

Meeting Summary
Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC)
December 18, 2019

- TAC Attendees:** Sue Adler, Mark Dana, Vaughnette Goode-Walker, Bill Lovett, & Joe Marinelli
- TAC Absences:** Melinda Allen, Michael Ambrose, Charlie Brazil, Clinton Edminster, & Michael Owens
- City Staff:** Susan Broker, Lida Coleman, Edward Grant, Jonika Rountree, & Rachel Scott
- Guest Attendees:** Carson Daley (filling in for Michael Owens), Beth Nelson; Savannah Film Commission, Michael O'Donovan, Garry Patel (filling in for Charlie Brazil)

Chair's Report

Chairmen Mark Dana opened the meeting by asking for any comments on the November 20, 2019 minutes. Joe Marinelli made the first motion to pass the minutes from the November 20 meeting. Bill Lovett seconded the motion to pass minutes with no objections.

Director's Report- Susan Broker

Public Meeting recap: Tour Service for Hire and Special Event Ordinance

On December 9th the Office of Special Events, Film and Tourism hosted two public meetings to discuss the changes made to the Special Event Ordinance and Tour Service for Hire Ordinance. The meetings were held at 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. in the Mason Room at the Savannah Civic Center. The meetings were open to the public. Rachel Scott, Tourism Coordinator and Edward Grant, Assistant Director of Special Events presented at each meeting. The main concern conveyed by the public was the newly approved insurance requirements that include workers compensation. The office of Special Events, Film and Tourism (OSEFT) has since met with Bryan Hollis Director of Risk Management and confirmed the new requirements and addressed the public's concerns.

Revenue Ordinance: New Fees Proposed

Susan discussed fee changes proposed for the 2020 revenue ordinance. There will now be a food truck application fee, a Special Event application fee of \$25.00 and a Special Event permit fee of \$150 to account for employee's time and other administrative costs. The Daffin Park Pavilion will now be \$100.00 to rent. The street performer badge fee will also go from \$10 to \$20. A replacement will be \$10.

2020: What's in the pipeline?

Additions to the TSFH ordinance

After the approval of the Tour Service for Hire Ordinance on October 24, 2019 OSEFT has since identified sections in the ordinance where additions and modifications need to be made. Modifications and additions proposed include; Walking tour Boundaries, Hours of operation/restricted tour hours for all tour companies, the modification/creation of the Segway Ordinance/policy, Deadline dates for horse carriage stands/equine sanitation payment and consequences for not paying.

Walking tour Boundaries and Tour group size

Due to the number of complaints from citizens the OSEFT and members of the Tourism Advisory Committee proposed lowering the maximum number of people in a walking tour, requiring two tour guides per 30 people, and creating a boundary with hours of operations for walking tours. Mark Dana, Joe Marinelli, Bill Lovett, and Vaughnette Goode-Walker agreed the proposed modifications to the ordinance would address citizens' concerns and recommended setting up a meeting with the walking tour companies to hear their thoughts. Vaughnette Goode-Walker also recommended suggesting tour companies provide headsets as a tool to lower the noise complaints.

Segway Ordinance/Policy

The Segway tours that operate in the city currently operate on an in house policy that is outdated and needs to be updated. The policy does not outline boundaries or hours of operations. Garry mentioned Segway's should not be allowed on the road during rush hour traffic just like other tour service companies. Bill Lovett expressed concern about the distance between Segway's while a tour is in progress. They are not in a group they are spread out and should be closer together when traveling on a tour. It is dangerous and holds up traffic. OSEFT, Tourism Coordinator will draft an ordinance or policy that TAC can review in February 2020.

Equine Sanitation Payment Deadline and consequences

Currently there is no deadline for the payment of equine sanitation fees or consequences for not paying. The deadline is understood to be by the last day of each calendar year. Two of the three carriage companies are behind on payments and there is not a consequence for the delinquent fees. The City of Savannah pays the equine Sanitation Contract upfront and the carriage companies are to repay the city within the year with monthly payments. \$5,956 is due each month. The fee is split between the three carriage companies and each company owes \$1,985.33. Mark Dana expressed concern for the smaller carriage companies who do not have as many horses as the other companies and how the fee should be assessed according to size of company and how many horses each company has on the street at any time. Smaller companies cannot keep up with the larger ones if they are required to pay the same fee for half of the horses. Deadline dates for horse carriage stands/equine sanitation fees and consequences for not paying will be added to the Tour Service for Hire ordinance in 2020.

Bonaventure Cemetery:

The parking study was completed in December 2019 at Bonaventure Cemetery. Richard Gerbasi will attend TAC in February 2020 with updates and results following the study to identify ideal solutions.

RHI: Responsibility Hospitality Institute

After an informational meeting about the Responsible Hospitality Institute (RHI) with director of RHI, Jim Peters TAC members were impressed by Mr. Peter's presentation and voted to support moving forward with the contract at the November 2019 TAC meeting. All were in favor of moving forward with no objections. The City will enter into a contract with RHI in quarter 1 2020 after St. Patrick's Day. The goal of the contract is to develop a night time management plan that will assist the City of Savannah in developing a strategy and structure to address night time enforcement, activities and quality of life. Mark Dana proposed requesting a member of the RHI team attend St. Patrick's Day so they can see the City at its busiest. Susan will check on seeing if a member can attend.

St. Patrick's Day 2020

The proposed festival dates for 2020 are as follows: Friday, March 13, 2020- Sunday, March 15, 2020 from 6:00 p.m. Friday to 6:00 p.m. Sunday. The Parade will be on Tuesday, March 17, 2020. The proposed dates will be presented at council on December 19, 2020. The City is hopeful with the proposed one weekend festival it will lower the trash and damage to the city.

The Waterfront Association has changed their name to Savannahs Waterfront and is wanting to move away from the party on River Street and is in support of the weekend festival.

Tourism Advisory Committee meeting dates

The Tourism Advisory Committee will continue to meet on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 8:30 a.m. at City Hall in the 2nd Floor Media Room.

Next Meeting: **Next meeting: February 19, 2020 – City Hall Media Room – 2nd Floor**