

City of Alexandria Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force

Meeting Minutes
19 May 2008
City Hall, Room 2000

Attendees

Task Force Members: Mayor William D. Euille, Councilman Paul Smedberg, Rob Aronson, Rich Baier (chair), David Baker, Bert Ely, Hubert Herre, Greg Ogden, Ellen Stanton, Sarita Schotta, Tara Zimnick-Calico, David Huchler (staff), Lorraine Lloyd (staff), Yon Lambert (staff).

Others: Councilman Rob Krupicka, Carolyn Dabney, Joanne Platt, Jerry Lepisko, Andrea Stowers, Carolyn Bell, Trish Kligenmaier, Julie Crenshaw.

Below is a summary of the City of Alexandria's Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force meeting conducted on 19 May 2008.

Executive Summary: This meeting began with introductions by all Task Force members. The primary meeting topics included proposed meeting schedule and timeframe for Task Force, a discussion of the Task Force charter and review of previous efforts related to motorcoaches in Alexandria. Meeting agendas and minutes will be available on the Task Force webpage at >> www.alexandriava.gov/motorcoach

The meeting began at 7 pm and concluded at 8:45 pm

1. Welcome & Introductions

The Task Force members introduced themselves and reviewed the notebooks and binder information presented to Task Force members.

2. Housekeeping Issues

Chairman Baier outlined a proposed Task Force timetable which includes meeting twice monthly with the goal of providing recommendations to City Council in Fall 2008. Task Force members verbally consented to meeting on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month throughout the summer (August included).

Task Force members consented to share contact information with each other in notebooks.

Task Force members agreed that e-mail is the preferred mode of communication. A listserv may be established to allow members to communicate and share information across members. A website has been established so that Task Force members and the public may find additional information: www.alexandriava.gov/motorcoach

Task Force members agreed that while public comment may be sought at designated times during meetings, comments and questions by citizens who attend meetings should be addressed at the end of regular meeting agendas.

Chairman Baier asked members of the Task Force to be sure to exchange information with the groups each represents and to bring back input from their constituencies.

Previous reports have been included in notebooks for information purposes only and additional items may be added to notebooks at any time.

The Task Force members were encouraged to solicit input from other stakeholders who may be interviewed and information incorporated.

Questions were raised regarding representation of businesses from Upper King Street and whether the Task Force would address issues related to the King Street Trolley. Chairman Baier explained that the Task Force would not address trolley issues and would focus on motorcoaches and tour buses only. Additionally, it was explained that the Old Town Business & Professional Association does seek to represent all businesses on King Street. Ms. Zimnick-Calico agreed to inform King Street businesses that the Motorcoach Task Force would address only motorcoach-related issues and would not address trolley related issues.

3. Items for Notebooks

Chairman Baier reviewed a handout for inclusion in members' notebooks that included the City Code related to motorcoach issues. There were questions related to whether the City has the power to regulate the physical size of buses. Chairman Baier explained that the City does regulate oversize and overweight trucks and can regulate according to vehicle size. It was agreed that the next meeting should feature a representative from the City Attorney's office who could speak to the regulatory framework.

Ms. Lloyd reviewed the ACVA publication "Motorcoach Rules & Regulations for Historic Alexandria, Virginia." The publication is somewhat inconsistent with operations that are currently taking place on The Strand and Prince Street, which is currently being used as a designated tour bus loading and unloading area. Buses will be allowed to load and unload on the 200 block of Prince Street and The Strand will be managed by the Alexandria Police Department which will be designated as one-way (westbound) on Fridays and Saturday evenings.

Mayor Euille explained that the Task Force would seek both short-term and long-term solutions for the challenges and opportunities presented by motorcoaches.

Councilman Smedberg voiced citizen concerns related to hotel vans and urged the Task Force to produce a document similar to "Motorcoach Rules & Regulations for Historic Alexandria, Virginia" issued by the City of Alexandria.

4. Charter

Upon review of the proposed charter and considerable discussion, the Task Force verbally consented to the following additions and changes:

Working collaboratively with multiple stakeholders, the Task Force will develop a proactive approach to motorcoach management that recognizes the economic value of the industry and balances its operational needs with measures to limit intrusive effects on Alexandria's neighborhoods, historic resources, the environment, quality of life, traffic and parking. The Task Force will review best practices and build consent on measures that balance the multiple interests of the City especially residents' public health, safety

and welfare. Ultimately, the Task Force will recommend a motorcoach management plan to City Council.

5. Review: Motorcoaches and Alexandria

The Task Force then reviewed two documents that were submitted for inclusion in the members' notebooks:

- ACVA Motorcoach Task Force Study (November 2005)
- Motorcoaches and Tourism Policy in Alexandria, Virginia (November 2007)

ACVA Motorcoach Task Force Study (November 2005)

Ms. Lloyd provided a review of this effort and its outcomes which include the currently established locations for loading and unloading as well as short-term and long-term parking. The previous report and task force efforts resulted in deadlocks on many key issues.

Motorcoaches and Tourism Policy in Alexandria, Virginia (November 2007)

Mr. Aronson provided a review of this document with efforts that originated during the previous task force. The documents includes a review of Task Force & Regulations, discussion of tourism planning efforts, costs of motorcoach tourism, motorcoach management reviews in other cities and recommendations for future management strategies.

Task Force members also reviewed a list of "Key Issues" as topics for future meetings. The issues and potential meeting topics include:

1. Code, Regulation & Legal Issues
2. Tourism Planning Strategies
3. Motorcoach Management in Other Cities (guest speakers)
4. Parking (Short-term & Long-term)
5. Designated Routes and/or Alternate Distribution Strategies
6. Communication & Wayfinding

Task Force members were specifically interested in the following additional actions to be arranged as soon as possible:

- Receiving a report outlining best practices and policies in other cities, with specific information detailing enforcement responsibilities
- Hearing from a representative of the City Attorney's office to discuss motorcoach regulations and the framework for additional regulations in the future
- Learning more from Williamsburg, Va., including the possibility of scheduling a guest speaker
- Bringing a representative from CSI to address the task force about tourism planning strategies

Staff also reviewed the City's current efforts regarding motorcoaches. The current short-term response includes Police presence on Friday and Saturday on the unit block of King Street and The Strand, one-way traffic direction on The Strand and in the

unit-block of King Street, efforts to try new tactics for motorcoach management on The Strand and King Street and new enforcement - specifically ticketing - of motorcoach drivers.

Mayor Eulle emphasized the City's intent to address issues related to motorcoaches quickly and - if necessary and/or desired by the Task Force - take short-term actions prior to acceptance of any report from the Task Force.

The Task Force adjourned at 8:45 pm

DRAFT