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Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force

Meeting Minutes

9 February 2009

Sister City Room, Room 1101, City Hall

Attendees

Task Force Members: Mayor William Euille, Councilman Paul Smedberg, Rob Aronson, Stephanie Brown, Nick Gregory, Poul Hertel, Greg Ogden, Bert Ely, Charlotte Hall, Hubert Herre, Ellen Stanton, Tara Zimnick-Calico, Lorraine Lloyd (staff), Chief David Baker (staff), Yon Lambert (staff), Karen Callaham (staff)

Guests: William Bartow, Andrea Stowers.

Below is a summary of the City of Alexandria's Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force meeting conducted on 9 February 2009.

Executive Summary: The primary meeting topic was to review the Task Force comments on the second draft of the short-term recommendations.

1. Welcome & Introductions

Mr. Smedberg opened the meeting and asked the Task Force members to provide introductions. He then reviewed the agenda and reminded the group that the Task Force was focusing on comments to the second draft of the Task Force recommendations.

2. Review Minutes (February 5) & Report Back from Constituent Groups

Charlotte Hall requested that Joanne Platt be added as a guest at the February 5th meeting.

There was also a recommendation to change bucket #1 by adding motorcoaches with "group" reservations. The Task Force members unanimously agreed.

Poul Hertel questioned the group's discussion regarding dispersal under Item #2 of the February 5 minutes. Yon Lambert stated the text reflects what was discussed at the meeting.

Mr. Hertel asked whether the Feb. 5 minutes should be amended to reflect the premature ending of the meeting and closing of public comment. It was agreed that on Feb. 5 a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Stephanie Brown asked for clarification of Mr. Spera's conversation regarding federal law. Ms. Brown asked whether the group added the distinction of private property after Mr. Spera's presentation. Mr. Smedberg clarified the City Attorney opinion and referred the Task Force to the legal memo. Mr.

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Smedberg said it was not an absolute statement by Mr. Spera that he stated how the legislature or an attorney in litigation would look at any potential proposal brought forward.

Mr. Hertel asked if the minutes reflected the comments of how other jurisdictions may have commented on the benefits to the industry from their limited restricted sizes of buses. Mr. Lambert directed the Task Force to the last paragraph of page 3 of the Feb. 5 minutes.

Mr. Smedberg inquired if there were additional recommended changes to the minutes. There being none, a motion to approve was solicited and seconded by Greg Ogden. All Task Force members agreed and the minutes were approved.

3. Short-Term Recommendations Report Final Review

Mr. Smedberg stated the cover letter and the draft of the memo being sent to the Mayor and City Council with the report are different documents. Mr. Lambert pointed out only minor changes were made in the cover letter and the recommendation report: In the 5th paragraph of the cover letter to reflect there were minor operation changes, “*operation*” was added. Another change in the cover letter is a change in the fiscal impact of the amount required for recommendation #7 according to Chief Spruill. Instead of \$161,000, it’s actually \$80,000. In the short-term recommendations, staff changed recommendation #1 to reflect that a separate advisory group or work group as discussed by the group would not be appointed. The Task Force would continue meeting, and staff would provide the group with progress updates.

Mr. Lambert indicated comments to the drafts were received from Mr. Hertel and Ellen Stanton, which were distributed to the group.

Changes made to the Recommendations and the Report

- Mr. Hertel’s reference to the OTCA comment in the general meeting and the reference of encouragement of more pedestrian tours.
- Ms. Stanton’s reference to both the short-term recommendations and the report that there were two possible regulatory options.
- Lorraine Lloyd agreed to answer items 2 and 3 raised by Ms. Stanton. Ms. Lloyd said the ACVA tracked 135 overnight and 48 day passes. #3 was a question regarding the location of the hotels. Ms. Lloyd indicated there were no records, as industry does not keep their books based on transportation types.

Mr. Smedberg asked if everyone was comfortable adding that data. There were no objections. Ms. Brown added that there are currently a number of resources available for walking tours and developing those resources for such tours is not an issue.

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Mr. Smedberg asked if there were additional comments to the cover letter as the suggestions impact the actual report from the Task Force to the Council.

Ms. Brown inquired of the last item in the report where it indicated Rich Baier and David Baker as being the staff that contributed. The Mayor recommended adding thanks to the Task Force and adding their names. This has been included within the Recommendations report.

All charts have been amended to reflect the change to “group” reservations.

Mr. Smedberg added that the Task Force memo should include the Mayor’s recommendation of adding thanks to the Task Force and listing their names.

Ms. Hall asked whether recommendation #2 might be adjusted to reflect counts of motorcoaches during off-peak (i.e. at times other than March through September). After some discussion, it was agreed that the essence of the recommendation was for staff to begin the counts as soon as possible and that the wording could be made more general to reflect counts during 2009.

Mr. Aronson suggested that it may be the group’s desire to add “peak” to recommendation #2. Mr. Aronson also indicated that due to a short review period, there was not time for his group to discuss the final version of the report.

Mayor Euille questioned the \$80,000 cost for police participation. Mr. Lambert repeated the Police Department response which had been included in the report directly as provided.

Ms. Brown recommended changing the language from motorcoach management to transportation management when discussing the Police Department’s participation.

Mayor Euille suggested the last paragraph of the Fiscal Impact section of the memo should be reworded to reflect that the cost for transportation management is \$160,000 annually, of which \$80,000 is currently borne by the Police Department in their regular overtime budget but that up to an additional \$80,000 may be needed to support their efforts.

In response to a question about making King Street one-way westbound permanently, Mr. Lambert informed the Task Force that these recommendations would need to be referred to the Traffic & Parking Board for hearing.

Mr. Smedberg then recapped the changes that will be made to the docket item:

1. Mayor Euille’s recommendation to change the language regarding counts to “2009.”

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2. Mr. Aronson's recommendation to "registration and permitting."
3. Ms. Brown's recommendation to strike "motorcoach" management and insert "transportation" management.
4. Mayor Eulle's recommendation to reword the last paragraph of Fiscal Impacts to reflect the need for up to \$160,000 annually.
5. Mr. Brown's recommendation to change the names of the staff that contributed or to include the Task Force members by name somewhere in the documents.

Mr. Smedberg asked for a motion to accept the 2-page report. Ms. Hall made the motion, which was seconded by Chief Baker. Mr. Aronson abstained from voting but the Task Force otherwise approved.

Mr. Ely indicated he had drafted a statement about motorcoaches that reflects the sentiment of Old Town residents and asked that it be placed in the records. A discussion ensued during which Ms. Stanton suggested the statement format should be changed from paragraphs to bullets. Mr. Smedberg recommended Bert submit his statement in a letter format using bullets to highlight the main points. He stated the letter would not be a part of the report but it will be a part of the record and that maybe the upcoming public hearing is the route the civic associations could take to voice their opinions.

Ms. Brown suggested the next phase of the meetings should include an analysis of the tour bus turning radii compared to other vehicles. Mr. Lambert said the Task Force had been provided with information regarding all intersection curb radii on streets in Old Town and that it would be possible to provide turning radii for motorcoaches compared to DASH buses at a future meeting.

4. Public & Task Force Q&A

Andrea Stowers acknowledged that she appreciated the Task Force work. She pointed out that Valerie Ianieri, representative of Founders Park Community Association, had been unable to attend many of the meetings because of personal hardship. Ms. Stowers indicated that Founders Park had not been able to appoint a representative and she believed that the Task Force did not have adequate representation from the area near Founders Park.

Ms. Stowers introduced the President of Tobacco Quay, William Bartow, and informed the Task Force that she and Mr. Bartow had permission to speak for Founder's Park and residents on Pendleton Street. Ms. Stowers said that Old Town is not China Town or National Harbor where efforts at redevelopment were undertaken to obtain value for areas that had no value. Ms. Stowers said the Task Force, in the name of business for Old Town, was destroying value in the name of private commercial interest.

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Mayor Euille said the Task Force did not make the determination that the Founder's Park representative could not be removed from the Task Force. It was never discussed at the meetings and no formal request was ever received by the Task Force.

Mr. Smedberg said that the report does not indicate designated routes and instead reflects managed dispersal.

Task Force members thanked staff their work on the project and Mr. Reminder the group of al that had been accomplished.

The meeting concluded at 8:30 pm.

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