



**Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC)
July 23, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Date: July 23rd, 2024

Location: Savannah City Hall, 2nd Floor Media Room

TAC Attendees: Melinda Allen, Sue Adler, Charlie Brazil, , Vaughnette Goode-Walker, Ryan Madson,

Absentees: Steve Brenneman, Jason Combs, Mitch Linder, Joe Marinelli, Michael Owens

City Staff: Ashley Anderson, Susan Broker, Rachel Buck, Edward Grant

Guest Attendees: DeeAnn Geeslin (Joe Marinelli), David McDonald (Steve Brenneman), Patricia Perry (Michael Owens)

Call to order: 8:31 AM.

Summary

The TAC meeting held on July 23, 2024, covered key topics surrounding approval of the recommendation for horse-drawn carriages, temporary pause of new tour company approvals, concerns regarding over-tourism, requests regarding motors on quadracycles, vehicle visibility and safety, management of tour operations, and regulation of street performers in Forsyth Park. Central discussions emphasized the necessity for improved tour management, safety considerations, and the formulation of regulations pertaining to street performers. The meeting ended and adjourned at 9:28 AM.

1. Approval of meeting minutes

- S. Adler initiated the meeting by requesting a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the June 25, 2024, meeting. The motion was made by V. Goode-Walker and seconded by M. Allen. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. Staff Report:

Horse Drawn Carriage Update

R. Buck provided an update on the Horse Drawn Carriage industry and discussed the recommendation voted on from TAC. A detailed PowerPoint presentation was submitted for review, covering a vast amount of research on the proposed ban's impact on horses, industry history, and city ordinances.

TAC's Statement Regarding the Tour Pause

- Due to the current suspension of new tours until the end of the year, R. Buck mentioned that she has already declined three walking tour companies. In response, V. Goode-Walker sought clarification, stressing the need to review the routes of these tours before rejecting them to avoid further rejections once the suspension is lifted.

R. Buck asked TAC whether there was interest in releasing a statement to the community and the public regarding the current tour pause. S. Broker pointed out to TAC that the issue had been covered in the news. R. Madson suggested TAC's statement should clarify the rationale behind the pause and propose a potential resumption date, considering community tourism concerns, C. Brazil felt a straightforward statement with metrics could suffice for the public, and S. Adler requested that the Special Events and Film provide current numbers to develop a more accurate statement.

Sip & Cycle request for motor on Quadricycle

- Sip and Cycle expressed interest to R. Buck in adding motors to their quadricycle for moving their bikes and parking when passengers are not on board. C. Brazil indicated that it could make sense with clear guidelines regarding noise and speed. He suggested that TAC should not outright reject the idea but instead evaluate factors like motor type and size. R. Buck provided details from the tour company about the motor's specifications. S. Adler raised concerns about the reality of monitoring another compliance issue. M. Allen expressed reservations about the potential for quadricycles to accelerate. Despite C. Brazil's view that policies can evolve, the discussion also touched on how other companies would adapt. Ultimately, it was decided that the TAC would not approve motors on quadricycles at this time.

Walking Tour Task Force

- R. Buck stated there was an upcoming meeting to address walking tours and potential ordinance revisions. Concerns include challenges with hybrid tours that are not currently accommodated by existing ordinances and limited parking availability for tour stops. R. Buck plans to provide updates on ordinance changes following the meeting.

3. Other Business:

Discussion on the Increase in Street Performers in Forsyth Park

- S. Broker initiated a discussion regarding the increasing number, now totaling 70, of street performers in Forsyth Park. While acknowledging the value of street art and community-building, she expressed concern that the current quantity may be excessive. She sought TAC's perspective on the matter.

V. Goode-Walker questioned whether these performers were previously on River Street and noted the ending of activities like bike riding from there. She also inquired if these entertainers were present during major events such as concerts.

P. Perry confirmed that during Juneteenth event, some vendors who had paid for spots had to be refunded due to lack of space. Susan elaborated on the issue, expressing concerns on behalf of residents who use the park for activities like dog-walking, highlighting the challenges posed by the growing number of performers. The discussion did not reach a definitive conclusion but generated further considerations and suggestions.

The meeting adjourned at 9:28 AM

These minutes were prepared by Ashley Anderson, reviewed, and approved by Rachel Buck.

Next Meeting: August 27th, 2024, at 8:30 a.m., Savannah City Hall, 2nd Floor Media Room