

ATLANTIC CITY
TOURISM ADVISORY COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE
TOURISM ADVISORY COMMISSION

Date: Tuesday, June 26, 2012
Time: 4:00 p.m.
Location: 15 S. Pennsylvania Avenue
Atlantic City, NJ 08401

PRESIDING: Joe Maher, Chair

PRESENT: Aaron Gomes, David Greenblatt, Keturah Jackson, Sarah Beth Johnson, Joseph Kelly, Cortez Martin

ABSENT: William Cheatham, Keith Mills, Ali Reynolds,

CRDA STAFF: Susan Thompson, Sharon Dickerson, Heather Walls

OPENING STATEMENT

The meeting of the Atlantic City Tourism Advisory Commission was called to order at 4:00pm. The Chair requested a motion to approve the minutes of May 24, 2012. Ms. Jackson noted the name of the ACA representative at the May meeting was Jeff Guaracino, not Garcia. Ms. Jackson made a motion to approve the minutes with a second from Sarah Beth Johnson. Minutes were approved with correction by unanimous vote of the Commission.

Joe Kelly joined the meeting at 4:10pm.

Adoption of TAC By-laws

The Chair requested any comments related to the by-laws. Mr. Greenblatt inquired about the terms of the commissioners. Ms. Dickerson responded the terms are mandated by statute but the by-laws can be modified at any time by majority vote of the commissioners. Ms. Johnson stated we need to be sure to vote when we are approving an item.

The Chair noted there was a blank page in the by-laws distributed. Ms. Dickerson left the meeting to retrieve the complete version of the By-laws so they could be finalized and voted on at this meeting.

Discussion of Draft Resolution on Open Space Tax Impact

The Chair explained the history of the resolution. Based on a presentation by Director of Real Estate, Bunny Rixey, the Commission is recommending a study related to the impact the amount of publicly-owned open space will have on the tax base in the future. The main concerns are:

1. Has there been a study to evaluate impact of public acquisition on tax base?
2. Could property be sold if no longer used for a public purpose?
3. Have the properties acquired by the CRDA had a positive impact on the city?

Ms. Jackson inquired if there was a map in existence indicating locations of CRDA-owned property. Ms. Thompson responded the city has already done this mapping.

Ms. Thompson stated the Authority would support such a study and is confident it would indicate many benefits to the city. Ms. Thompson further elaborated on several CRDA-owned properties and their inherent benefits to the city. Ms. Jackson inquired if the city received any income from the new WAVE Parking Garage. Ms. Thompson stated the garage is owned and built by CRDA as well as the land it sits on therefore the city does not receive any revenue from the garage. Ms. Jackson posed the question about loss of ratables related to CRDA-owned property. Ms. Thompson stated many of the tax exempt properties offer a benefit to the public that the public sector would not be able to offer. Mr. Kelly also suggested the study include which properties to pay taxes. The general public needs to be educated on this topic. Mr. Gomes stated the goal is to bring more visitors into the city to generate more revenue. Mr. Kelly suggested the study also include investment in the city as well as employment opportunities. Ms. Thompson added REVEL would not have been built without the improvements in the surrounding infrastructure funded by CRDA. Mr. Kelly added an Economic Impact Assessment jointly with the city would show the press and nay-sayers the positive impact the Tourism District has had on the city. Ms. Jackson stated the public also needs to know how many city residents the casinos and other businesses employ. We need to dispel the perception that most of the casino employees are not city residents. Mr. Kelly also suggested the statistic of how many city employees get jobs than move out of the city. Ms. Thompson suggested bringing Sydney Phoenix from REVEL in for a meeting to discuss her experience while hiring for REVEL and the demographic of employees.

Mr. Maher asked if there are any other topics the study should include. Ms. Thompson stated the other side of the issue could be included in the study as well by including the

impact the public investment has had on the city. Mr. Kelly suggested a review of incentives for businesses also be included. We need a plan to either control costs or enhance investment opportunities for business development.

Ms. Reynolds joined the meeting at 4:35pm.

Ms. Jackson inquired what other public agencies have added capital investment to which Ms. Thompson replied ACHA, SJTA, Corps of Engineers, etc. Most have more minor impact than CRDA. We also need to understand what the trends have been over the last 20 years and where the funds have come from.

Ms. Jackson inquired who funds the Main Street project. Ms. Thompson replied Main Street AC provides professional resources but no actual funding. In Atlantic City, the one employee is supported by the city but in most cities it is funded by the Special Improvement District which is a special assessment on local businesses.

Mr. Maher stated he would revise the resolution based on the comments of the commissioners.

Return to Adoption of By-laws

Ms. Dickerson distributed the complete document for the commissioners. The Chair requested a motion to adopt the By-laws of the Atlantic City Tourism Advisory Commission. Mr. Greenblatt made a motion which was seconded by Ms. Johnson and approved by unanimous vote of the commission.

Commission Member Comment

Mr. Greenblatt suggested Atlantic City sponsor a promotion of worldwide events, i.e. Olympics, World Cup, etc. Ms. Reynolds added we need to capitalize on these events. Ms. Thompson suggested connecting into other organizations: ACA, Main Street AC, Hotel Lodging Association, Chamber of Commerce, MBCA, etc. We could put together a calendar of major events and then brainstorm ideas to promote locally with these organizations.

Ms. Jackson commended the Multi-Cultural Parade and its organizers. It was a great representation of the many different cultures represented in the city. Ms. Thompson suggested adding video to the Atlantic City website through the ACCVA.

Mr. Kelly mentioned he is meeting with the Economic Development task force to propose a single portal for potential developers to streamline the process of development in the city. Ms. Thompson added this is a first step to becoming more 'business friendly.' Ms. Reynolds stated the County website may have many of the links needed for small business development. Ms. Thompson stated the goal is to grow small business within

Atlantic City and attract new business from outside the city. Mr. Kelly added Cape Bank relocated its main offices to Atlantic City. Ms. Thompson will connect Cape Bank with the Ambassadors to give them a higher comfort level in their location.

Ms. Reynolds mentioned the criminals seem to disappear when they see the Ambassadors coming their way. Ms. Thompson asked the commissioners what they thought about the Ambassadors having whistles. The commissioners agreed whistles would scare a culprit away but may prevent police from apprehending them.

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