

**ATLANTIC CITY**  
**TOURISM ADVISORY COMMISSION**

MINUTES  
OF THE  
TOURISM ADVISORY COMMISSION

Date: Tuesday, March 27, 2012  
Time: 4:00 p.m.  
Location: 1014 Atlantic Avenue  
Atlantic City, NJ 08401

**PRESIDING:** Joe Maher, Chair

**PRESENT:** William Cheatham, David  
Greenblatt, Keturah Jackson, Sarah  
Beth Johnson, Joseph Kelly, Joseph  
Maher, Keith Mills, Ali Reynolds

**ABSENT:** Cortez Martin, Tony Rodio

**CRDA STAFF:** Susan Thompson, Paul Weiss,  
Heather Walls

## **OPENING STATEMENT**

The meeting of the Atlantic City Tourism Advisory Commission was called to order at 4:15pm. The Chair requested a motion to approve the minutes of February 28, 2012. Ms. Sarah Beth Johnson made a motion which was seconded by Mr. David Greenblatt. The minutes of February 28, 2012 were approved by unanimous vote of the Commission.

### **CLEAN AND SAFE INITIATIVE**

Mr. Tom Gilbert, Commander of the Tourism District, presented a synopsis of the Clean & Safe Initiatives. The program applies to the entire city, not just the Tourism District.

The Violent Crime Task Force of Atlantic City is comprised of officers from NJ Division of Criminal Justice, NJ State Police, Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office, AC Police Department, Atlantic County Sheriff's Department and the State Parole Board. The goal of the task force is to target organized criminal activity. TAC Teams have been re-established in certain areas with re-employed officers. The police are now interacting more with residents and getting to know them. Class II officers have been hired as an extra layer of eyes. ACPD is training casino security patrols from every casino and all security officers from each property are communicating with each other.

We now have twice the amount of lighting on the boardwalk than last year. Phase 1 of the CRDA lighting program is now complete.

Atlantic City Police Department is in need of improved technology which we are gradually implementing. The Eyes on AC initiative is lead by the Prosecutor's Office with the help of ACPD, DGE and NJSP. They are mapping and collecting data on privately operated cameras in the city and connect to a public database. In addition, neighborhood watch organizations are being expanded to be another set of eyes in the city. Ms. Jackson asked to clarify this statement. Mr. Gilbert stated in the case of a crime, the ACPD will know exactly where there is a camera in the vicinity of the crime and who owns that camera to try to solve the crime. We are also developing a camera strategy for the Gateway area including The Walk, Expressway, Convention Center and restaurants in the area.

MutuaLink will be implemented as a central connection during a time of crisis so all parties involved are able to communicate over a secure network.

Division of Gaming Enforcement has been working with the casino industry to catalog all cameras on casino properties. Security upgrades are also being implemented within the casinos including increased staff and bike patrols around the outside of the casino properties. In the past the casinos were only concerned with the security on the inside. On the Boardwalk, there will be cameras on each street end and an integrated PA system.

“Shots Fired” technology will be installed in high crime areas which will alert the police as soon as gunfire is detected. We hope to suppress gun violence and eventually cover the whole city with this technology.

The CRDA has dedicated \$3.5 million in funding to support and implement enhancements and provide the city with the tools necessary to promote a safer city.

TIP 411 is anonymous text technology. It is web-based and the phone numbers are scrambled. No identifiers will be received by the police department. The goal is to encourage residents and particularly young people a means to be more active in keeping their neighborhoods safe without fear of retribution.

The city government and CRDA Special Improvement District Division are working together to create a new ways of keeping the city clean and safe, i.e. Disney. SID has also added archways, benches and new lights to enhance the visitor impression and experience on the Boardwalk.

We have a list of properties scheduled for demolition to rid the city of eyesores and properties where criminal activity has been based out of.

We are fighting graffiti aggressively by getting it covered as soon as it happens. SID has established procedures to respond to issues related to trash and graffiti.

We have a 10 year plan to handle the homeless being developed by the County. We are integrating with social services programs and working with public assistance agencies to help send many of the homeless back to their hometowns.

The success of the Dave Matthews Music Festival has brought us more such events in 2012.

The bottom line is if the city is not clean and safe, potential developers will not invest and current businesses will not re-invest. Visitors need to see new experiences every time they visit in order to keep them coming.

Ms. Jackson stated we need to invest in our youth. We had 300 students participate in a Ready-to-Work workshop but only about 100 jobs for them. There are not enough jobs for these students. Mr. Gilbert stated incarceration becomes a timeout not a solution. Community Planning Boards are being instituted in Atlantic City and Pleasantville to pull the stakeholders together and provide support and guidance to at-risk youth.

Mr. Keith Mills stated moving the homeless out of Tourism District has displaced them to the North and West side of the city and closer to neighborhoods. We need a strategy to help them all over the city. Mr. Gilbert stated the goal is not to move out of Tourism District but improve the system and provide the support and services. Ms. Susan

Thompson stated the current situation did not happen overnight and the solution will not either. The fact that the city has been the deposit place for other jurisdiction's homeless. These jurisdictions need to take responsibility for their own homeless. Mr. Mills inquired if a database is being built to track where the homeless are coming from. CRDA has funded a program to get them back home and take them off of our rolls.

Mr. Mills stated the city has obtained a Green Acres grant to deal with the clean-up and rejuvenation of Brown's Park. The goal is to get the park cleaned up before the new equipment is installed and children are re-introduced. Mr. Gilbert stated that some are just working the system and truly do not want the help. The comprehensive database will provide information to integrate the different entities so if one agency is helping someone, they can look them up and know whether they have gone to other agencies. Ms. Thompson stated the Rescue Mission is changing how they operate knowing that their past practices are in conflict with the goals of the city and the Tourism District.

Mr. Joe Kelly stated the city can team with other professional services to get people the help they need. Mr. Gilbert agreed and said some are not rational regarding whether they need help or not. Many come here and survive but do not get the help they need to re-integrate into the community.

Ms. Ali Reynolds inquired the impact of bringing County Social Services back into Atlantic City from outlying jurisdictions. Mr. Gilbert stated it was an aspect of the issue that should be researched. Mr. Mills stated the Atlantic City Library sees an impact everyday of people looking for services.

### **LICENSING AND INSPECTIONS**

Mr. Anthony Cox, AC Director of Licensing and Inspections, explained the functions of his department. L & I is in charge of all licensing of businesses and inspecting for code and construction enforcement for the city. We approach the city issues as if there are no district lines. Mr. Gilbert and L & I have been working effectively together to accomplish the same goals of cleaning up certain properties and enforcing the regulations to run a business.

Regarding rolling chair operators, we are working to improve the visitor experience. We want to require a background check for the operators so we have a record of who is operating the chairs. In order to require this, the city ordinance governing rolling chairs needs to be changed through city council. Ms. Thompson stated the Commission and others would support this measure at City Council when it is heard. Mr. Cox stated the next Council meeting is April 11 and he is working with the City Solicitor to draft the necessary changes in the ordinance. Mr. Kelly inquired whether any opposition is anticipated from other operators. Mr. Cox responded in the affirmative but would like to bring all the operators in to discuss the issues and proposed changes to give them an opportunity to have input and comply with the proposed revisions to the ordinance. Ms.

Jackson inquired if there was enough time to get the background checks completed prior to license renewals in May to which Mr. Cox replied in the affirmative. Mr. Gilbert stated the Ambassadors will be aware of the regulations and be sure to remind the operators of the regulations. The goal is to bring the rolling chair experience back to the past when it was a very positive experience for all.

Mr. Kelly stated we need to draft a document from the Tourism Advisory Commission in support of the rolling chair ordinance revisions to back up Mr. Cox and L & I. We should also consider attending the council meeting to balance the overflow of chair operators in opposition to the changes. There is also more accountability to the owners of the chairs if the operators were employees and not independent operators. Ms. Thompson stated this will also control the number of chairs on the Boardwalk because the owner will have to pay the employee rather than the operator paying the owner. One operator is on board with this new proposal.

Ms. Thompson stated it was in the authority of the Commission to make a recommendation to Mayor and Council regarding this issue. Mr. Maher stated we need to be guided in this direction. Mr. Maher also stated the transition needs to be gradual. Ms. Jackson inquired what the difference between the rolling chair situation and the taxi operators. The rolling chair issue should be treated the same as the taxi drivers.

Commissioners continued to discuss the issue of the rolling chairs and agreed to attend the next council meeting in support of the ordinance revisions.

As the time was getting late, Mr. Cox agreed to return next month, Tuesday, April 24 to continue his presentation.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30pm.