. Ms. Thompson stated the Authority cannot subsidize housing unless a person can qualify for a mortgage. A program, Single Point of Entry, was recently approved by the Board and is an intergovernmental agreement to move forward the issue of homeless in Atlantic City.

Ms. Libbie Wills inquired about the children's area at McClinton Park. Mr. Guardian stated the Park is county responsibility and fenced it until the surfacing can be replaced. Ms. Thompson stated it should be completed by spring. Mr. Cason inquired about the revenue from McClinton Park. Mr. Guardian stated it is the fee SID charges the county to maintain the park.

Ms. Lamaine inquired what was to be discussed at City Council tomorrow about the Boardwalk. Mr. Guardian stated it was in regards to the sea wall.

Hearing no further questions, the Chair requested a motion to accept the SID budget. A motion was made by Rev. Williams and seconded by Daryl Bulthuis. Motion was approved by unanimous vote of the Commission.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

No Report

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

No Report

MARKETING AND PROMOTION AGENDA

A presentation will be made in January when ACA will be invited.

CLEAN & SAFE

Mr. Exadaktilos reviewed his research on taxi service in Atlantic City as compared to other destination cities and gave Atlantic City a letter grade C- to D for the following reasons:

- Mercantile licensing – need to address non-compliance with city ordinance
- Price gouging
- Poor customer service
- Drivers do not know the city well

Mr. Exadaktilos offered the following solutions:

- Color-coded cabs
- Livery Service with a seal on the car
- Accept credit cards
- Handicap accessible vehicles
- Surprise inspections

Mr. Cason suggested the cab companies be brought together to address the concerns. We do not need new regulations; we need to enforce the ones on the books.

Mr. Exadaktilos also indicated the majority of the medallions are owned by the same person which is a major problem. Mr. Maher stated it could be addressed like the rolling chairs were. Mr. Stankovic suggested they needed professional training including knowledge of the city, customer service, cleanliness of vehicle, foreign languages spoken.

Mr. Stefan Jackson added a complete audit of the system is needed and the current operators need to comply.

Mr. Cason suggested Mr. Exadaktilos extend an invitation to the mercantile office to address these concerns at a future meeting.

General Public Comment

Ms. Harriet Diamond stated the city needed to address the quick fixes with the cabs first to show progress.

Mr. Lamaine inquired about the selection for the facilities operator for Convention Center to which Ms. Thompson indicated it was a confidential process and could not elaborate on its status.

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