



Tourism Advisory Committee

April 20, 2022, Meeting Minutes

TAC Attendees: Melinda Allen, Charlie Brazil, Steve Brenneman, Jason Combs, Nancy Maia, Joe Marinelli, and Michael Owens

TAC Absences: Sue Adler, Vaughnette Goode-Walker, and Jay Wiendl

City Staff: Rachel Buck and Jennifer Herman

Guests: Deborah Caldwell and Mary Sue McCarthy

Call to Order: 8:34 a.m.

1. Approval of Minutes from March 30, 2022 Meeting

Jason Combs requested a motion to approve the minutes from the March 30, 2022, Tourism Advisory Committee meeting.

Steve Brenneman made a motion to approve the minutes. Melinda Allen seconded the motion to approve the minutes. Minutes passed unanimously.

2. Director's Report: Rachel Buck

- **Parklet Ordinance and Policy additions**

Rachel Buck addressed the Parklet Ordinance additions she will be making after speaking with other City departments. The additions will include lighting, petition for removal, and enforcement. Lighting is not addressed in the current ordinance. R. Buck states the ordinance will be revised to address what type of lighting is permitted to be sure there are no cords going across the sidewalk.

R. Buck stated a petition for removal will be added on the off chance a parklet becomes a nuisance to the neighboring businesses.

R. Buck also mentioned an enforcement section will be added to inform the business that receives a citation on how to pay or appeal it, much like in the Tour Service for Hire Ordinance.

R. Buck will bring the Parklet Ordinance back to TAC for review after the additions are made.

Joe Marinelli asked, "how many parklets are in play at the moment?"

R. Buck stated she believes once the guidelines have been released to the public the City will have a better idea of how many businesses will be interested and able to participate. Some businesses will not be able to afford a parklet based on



the guidelines in the ordinance. The guidelines in the ordinance are necessary. R. Buck expects around five parklets to be established.

Melinda Allen asked if there was any clarification referring to the distance requirement of a parklet from a stop sign. R. Buck stated after speaking with Jennifer Herman and Traffic Engineering that the 30ft from a stop sign regulation is a state law and the parking spot in question is illegal. R. Buck explained she also went and measured the parking spot in front of Collins Quarter herself and confirmed that Collins Quarter can have a parklet it will just be in the diagonal spaces from their entrance. Collins Quarter will not be able to use that first parking space for a parklet. It is 22ft from the stop sign. J. Herman confirmed the regulation is a state law and there cannot be a parklet permitted in that space.

J. Marinelli stated he was in New York recently and there was a parklet that was burned down. When he asked the business what happened they stated the parklet caught fire due to a standing torch heater. He suggested as R. Buck moves forward with edits to the Parklet Ordinance that electric and heating be addressed

R. Buck stated at this time the sidewalk cafes already use propane heaters that are rolled out during the cold months. R. Buck asked J. Herman if the heater specifications needed to be in the ordinance. J. Herman recommended anything that is specifically regulated be added to the ordinance. M. Owens agreed.

R. Buck confirmed she will add heating specifications to the ordinance.

J. Combs mentioned Montgomery County parklet program was discussed heavily in D.C. at the RHI summit, he asked if R. Buck had a chance to look at their ordinance.

R. Buck confirmed that Montgomery County does allow propane heaters. J. Combs asked if Montgomery County allows cords from the main establishment. R. Buck confirmed they do not allow cords. M. Owens asked if cords are allowed with a cord cover. R. Buck did not confirm but stated that if we allow cord covers on the sidewalk that the City was asking for an issue. R. Buck continued stated if the business needs lighting it will need to be battery operated or solar-powered.

- **Bicycle and Segway Ordinance**

R. Buck stated she made the edits discussed at the previous TAC meeting and sent the final ordinance to TAC members via email. R. Buck stated she has received several emails with letters from members of the Victorian Neighborhood Association (VNA) stating they are against the passing of the Bicycle and Segway Ordinance. VNA Members have issues with the size of the tours allowed and the allowance of bicycles on the perimeter sidewalk of Forsyth Park. R. Buck will attach the letters to the ordinance when it is submitted to council.



R. Buck asked J. Combs to write the letter of approval from TAC to submit with the ordinance.

- **GEM Cars**

R. Buck was not employed by the City when TAC discussed GEM cars in October 2021 but did confirm the cars have arrived and will be on the road soon. There will be 4 cars and R. Buck has reiterated the company must comply with the stipulations discussed in the October TAC meeting.

The company will be renting a space in the visitor center lot and will be working directly with the hotel's valets and concierges to coordinate the pickup and drop off of their patrons.

The above recommendation was made because the Tour service stands are already congested and the cars a smaller and able to pick up at the hotels compared to a trolley.

R. Buck stated GEM cars will have to be added to the Tour Service for Hire Ordinance since the company has been approved to operate as a tour service for hire vehicle.

J. Combs asked if the GEM cars would be a whole other section of the ordinance.

R. Buck confirmed GEM cars would be its own section in the TSFH ordinance.

M. Owens asked J. Herman to confirm that the GEM cars are tagged and registered vehicles. J. Herman confirmed the vehicles are tagged so the City should not have a golf cart issue.

R. Buck confirmed the cars will not stop they will narrate as they move.

- **Holiday Decorations**

R. Buck confirmed she will start working on Holiday Decorations. She is hopeful the holiday decorations committee will make the process easier.

J. Combs stated Thomas Square would like to be included in the decorations whether that means they take it on themselves or discuss with the City about other resources.

J. Marinelli recommended to R. Buck to reach out to Bill Hubbard as he has years of experience with holiday decorations and would be helpful.



R. Buck mentioned she was supposed to have lunch with Bill and Susan and the lunch fell through. She will reach back out to reschedule.

- Other Business

- **Rock 'n' Roll**

- J. Combs asked if there was any information on the Rock 'n' Roll marathon that could be shared.

R. Buck did not have any information, but J. Marinelli stated Rock 'n' Roll marathon will not return to Savannah/ Chatham County in 2022.

J. Combs stated he knew there was a laundry list of things that were discussed that could be improved but didn't know there was a chance the marathon would not be coming back.

RHI

R. Buck recapped her experience at the RHI conference. She stated Eddie Grant, Nicole Bush, and Pearlette Shuman with the Office of Special Events all attended the conference along with Jason Combs.

R. Buck mentioned that D.C. had a ton of parklets, some were not well made, and others were immaculate. J. Combs agreed that all the parklets in D.C. were enjoyed.

J. Combs asked, "when will RHI be here?" R. Buck stated there is not a set date for their arrival and we will not know until RHI is passed by council.

J. Marinelli asked R. Buck what her single biggest point of interest was that she wanted to bring back to Savannah. R. Buck stated she was interested in bringing back the process of utilizing the tour service stands. Tour service stands are a big issue in Savannah, so she welcomes a new way to minimize complaints and circulation of tour service vehicles. She mentioned Old Town Trolley charges \$500 and tows vehicles parked in their stand.

R. Buck also stated she would like to post signs in the parks and street segments with ordinance codes so people are aware of the local ordinances in hopes to alleviate violations.

R. Buck stated overall the trip to Washington, D.C. was great and mentioned the tour the team took, Monuments by Moonlight was fantastic.

J. Combs stated his biggest takeaway talking about sound management approaches from different cities. Austin TX and San Francisco CA. He described the presentation San Francisco gave, stating two maps were shown side by side. One map was the entertainment district, and the other was where new apartments



were going up. The maps were almost identical. San Francisco makes everyone who is buying, building, or leasing residential dwellings in the areas sign a disclosure stating they realize they are moving into a nightlife district where certain sound allowances are given, so when the City receives a noise complaint they ignore it because a disclosure was signed.

J. Marinelli asked how this application would be applied in Savannah.

J. Combs stated he is not sure if we will have to deal with that now since Hang Fire and Jinx have closed in a similar situation but suggested considering it for future music venues.

R. Buck explains the complaints are addressed up to three times and if the complaint is not notable the complaints of noise from that establishment or individual are ignored.

R. Buck and J. Combs noted other cities that attended RHI.

M. Owens stated he thought the \$500 fine for parking in a Tour Service Stand was too high. R. Buck concurred and explained the fine for parking in a motorcoach zone is \$250, which is what she will suggest changing the fee to.

R. Buck asked for any other new or old business. Charlie Brazil asked for a sidebar with R. Buck.

Adjourn 8:35 a.m.

Next meeting: June 15, 2022– City Hall Media Room – 2nd Floor