



**Tourism Advisory Committee
Minutes
February 16, 2022**

TAC Attendees: Melinda Allen, Charlie Brazil, Steven Brenneman, Jason Combs, Vaughnette Goode-Walker, Nancy Maia, Joe Marinelli, Michael Owens, and Jay Wiendl

TAC Absences: Sue Adler

City Staff: Jennifer Herman, Rachel Buck, and Susan Broker

Guest Attendees: Carson Daley

Call to order: 8:33 AM

1. Approval of Minutes from November 17, 2021 Meeting

- a. C. Brazil made a motion to approve the minutes. M. Allen made a second to the motion.
- b. M. Owens brought up, in relation to the motion, that in the November meeting, B. Lovett made a motion to change the October minutes regarding the conversation around the time for bicycles to be starting. B. Lovett asked for the minutes to be changed to reflect the 9AM start time. M. Owens explained that the original conversation was about a 7AM start time and asked that the minutes from October's meeting be amended to reflect the original and accurate time discussed. All agreed.
- c. Rachel and M. Owens will discuss the amendment of original minutes, which will be presented to TAC.

2. Approval of Minutes from January 19, 2022 Meeting

- a. There was no discussion regarding the January minutes. J. Marinelli made a motion to approve the minutes. C. Brazil made a second to the motion. The meeting minutes were approved.

S. Broker invited Bill Lovett to attend today's meeting to recognize him for his hard work on TAC for the past eight years. S. Broker shared a plaque that will be given to Bill. TAC members gave a round of applause for Bill and his dedication.

S. Broker also would like to invite M. Dana back to a meeting to recognize him for the hours and conversations he dedicated to TAC.

3. Visit Savannah Lodging Appointee



- a. J. Marinelli introduced Jay Wiendl. J. Marinelli has invited Jay to join the TAC in place of M. Dana. Jay gave a short introduction. J. Marinelli thought Jay would be a good addition to TAC.
- b. M. Allen also introduced Steve Bernnamen who will be the DNA replacement on TAC in place of Bill Lovett.
- c. S. Broker recognized Jen Herman and said she will be attending TAC meetings regularly.

4. Director's Report: Susan Broker

- a. S. Broker mentioned her goal with TAC is to ease out the door and hand over TAC meetings to Rachel.

• **St. Patrick's Day update**

S. Broker said a group of industry professionals met last April to see how to move forward with St. Patrick's Day. S. Broker will provide Rachel with a presentation to attach to the minutes for the TAC members.

S. Broker said the goal was to look at the past celebrations and determine what about the celebrations were good that the city wanted to keep around moving forward and morph the celebration into something great for the community.

S. Broker said the second part of the goal was to take all the visitors and local and spread the economic opportunity to businesses outside the former control zone.

The committee made recommendations to get about from the "spring break" feeling. This year, the city will suspend the issuing of permits for any on street public right of way activity (entertainment, alcohol booths, wrist band sales, etc.)

The committee also recognized the issue with out of town motor coaches that come in from out of town already intoxicated. These visitors do not add value to the celebration and the committee voted to suspend the issuance of motor coaches coming in from our of town. This will push people outside of the core area from where the celebration typically takes place.

The third recommendation from the committee was to extend the to go cup zone. The city and industry is trying to get away from the term "festival zone" and extend that area to Victory Drive and Truman Parkway and encourage other businesses and areas to participate in the day. S. Broker has started reaching out to the neighborhoods that this will extend to and get them the correct information regarding the celebration.



S. Broker said City Council will be invoking the festival ordinance but not be establishing “festival days”. The celebration will only take place on St. Patrick’s Day only. The to go cup is day only (March 17). The suspension of the issuing of permits will go through the weekend.

There will be no food vendors permitted on River Street. The SDBA has had food trucks in front of The Cotton Sail the past few years. Those food trucks will stay this year but the city will be managing them. There are currently conversations deciding if the food trucks should stay throughout the weekend or day only.

M. Owens said it is important to shape expectations. M. Owens said this celebration will not be moved to “family friendly” event late at night. This is the beginning of what will hopefully be a multi year improvement and will not be changed in just the first year. Over the years, everyone has tried to improve public safety and the guest experience. Many of those things didn’t work. Since those measures were put in place by the private sector, they can be removed rather easily. M. Owens added that without the changes that are being made this year, many businesses were going to close the day of due to lack of revenue and dine and dash issues. M. Owens said police and sanitation will be managed and this is a good change to begin a multi-year plan.

M. Owens also said the notion of banning pettycabs was absurd. People need access to transportation and food. J. Combs said he has heard concern of not enough food compared to alcohol. J. Combs suggested street tents with food options for visitors. M. Owens said there is not enough time for tents to get an application, permitted and inspected, etc. before this year’s celebration. M. Owens said restaurants will change operations to implement grab and go options and Owens supports food trucks.

J. Marinelli said the theme this year is celebration vs. festival. This is important as leaders to adopt that nomenclature. He added that policing these days is monitored in every way but he is fully confident that there will be enough public safety. City and county departments and sheriff department is downstaffed but the chiefs are reaching out to units around the state to come assist.

M. Owens added that STVR and Airbnb owners are invoking age restriction and other policies for the week.



J. Combs asked when City Council will vote on the recommendations made. S. Broker said the recommendations will be on the agenda February 24.

C. Brazil said the critical component for businesses like his are road closures. M. Owens suggested that a Zoom call be set up with trolley and pedicab companies regarding road closures, etc. S. Broker said SPD is trying to keep all roads open and only close them 10a-3p due to the parade activities.

• Parklet Fee Structure

S. Broker said the parklet program has been developing and her office is wanting to get the parklets finalized and on the streets.

R. Buck said she has been talking with Sean Brandon regarding the fees. Each parking space is worth \$3k that would be lost yearly. The city is only allotting the restaurants to use up to two spaces. R. Buck proposed \$3k for the fee for the first spot and \$1,500.00 for the second space. There would be a small application fee as well. The spots would be able to utilized for the full year. The structure has to be removable but barricaded in the case of wrecks, etc. R. Buck researched and a restaurant could potentially recoup that cost of their parklet within two days of operating.

S. Broker said the most compelling aspect of the fee is local real estate agents said the average restaurant rental space is about \$20-24/sq foot. A parking space is 18x8 (144 sq ft). For a restaurant to pay for that space a year would cost around \$40k without the parklet program in place.

M. Owens did bring up the lack of use with inclement weather in the case that someone mentions that. M. Owens confirmed that the restaurants would have exclusive use to the parklet at all times. R. Buck said they would operate like sidewalk café- all tables, chairs and umbrellas need to be locked down or moved inside. S. Broker said the base structure will stay because it has to be flushed with the curb.

J. Marinelli asked if they can have a roof or be inclosed. S. Broker said they have only looked at umbrellas currently. S. Broker knows traffic engineering would want to be part of the conversation if roofs are allowed.

M. Owens said he would like to work closely with R. Buck on this project. M. Owens added that if parklets requires a permit, it needs to be codified and not in a policy. S. Broker said they handled sidewalk cafes as a policy



but would look to J. Herman for advice. M. Owens said a permit has to be predictable and not subjective. J. Herman said fees have to be tied to a service provided and agreed it may need to be put in an ordinance. J. Herman is going to research this more.

R. Buck said she would email and share the proposed parklet policy, fee structure and updates with TAC members.

• **Bicycle and Segway Ordinance**

R. Buck sent the ordinance to TAC members.

S. Broker said the bike ordinance came to her office and they started working on the ordinance this summer.

M. Owens asked the minutes to reflect a different time change- from 9a to 7a because of a conversation had at a previous meeting. S. Broker said the minutes would reflect that change.

R. Buck said traffic engineering had an issue since all other tour service vehicles can not start until 9a or 10a and the bicycles would hold up traffic. R. Buck said the owners of the bike companies were fine with 9a. M. Owens said there is substantially less traffic before 8:30a than after 9a. M. Owens added that the current companies may not want to start that early but another company may. J. Marinelli added that bicycles are quiet and would not be a disturbance before 9am. S. Broker added that the earlier the better works for her and she will ask traffic engineering for their thoughts.

S. Broker has met with the bike industry folks and the city department who works with the companies. Traffic engineering sent their edits to the ordinance back about a week ago and TAC members now have the final draft. It will go back to legal for final review.

R. Buck reviewed the ordinance with owners. A concern was the ride through Forsyth Park and the companies wanted to be able to ride to the fountain rather than dismounting their bikes. The other suggestion was a time change allowing them to ride until 10pm and segways until 8pm. M. Owens asked why the difference. R. Buck said the bike tours have tours until 10pm and have lights. The segways were fine with the 8pm stop. M. Owens added that for future companies, the 8pm stop may be an issue and that he could not find a compelling reason for the disparity.

S. Broker said the big question would be if the bike tours wanted to go until 10pm, she wanted TAC members input. J. Marinelli said daylight should have



some issue in this since it is a tougher to navigate in the dark. M. Owens added especially on Friday and Saturday nights. N. Maia added that from a safety perspective, she thinks the time needs to be earlier. M. Owens asked if currently the bike tours were going until 10on with no problems, R. Buck said no reported problems. M. Allen does have additional bike riding through the park. R. Buck added the tours still are not allowed to ride through the squares.

M. Owens added on pg. 3 and 4 (limitations) 1594c- M. Owens wants the first bullet point removed all together. – M. Owens wants it to read “all tours should be operated by a registered tour guide”.

R. Buck changed the limitations to read “all tours should be operated by a registered tour guide within city approved boundaries.”. R. Buck added that she has a boundary map that she is proposing for this.

C. Brzail added that is was repeated twice – 1594c and 1595.

M. Owens said there are some housekeeping things he would like to discuss with R. Buck after the meeting.

S. Broker complimented R. Buck on spending time and taking many tours herself.

There was much discussion on tandem and adding 3 wheel bikes under this ordinance. R. Buck will do more research.

• **Review of Tourism Advisory Committee makeup**

J. Combs will get with S. Broker and send recs to City Council and the Mayor. The mayor wants diversity and inclusion. C. Brazil, V. Goode-Walker and J. Combs will meet with S. Broker Friday.

5. Other Business

R. Buck suggested moving the March TAC meeting to the 23rd due to St. Patrick’s Day. She will send out an updated calendar invite.

J. Combs asked for an update on Rock n Roll. S. Broker will have an update at the next meeting.

6. Adjourn 9:51 AM

Next meeting: Scheduled for March 23, 2022