

**Tourism Advisory Committee  
Minutes  
August 17, 2022**

**TAC Attendees:** Melinda Allen, Charlie Brazil, Bill Lovett (Steven Brenneman), Jason Combs, Nancy Maia, Joe Marinelli, and Michael Owens

**TAC Absences:** Sue Adler and Vaughnette Goode-Walker

**City Staff:** Rachel Buck, Eddie Grant, Jennifer Herman, and Cynthia Pelote

**Guests:** Dee Ann Geeslin (Assisted with meeting minutes), Russ Lee, Jennifer Long, and Tess Scheer

**Call to order:** 8:32 AM

**1. Approval of Minutes from July 20, 2022**

Jason Combs asked if anyone had any questions or amendments to the minutes. J. Combs requested that the language be amended to reflect the additional TAC seat under consideration being referred to as the Westside District instead of the Canal District. Michael Owens made a motion to approve the minutes. Melinda Allen seconded the motion. The minutes passed unanimously as amended.

**2. Tour Service for Hire Vehicle presentations**

○ **Hearse Ghost Tours**

Russ Lee owner of Savannah Hearse Ghost Tours requested the addition of a funeral limo to the Hearse Ghost Tours fleet that will offer 3 additional daytime tours. R. Lee stated eventually he would like to have a total of 4 limos in the fleet. He has secured a parking space at the visitors center for limo pick up and drop off. J. Marinelli requested more information on “why” Hearse Tours was wanting to add to their fleet. R. Lee stated that with the addition of the limo he will be able to offer service to those who may have physical limitations. The limo would be easy to enter and exit and will be climate controlled. He also stated that he is confident that he will be able to secure adequate staffing for these additions.

○ **Creeper Van**

Jennifer Long appealed TAC’s original recommendation that was not in favor of supporting her request for a tour service permit. J. Long was invited to the August 17, 2022 TAC meeting to present her business plan and allow TAC members to ask questions. J. Long stated the theme of Creeper Van with the verbiage “Free Candy” advertised was meant to be light-hearted and creepy in a positive way. The focus of Creeper Van Savannah is supposed to be fun –

edgy. J. Long stated that she does not in any way wish to damage Savannah's image. She wants to offer a fun and memorable experience for guests and offer free candy on her tour. R. Buck asked J. Long to walk the committee through her tour. Ms. Long stated she would narrate the darker histories of Savannah and incorporate a murder pop quiz, bar stops, and movie trivia. She stated the tour would be similar to the "Cash Cab" experience. When asked where she planned to park. R. Buck stated the tour service vehicle stands are not for parking. The stands are for loading and unloading only so she would need to come up with an alternative way to pick up guests. Vehicle parking locations will need to be identified.

TAC members expressed their concern over the terms "creeper van", "free candy", and the connotation of making light of child murder and molestation. J. Long was not open to changing the verbiage "free candy" or Creeper Van.

J. Long stated that she would like to customize the interior of the van with artsy images in keeping with the theme. Jennifer Herman confirmed Alcohol consumption in the van will be prohibited under the vehicle open container law.

- **Savannah Cruzers**

Savannah Cruzers was approved in the fall of 2021 to operate as a tour service vehicle with the stipulation they would not use the tour service vehicle stands. R. Buck explained Savannah Cruzers has not been operating under the approved stipulations. Tess Scheer stated there was a miscommunication and misunderstanding on her part over what is allowed and what is not allowed regarding her approval to operate. T. Scheer asked if the GEM cars could park in a metered space and pay the fee accordingly or park in tour service stands. R. Buck stated that tour service companies are prohibited from parking in metered spaces, and the company must operate like a regular tour service for hire business if it is going to park in tour service stands. T. Scheer stated that she simply wants to know what her business can and cannot do. R. Buck responded that further discussions will be had for clarification of regulations, and someone will be in contact with her with more information.

TAC and R. Buck made recommended Savannah Cruisers be required to operate as a Tour Service for Hire company and adhere to the established Tour Service for Hire ordinance accordingly. Michael Owens requested that tour service stand requirements be more closely monitored for compliance if possible.

R. Buck will meet with T. Scheer to relay the recommendation.

- **Discussion of Creeper Van**

After further discussion, TAC members unanimously agreed Creeper Van Savannah's business concept was not in line with the aesthetic or image that the City of Savannah wants to portray. J. Herman recommended that TAC formulate a recommendation according to the written mission of the council. R. Buck asked for a motion to restate the previous recommendation of TAC and submit it to the Mayor and City Council. M. Owens made a motion not recommend approval of a tour service permit to Creeper Van Savannah. J. Combs seconded the motion. TAC members unanimously voted to uphold their original vote to not recommend the issuance of a Tour Service Permit to Creeper Van Savannah

R. Buck requested that City staff, confer with the Deputy City Attorney, to draft a letter to not recommend the approval of the Creeper Van Savannah. R. Buck will send the letter and memo to TAC members for review.

### **3. Directors Report**

- **RHI Update**

- Eddie Grant gave a brief update on the status of the RHI project. Listening sessions were conducted and data is being provided to the review panel. A future meeting of the panel in Savannah is scheduled for the week of October 22<sup>nd</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>. After the October visit the action phase of the project will begin.

J. Marinelli inquired about the status of the glass building in Ellis Square. E. Grant provided an update on the refurbishing of the space which is moving along nicely.

- **Parklet Ordinance**

- Michael Owens motioned to table the subject until the next TAC meeting. J. Combs seconded. The vote to approve passed with 1 dissent due to concern over delay for affected businesses.

### **4. Other Business**

**Adjourned 9:51 AM**