Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force

Meeting Minutes
8 September 2008
City Hall, Room 2000

Attendees

Task Force Members: Rob Aronson, Rich Baier (chair), Stephanie Brown, Mayor William D. Euille, Chief David Baker, Hubert Herre, Greg Ogden, Ellen Stanton, Councilman Paul Smedberg, Tara Zimnick-Calico, Denielle Vendetti, Charlotte Hall, Bert Ely, Ellen Stanton, Mark Jinks (staff), Lorraine Lloyd (staff), Jesse Harman (staff), Yon Lambert (staff).

Guests: Ken Presley, Betty Ward, Wellington Watts, Danielle Westphal, Van Van Fleet, Julie Crenshaw Van Fleet, Elizabeth Baldwin, Mamey Keleher, Thomas Byrne.

Below is a summary of the City of Alexandria's Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force meeting conducted on 8 September 2008.

Executive Summary:

1. Welcome & Introductions

Mr. Baier welcomed everyone to the Motorcoach Task Force meeting and reviewed the topics of the evening.

2. Review Minutes & Report Back from Constituent Groups

Mr. Baier reviewed the minutes of the August 11 meeting and asked for comments. Ms. Brown proposed an amendment to the minutes which was approved. The minutes were adopted by a unanimous vote.

Ms. Brown reported that the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association stakeholders group regarding Motorcoach issues is continuing to meet. The stakeholders group is exploring how to handle permits, registration and possible places for short-term parking. The ACVA plans to collaborate with the City on these issues and others that are being considered by the Task Force.

3. Presentation: Review of the 2003 Alexandria Visitors Center Report. Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager

Mr. Baier introduced Mr. Jinks who provided a review of the 2003 Visitors Center Report. Mr. Jinks said the effort began in 1999 with a feasibility study focused on Alexandria Union Station as a potential site for a visitor's center. Neighboring civic associations were critical of the study and City Council opted to conduct a more in-depth study.

The 2003 Visitors Center Report included was a study led by Parter International, Inc. and included stakeholder interviews, a SWOT analysis and recommended options for a Visitors Center. The consultant team determined that the existing Ramsey House is insufficient to meet the current and future goal of conveying tourist information and that Alexandria needs a Visitors Center of approximately 3,500 square feet.

The consultant team reviewed potential sites and identified potential locations in the City. Each location was analyzed with respect to its positive and negative impacts on residential and commercial activities in the surrounding areas. The report also included recommendations about signage and wayfinding, exploration of changes in public bus service, extension of DASH or free off-peak service and additional detailed parking and traffic evaluations. Motorcoach management through signage and route alternations was also recommended.

After reviewing seven locations, the report ultimately concluded that there were two options for a new Visitors Center location: expanding the Ramsey House or constructing a pair of pavilions on Market Square.

In response to a question about whether the consultants conducted motorcoach counts, Mr. Jinks responded that they did not.

In response to a question about whether the consultant identified specific streets, Mr. Jinks responded that the report does identify specific streets for motorcoach routes.

The full report was received by City Council on June 10, 2003 and is available on-line here >> http://dockets.alexandriava.gov/fy03/061003rm/di21.pdf

4.   **Group Mapping Exercise: Short-term & Long-term Solutions**

The Task Force broke into two groups to explore short-term and long-term solutions for routes, drop-off and short-term parking.

The groups were provided oversized "Motorcoach Walking Shed" maps which included streets and a description of uses around each location. The groups were also advised that a GIS "Dynamic Map" was available on the computer screens to analyze specific options with respect to infrastructure (curb radius, presence of parking, street width, aerial photography, etc…) that was not available on the static maps.

The goal of the exercise was to draw specific routes and/or drop-off and parking locations on the map for further study by the Task Force and the City.

Group #1
This group presented the following findings:

Potential <u>Parking</u> Locations:
- Jamison Ave (between Holland and West)
- Off-street commercial property at the corner of St. Asaph and Madison (approximately 717 to 723 N St. Asaph)
- 800 block of N. St. Asaph (between Montgomery and Madison)
- 800 block of N. Fairfax St. (between Montgomery and Madison)

Potential <u>Drop-Off</u> Locations:
- 100 block of N. Lee Street
- Unit block of Duke Street

Potential <u>Routes</u>:
- Washington St. (N and S)
- Pendleton St.
- N. Royal St.
- N. Fairfax St.
- Franklin Street
- S. Union St.

Group #2
This group presented the following findings:

Potential <u>Parking</u> Locations:
- Jamison Ave (between Holland and West)
- Eisenhower Ave. near Bartholomew St.
- 600 Royal Street

Potential <u>Routes</u>:
- Washington St.
- Madison St.
- Pendleton St.
- N. Fairfax St.
- N. Union St.
- S. Union St.
- Strand
- Prince St.
- Duke St.
- King St.

5.   Upcoming Meeting Topic Schedule & Legislative Issues (if needed)

The Task Force agreed to meet on Sept. 22 at 7 pm at Market Square (King Street) for a field trip on a motorcoach to review potential parking, drop-off and route locations. The following meeting, October 13, will be reserved for a discussion about Enforcement and Communications.

6.   Public & Task Force Q&A (15 minutes)

In response to a question about the ACVA brochure "Motorcoach Rules & Regulations for Historic, Alexandria," Ms. Brown provided a breakdown of how the brochure is printed and where the funds from parking proceeds are dispersed.

A resident raised a question about trolleys parking at Robinson Terminal and pointed out that this site as a layover area may need to be reexamined in the event of future development.

There being no further comment, the Task Force adjourned at 9:20 pm.