



## **Meeting Summary**

Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC)

January 30, 2019

**TAC Attendees:** Joe Marinelli, Bill Lovett, Charlie Brazil, Mark Dana, Michael Owens, Daniel Carey, Melinda Allen, Michael Ambrose

**TAC Absences:** Nichelle Stephens, Vaughnette Goode-Walker

**City Staff:** Amanda Hutson

### **Chair's Report**

Chairwoman Melinda Allen opened the meeting by asking for any comments on the December 2018 minutes. Bill Lovett asked for a clarification on chartered versus private boundaries for quadricycles. Amanda Hutson clarified that “private” was a clarification on a map, but that the official term in the ordinance is “charter.” To facilitate the review of minutes at subsequent meetings, staff will email the minutes along with the agenda. The minutes were subsequently passed with no objections.

Chairwoman Allen noted that Susan Broker, Director of Special Events, Film & Tourism, was absent due to personal reasons and that it was Ms. Hutson’s last day serving as the Tourism Management Coordinator. Members of the TAC expressed their thanks and wished Ms. Hutson well. Chairwoman Allen also noted the absences of Nichelle Stephens and Vaughnette Goode-Walker. Joe Marinelli stated that Ms. Goode-Walker was absent due to illness. Noting that Ms. Stephens has missed the last two meetings, Chairwoman Allen suggested that members plan on sending a representative in their place when absent to ensure representation. Michael Owens recommended that the representative serve a reporting function, but should not be permitted to vote or influence the conversation. Chairwoman Allen will reach out to the Thomas Square Neighborhood Association to address the absences and to encourage a new representative if Ms. Stephens is no longer able to serve the minimum year required by ordinance.

Chairwoman Allen also requested that TAC members plan on meeting beyond the standard one hour if the meeting contains meaningful discussion. While some members agreed that meetings should continue as long as necessary, Mr. Marinelli recommended that meetings only be extended for an additional 15 minutes, as members have additional responsibilities beyond these meetings. Mr. Owens also advised members to be sensitive of time when requesting agenda items. Charlie Brazil stated that task forces and committees should be used outside of the scheduled meetings to encourage extended discussions.

### **Tourism Management Plan**

Ms. Hutson opened the discussion of the Tourism Management Plan (TMP) objectives for 2019 by introducing the strategies proposed by staff and reiterating the directive in the TMP to



produce a TAC Annual Work Plan. Mr. Marinelli stated that the TAC should review the TMP before proceeding, since the last time the group discussed the document was in September of 2018. TAC members should review the TMP and develop priorities or target areas and readdress the annual work plan at a later meeting. Ms. Hutson will resend the TMP to members via email and Chair Allen and Vice Chair Mark Dana will develop a targeted list for consideration.

Mr. Owens stated that there appeared to be two priorities already being addressed during the last few meetings: the Special Events Ordinance and after-hours management. Daniel Carey stated that while the TMP as a whole emphasized preservation, the strategies proposed by the City had only one clearly-related objective concerning preservation (pursuing an archeology ordinance). Mr. Carey stated that a link between tourism and preservation could be found in “product protection and enhancement” and should be explored. Mr. Brazil pointed out that strategies related to infrastructure, such as the addition of public restrooms, could be indirectly enhancing preservation, as these strategies are intended to prevent damage. Ms. Hutson closed the discussion by stating that the TMP held two distinct purposes: to act as a strategic framework for the TAC’s work and to identify specific strategies for the City to pursue, either independently or with the TAC’s direct involvement. The City-led strategies could contribute to the TAC’s annual work plan or not, it would be up to the members to determine the extent.

### **Other Business**

At the request of Ms. Broker, Chairwoman Allen opened nominations for two members (one tourism, one non-tourism) to serve on an interview committee for the Tourism Management Coordinator position soon to be vacated by Ms. Hutson. Ms. Hutson was asked for her input on the qualities of an ideal candidate and the responsibilities of the position. Ms. Hutson stated that the position required organizational skills, experience working with a committee like the TAC, and excellent writing abilities. As there is little training involved in this position, the candidate would be required to learn the details of the tourism industry and the residential community as they went along. Michael Ambrose asked if the candidate should have experience in the tourism industry to succeed. Ms. Hutson stated that she had a general knowledge through a previous position, but that it was not a requirement. Mr. Owens reinforced this notion, stating that the skillset would be more valuable than industry experience. Mr. Brazil added that too much knowledge of the industry would potentially be detrimental, as the position requires a unbiased and impartial perspective. Mr. Brazil and Mr. Ambrose were selected to serve on the interview committee of the final candidates.

Chairwoman Allen then asked for any additional comments on the Tourism Small Group meeting summarized in the agenda and asked if any of the members had representatives present at the meeting. Ms. Hutson clarified that the group was composed of late-night tour operators and downtown residents who attended the public comment sessions. Mr. Brazil encouraged TAC to treat this group as a separate committee and to leave them to complete their work without the TAC members. Chairwoman Allen also asked if there were any comments on the annual report. None were presented and the report was approved as a memorandum for Mayor and Council.



The final topic was the proposed quadricycle boundary changes. Ms. Hutson and Mr. Owens explained the genesis of the boundary changes, particularly the elimination of the commercial and charter distinctions. While required by ordinance to seek permission to enter into the charter boundaries, the quadricycle companies have been permitted to operate outside of the commercial zone by City policy. The boundary amendments were introduced to align policy with the ordinance and to alleviate quality of life concerns on the eastern boundary. In exchange for reducing the eastern (and to some extent southern) operational boundaries, quadricycles will now be granted access to Indian Street and Williamson Street.

Mr. Carey asked if there are any limitations placed on the number of charter routes permitted by the City. Mr. Brazil responded that there is no limit, but all tours are physically limited by the number of tour stops and access points. Mr. Lovett asked if the quadricycles were interested in access to River Street as well, and the general consensus was that the cobblestone and access ramps are too difficult to maneuver until streetscaping improves.

Mr. Dana sought confirmation that the language in the ordinance matched the map provided. Ms. Hutson clarified that the map was developed internally and a better version would be produced before the amendments are presented to Council. Mr. Owens introduced the motion to approve the quadricycle boundaries as proposed and the motion was seconded by Mr. Lovett. All were in favor, the amendments will be presented to Council in the coming weeks. Mr. Owens concluded by reiterating that the proposed changes were initiated by a quadricycle company to proactively resolve ongoing issues. The company introduced their request over a year ago and continue to seek solutions to problems that arise.

Mr. Marinelli closed with another thank you to Ms. Hutson for all her work with the TAC. With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

**Next Meeting:**           Wednesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>  
                                  8:30am – 9:30am  
                                  Visit Savannah, Chamber Board Room