



**Tourism Advisory Committee
December 10, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Date: December 10, 2024

Location: Historic Savannah Foundation, Conference Room

TAC Attendees: Sue Adler, Melinda Allen, Charlie Brazil, Steve Brenneman, Jason Combs, Vaughnette Goode-Walker, Mitch Linder, Joe Marinelli, Michael Owens

Absentees: Ryan Madson

City Staff: Ashley Anderson, Susan Broker, Rachel Buck, Donna Cooper, Faye DiMassimo, Will Gillison

Guest attendees: Evan Lasseter, Nancy Maia (Ryan Madson), Marysue McCarthy, David McDonald, Brenna Michaels, T. C Michaels, Hamp Murphy, Stephen Plunk, Nancy Radke

Call to order: 8:31 AM

Summary:

The meeting focused on recommendations for revising the walking tour ordinance to strike a balance between tourism growth and preserving residents' quality of life. This included a proposed pilot program to evaluate the impact of operational restrictions. Key discussions included the implementation of sound control measures, limiting walking tour operations after 10 PM in certain areas, and capping the number of registered walking tour companies. Additionally, the discussion covered the every woman's marathon and the transition of TAC members.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes

S. Adler initiated the meeting by requesting a motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 22, 2024. A motion was made by M. Linder and seconded by V. Goode-Walker.

Staff report:

Walking Tour Ordinance Review and Proposed Modification

- S. Broker began the meeting by presenting recommendations for modifications to the walking tour ordinance. The proposed changes include maintaining provisions that walking tours must avoid encroaching on private property, blocking sidewalks, or climbing of the monuments. Additionally, motorcoach groups with over 30 participants would be required to have an escort to ensure proper management. For sound control, any tour with 10 or more customers (excluding the guide) would be required to use sound control devices, such as in-ear technology, while voice amplification systems would remain prohibited. The existing time-based restrictions for walking tours, as outlined in the Tour Services for Hire Ordinance, would stay the same, but new recommendations include no walking tours operating south of Liberty after 10 p.m., and all tours north of

Liberty must cease by 1 a.m. Lastly, there would be a cap on the number of walking tour registrations, with further discussion to follow. S. Broker concluded the presentation and invited additional comments and questions from the group.

M. Allen noted that residents had proposed including the area south of Oglethorpe, particularly around the cemetery, in the pilot program for walking tours operating after 10:00 p.m. She also suggested adding Abercorn Street, the western boundary for walking tours after 10:00 p.m.

R. Buck stated that most tourism complaints were directed to her, and from her perspective, she had not received enough noise complaints outside of Colonial Park or residential areas to consider that request.

The discussion continued, with no determination made for proposal.

Every Women's Marathon

- S. Broker began the discussion by acknowledging that while the city hosts runs and marathons annually, there are still challenges. The city is working on developing performance criteria to elevate the race and minimize its impact on the community, while also encouraging local support. An internal after-action meeting with marathon representatives is scheduled for December 11, 2024.

S. Broker emphasized that the city doesn't just stop thinking about the event once it's over; they immediately begin reviewing feedback, addressing issues, and planning for improvements.

J. Marinelli assured that, his email, was filled with frustrations. While the post-survey results from participants, as well as their friends and relatives, were overwhelmingly positive, he also acknowledged the frustrations felt by many in the community, not just in the historic district, on that day.

Announcement of Changes to TAC Membership and Nominations

- R. Buck announced DNA members S. Brenneman and M. Allen would be leaving TAC, and N. Radke and M. McCarthy would be taking their places.

M. Linder was nominated as Chairman, and M. McCarthy was nominated as Vice Chair for non-tourism. S. Adler made a motion to approve both nominations at the same time. The motion was moved by J. Marinelli and seconded by V. Goode-Walker.

The meeting adjourned at 9:33 AM

Next Meeting: December 10, 2024, at 8:30 a.m., Savannah Historic Savannah Foundation, Conference Room. These minutes were prepared by Ashley Anderson, reviewed by Rachel Buck.