



Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force

Meeting Minutes
10 November 2008
7 pm, City Hall
Sister Cities Conference Room 1101

Attendees

Task Force Members: Rob Aronson, Rich Baier (chair), Stephanie Brown, Bert Ely, Nick Gregory (new appointee for Alexandria Chamber of Commerce), Charlotte Hall, Poul Hertel, Hubert Herre, Greg Ogden, Ellen Stanton, Councilman Paul Smedberg, Lorraine Lloyd (staff), Jamie Bartlett (staff), Yon Lambert (staff).

Guests: Van Van Fleet, Julie Crenshaw Van Fleet, Betty Ward, Wellington Watts, Ken Presley, Carolyn Cooper.

Below is a summary of the City of Alexandria's Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force meeting conducted on 10 November 2008.

Executive Summary:

1. Welcome & Introductions

Mr. Baier welcomed everyone to the Motorcoach Task Force meeting.

2. Review Minutes & Report Back from Constituent Groups

The group reviewed minutes from the October 27 meeting which were unanimously approved.

Greg Ogden reported that North Old Town Independent Citizens (NOTIC) has received updates and has no significant difficulties with the Task Force progress. NOTIC is in accord with the Old Town Civic Association statements on motorcoaches.

Rob Aronson reported that citizens he spoke with remain opposed to motorcoach routes, particularly those that would concentrate traffic.

Poul Hertel reviewed the Old Town Civic Association statement of concerns and solutions proposed by membership. (This document is available in the October 27 meeting materials on-line at >> ww.alexandriava.gov/motorcoach). OTC emphasized the four solutions at the end of the document.

Rich Baier reviewed with the group the issue of whether to create a subcommittee to review routes. After further consideration it was determined that a subcommittee was not warranted and none was created.



3. Review Issue #1: Lack of designated routes puts coaches on sensitive streets/safety (short-term)

Using printed map handouts and the GIS viewer, staff reviewed the current proposals for motorcoach routes with the Task Force members. The Task Force reviewed the routes proposed on September 8 by Group A and Group B as well as Option C and Option D. Option C and Option D include route options that have come up since the initial meeting to review potential routes.

Staff clarified that routes are being considered with an eye to long-term solutions. Routes are intended as an initial step in a larger motorcoach management strategy. Staff explained that although different options exist for routes, the review of routes is not intended to necessarily identify a “best” route or only one option. The routes are not mutually exclusive and Task Force input was requested to determine whether any streets should be removed from consideration.

The group also discussed the issue of different trip types or “buckets.” Currently, the group is considering how to address three different trip types: (1) Sightseeing, (2) Drop-Off/Parking and (3) Hotel/Attraction access.

Staff provided an 11x17 sheet that summarized the existing conditions based on the 12 different criteria developed for streets under consideration as routes. (The summary and route options are available under the November 10 meeting minutes online here >> www.alexandriava.gov/motorcoach)

The group had the following primary recommendations:

- An option may need to exist to use Duke Street only west of Route 1
- Loading and unloading at Christ Church on Washington Street is a good location. Safety concerns remain and there may be operational concerns and conflicts with rush hour, but ACVA and several residents supported expanding drop-off and parking in this location.
- Option D (a single route confined only to King Street) was not practical and should be removed from consideration. King Street may be included as one option but it should not be the sole route in Old Town.

(next)



4. Long-Term Action Items (Group Discussion)

After the discussion of routes, the Task Force provided a list of items that should be considered for discussion as Long-Term Action Items at its next meeting. The Long Term Action Items for discussion include:

- Parking
- Central Transfer Point (thorough explanation of process to include schedule and process)
- OTCA Executive Board "Statement of Constraints"
- Permitting
- Refining "Buckets" (ie Motorcoach Trip Types)
- Discouraging Vehicles and Encouraging Walking Tours
- OTCA Letter & Points
- Chapter 7 of Old & Historic District Residents Group

5. Presentation: Alexandria Footsteps to the Past/Sightseeing Routes

Betty Ward of Alexandria Footsteps to the Past made a presentation on sightseeing routes. An outline of the presentation is available under the November 10 meeting on-line here >> www.alexandriava.gov/motorcoach)

6. Upcoming Meeting Topic Schedule & Legislative Issues

The Task Force agreed that a verbal presentation to Council in December would be important.

The Task Force agreed to schedule a community meeting in December or January to present its findings with respect to routes. The Task Force also agreed that it tentatively planned to provide a report to City Council for action in February.

Rich Bair is scheduled to attend the Old Town Civic Association on January 14 to provide an update.

Responding to a question by Bert Ely, the group agreed that it did not plan to make a submission to the city's legislative package for 2009. There were no other legislative issues to discuss.

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

Julie Van Fleet said that while Mr. Euille said at a previous task force meeting that the civic groups near the current WMATA barn do not want a Motorcoach depot there, she does not believe that he actually talked to any of the civic groups there. She also said that she doubted that Mr. Euille had said anything to them that a Motorcoach depot would be nicer and not a disruption to their neighborhood like the current bus barn. The task force should consider the purchase and adaptive reuse of the WAMATA bus barn to Motorcoach and Motorcoach driver use.

There being no further comments, the meeting was adjourned.