

# City of Alexandria Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force

Meeting Minutes  
9 June 2008  
City Hall, Room 2000

## Attendees

Task Force Members: Councilman Paul Smedberg, Rob Aronson, Rich Baier (chair), Stephanie Brown, Bert Ely, Charlotte Hall, Hubert Herre, Ellen Stanton, Sarita Schotta, Danielle Vendetti, Tara Zimnick-Calico, Bernard Caton (staff), David Huchler (staff), Lorraine Lloyd (staff), Chris Spera (staff), Cleveland Spruill (staff), Ryan Touhill (staff).

Below is a summary of the City of Alexandria's Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force meeting conducted on 9 June 2008.

**Executive Summary:** The primary meeting topics included issues related to Motorcoach Regulation. The meeting began at 7 pm and concluded at 8:20 pm

### **1. Welcome & Introductions**

### **2. Review Minutes**

Mr. Baier reviewed meeting minutes for the May 19 meeting (emailed) and sought input on whether there were any amendments. Mr. Aronson offered an amendment to the minutes, under Section 4, with regards to the MCTF charter. Mr. Aronson requested the following changes:

*The Task Force will review best practices and build consent on measures that balance multiple interests of the City ~~especially residents'~~ with regards to the public health, safety and welfare of the community.*

Mr. Smedberg requested that the City Attorney's Office (Mr. Spera) research the City Code in order to learn if the Code contains a definition of a shuttle. There being no further discussion, the amendment to the Charter was accepted and the May 19 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

### **3. New Information**

Mr. Baier reminded the Task Force (TF) members to report back to their constituents in an effort to gain their feedback regarding the progress of the TF. Future meeting agendas will contain a time period when feedback from citizens, constituents and associations can be presented in an open forum regarding the motorcoach industry [motorcoach issues]. Concerns were raised including:

- Current regulations for bus loading/unloading of passengers (Mr. Herre)
- Additional citizen concerns regarding "drive-throughs" or "drive-bys" touring (Mr. Smedberg)

- Stretch limousines (Ms. Schotta)
- Problem definition and issues clarification for the TF, specifically the need for the TF to establish measurable goals (Ms. Brown)
- Need for quantitative analysis (Ms. Stanton)

#### 4. Motorcoach Regulation

Mr. Spera made a presentation regarding motorcoach regulation to the TF. He noted that state code creates a window with regards to a localities ability to regulate motorcoaches. The city has broad power to regulate parking and routes of traffic within the City and it is Mr. Spera's interpretation that the current limitations the City puts on motorcoaches with regards to parking and idling are within the City's power. Restrictions on the route of certain vehicles (based on weight, height) also fall under the City's power to regulate traffic. The unique challenge with regards to motorcoaches is whether or not motorcoaches can be regulated based on their status as touring vehicles as opposed to being based upon something measurable (i.e. height/weight of vehicle). There would be no challenge if the regulation of motorcoaches was based on size and was applied across the board. For example, the regulation would apply equally to motorcoaches as it would to MetroBus, DASH, etc. Regulations could be applied to parking, idling and route as long as the regulations are applied uniformly.

TF members raised questions regarding the definitions of "status" and "unscheduled buses," haul routes, whether similar regulations in Williamsburg have been challenged and whether special regulation in Alexandria would be possible because residents live in the Historic Area.

Mr. Spera concluded by suggesting that the City's initial step would be to initiate the legislative process to gain authority to regulate motorcoaches from the General Assembly.

Mr. Caton followed with an outline of the legislative process required to amend current state code or seek new laws aimed at motorcoach regulation. The process includes:

- A request made to all boards and commissions within the City for any legislative issues they would like to present to the General Assembly
- A meeting between the City Council's Legislative Sub-Committee and the General Assembly delegation to informally discuss upcoming legislative issues. The delegation provides comment and feedback to the City
- Development of a legislative package which includes the drafting of legislation
- A public meeting (usually in early November) on the legislative package
- A formal meeting between the City and General Assembly delegation is held. Some amendments or additions to the package may be made.
- City Council adopts the package.

Mr. Caton then works to have bills drafted and introduced in the General Assembly. The city must take into consideration the type of law it hopes to pass. The two choices include a General Law and a Charter Amendment. General Laws require more work because they provide an opportunity for other cities and counties within the Commonwealth to be included in the law. Charter Amendments are smaller [in terms of effort] but are generally watched closely by industry. For example, industries may worry that if one locality is provided an expressed authority to do something one year, then several other localities may seek the same authority during the next session.

The TF then reviewed a set of questions related to the regulation of motorcoaches developed by the Old Town Civic Association and presented by Mr. Ely.

The following major action items were developed after the presentations by Mr. Spera and Mr. Caton:

- (1) Mr. Smedberg requested from Mr. Baier a summary of what the City has done in terms of education about motorcoach issues and how it is currently regulating it. Mr. Smedberg also requested that the TF develop a timeline for how TF meetings will proceed in the coming months. (Note: This list was presented at the initial meeting on May 19 and was included in the meeting minutes. It will be revised and presented at the June 23 meeting.)
- (2) Mr. Ely suggested that the TF begin to draft language that could be later used by Mr. Caton when drafting legislation and that this process should be done over the summer in order to work within the legislative schedule.
- (3) Mr. Smedberg requested that Mr. Baier develop a report on what the City has implemented since the last motorcoach task force was convened and a one-page grid reflecting these changes.
- (4) Mr. Smedberg requested that Ms. Hall, Ms. Brown and Ms. Zimnick-Calico provide a business perspective to the TF that describes how businesses in Old Town rely on visitors from motorcoaches and executive coaches. Mr. Baier informed the group that this would be placed on the next meeting agenda.
- (5) Mr. Baier reminded the group to email questions for future meetings to the group so that presenters can formulate their presentations.

The Task Force adjourned.