

ATLANTIC CITY
TOURISM ADVISORY COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE
TOURISM ADVISORY COMMISSION

Date: Tuesday, May 22, 2012
Time: 4:00 p.m.
Location: 15 S. Pennsylvania Avenue
Atlantic City, NJ 08401

PRESIDING: Joe Maher, Chair

PRESENT: William Cheatham, Keturah Jackson, Sarah Beth Johnson, Cortez Martin, Keith Mills, Ali Reynolds

ABSENT: David Greenblatt, Joseph Kelly, Tony Rodio

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 April 24, 2012. Ms. Sarah Beth Johnson made a motion which was seconded by Ms. Keturah Jackson. The minutes of April 24, 2012 were approved by unanimous vote of the Commission.

ACA presents "DO AC" Campaign

Regina Viscount, a representative of Atlantic City Alliance, presented the "DO AC" Campaign to the commissioners.

Mr. Mills inquired what demographic was studied. Ms. Viscount replied the target demographic were households with \$100,000 income or higher.

Ms. Jackson inquired when the ad will be shown in Atlantic City market. Jeff Guaracino, Chief Strategic Officer for ACA, responded it is currently running occasionally in the AC market but primarily in NY, PA, MD and North Jersey. Ms. Jackson added AC residents

need to be excited about the campaign as well so they will sell it too. Mr. Guaracino stated the campaign is promoted through local media, casinos, Chamber of Commerce, colleges. Ms. Ali Reynolds stated it has been presented to various city, county and civic associations. Ms. Susan Thompson stated local pride is showing through the magnets that are now seen on so many cars in the region.

Mr. Guaracino also stated they are working with the Tom Joyner show and the Multi-Cultural Parade on June 1. Ms. Jackson provided Mr. Jackson with a contact for the parade.

Mr. Mills inquired when there would be a mobile app available to which Mr. Garcia replied it is in development as an itinerary planner. The use of the app will not require membership. Mr. Mills further added it is important to engage the locals through social media and area businesses.

Mr. Guaracino also stated the website has been rebranded and Mr. Maher expressed support of the website. Mr. Guaracino said the public private partnership has been very successful.

Open Space Update

Bunny Rixey, CRDA Director of Real Estate and Development, presented details of the Lighthouse District Park project. The acquisition project will be presented to the Atlantic County Board of Freeholders on May 30, 2012. Once approved, the affected property owners will be notified and briefed on the acquisition and relocation process. The county grant only covers the land and the CRDA will contribute the other funds.

Mr. Mills asked about the city land. Ms. Rixey indicated where the city-owned land was on the map. CRDA will be meeting with the City planning offices to discuss possible land swaps.

Mr. Maher inquired if the relocation efforts start with trying to keep the residents close to where they are already living. Ms. Rixey explained the relocation plan and stated the residents can choose to stay in Atlantic City or go outside of the city. Mr. Mills stated the city also offers assistance with downpayments and closing costs, sometimes turning renters into home-owners.

Ms. Jackson expressed concern about losing tax ratables when CRDA becomes the property owner. Ms. Rixey stated the concern has been discussed with the city. The goal is to eventually have these properties privately owned. CRDA will pay taxes for the first year and if the Authority still owns the land after a year, it becomes tax exempt. Ms. Thompson stated the project will be public investment to enhance the surrounding real estate values. The Park Project will be creating a better atmosphere for future development.

Ms. Jackson inquired what will happen to the apartments behind the lighthouse. Ms. Thompson responded there are many code violations and they are waiting on demolition.

Mr. Martin inquired if a study is going to be done to determine whether these projects and acquisitions have been successful. Mr. Mills stated the city has donated land in the past but with the current tax situation, the city needs to benefit from the CRDA acquisitions and future development. Mr. Mills further stated the tax increase due to the re-evaluation of the taxes will affect the tax payers more than the loss of tax ratable due to the phasing in of the re-evaluated tax assessments.

Ms. Thompson stated the study would be good to do as a cooperative study between the city and CRDA to show a complete picture including the expenses the city incurs. Mr. Mills added that 65% of the city budget is public safety. The police department is now at full force. Ms. Thompson stated the increased cost of the Ambassadors and the technology grant was contributed by the CRDA.

Mr. Maher stated the commission could recommend a joint multi-year study and incorporate the CRDA properties into the study. Ms. Thompson suggested Mr. Maher and the Commission put together a scope of work for the analysis.

Mr. Maher would like the commission to send a letter of support to the Board of Freeholders related to the Open Space acquisition. Mr. Martin made a motion which was seconded by Ms. Jackson and approved by unanimous vote of the commissioners.

TAC By-Laws

Ms. Sharon Dickerson stated she did not receive any additional comments since the last meeting regarding the by-laws. A revised version will be sent to the Commission to be voted on at the next meeting

Licensing & Inspection Letter to Council

Mr. Maher read a letter to be sent to city council in support of the staff of the L & I Department and suggesting an increase in staff. Mr. Mills made a motion to send letter to City Council which was seconded by Ms. Jackson and approved by unanimous vote of the commission.

Member Comments

Commissioners continued the conversation related to the causes of the tax crisis in the city. They identified the various problems causing the crisis: casino and resident tax appeals, publicly owned land, costs of public safety and services. Mr. Cheatham stated a

wage tax would help the city and many of the commissioners agreed. The legislature will not vote for it due to the effect on its constituency.

Hearing no further comment, Mr. Maher requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Cheatham made the motion which was seconded by Ms. Jackson and approved by unanimous vote of the commissioners.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30pm.