

Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) September 23, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Date: September 23, 8:30AM

Location: Historic Savannah Foundation

TAC Attendees: Nancy Beskar, Jason Combs, Vaughnette-Goode Walker, Mitch Linder, Joe Marinelli, Marysue McCarthy, David McDonald, Collier Neeley, Michael Owens, Garry Patrick

City Staff: Rachel Buck, Elizabeth Clark, Donna Cooper, Faye DiMassimo, Davita Grier, Danny Henderson, Will Gillison

Guest Attendees: Joseph Layden (Electric Carriage Tour Proposal), Mia Mance (DBA), Hamp Murphy (TLC), Brigid Jones (SALT)

Call to order: 8:30AM

Summary: The TAC approved the August 2025 retreat minutes and agreed to schedule a separate follow-up meeting to address retreat topics. Members voted to keep the existing meeting schedule unchanged and approved holding future meetings at the Civil Rights Museum. Discussion on adding two new seats concluded with the tabling of a West Side neighborhoods seat until the canal district plan is complete. TAC approved the Noise Ordinance as its project for the year, with members tasked to review the existing ordinance, and also agreed to move forward on drafting a Segway and Bicycle Ordinance with industry input and potential public forums. The need for a Buskers Ordinance was raised to replace the current policy, with emphasis on including compliant performers in the process. Lastly, a proposal for an electric carriage company was presented, but concerns over safety, regulation, and licensing led to postponement until further guidance is obtained from the state.

A. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- M. Linder called the meeting to order at 8:30AM. A motion to approve the August 2025 TAC retreat meeting minutes was made and unanimously approved.

B. Retreat Discussion

- F. DiMassimo appreciated everyone's time and stated the concerns about the limited amount of time for the retreat. A follow-up meeting with S. Kirk will be scheduled.
 - M. McCarty requested that the follow-up meeting occur outside of a regularly scheduled TAC meeting to stick to items on the agenda for regular meetings.

- M. Owens stated that the retreat further highlights the prioritizing of specific items and actionable, attainable goals.

C. Bimonthly Meetings – Take a vote.

- R. Buck asked for thoughts on moving TAC meetings to bi-monthly.
 - While V. Goode-Walker mentioned it being a good idea, J. Marinelli disagreed with others confirming this disagreement.
 - J. Marinelli stated that there would be too large a gap between meetings to be effective.
 - V. Goode-Walker understood this point and agrees.
- All participants voted for no change to the existing schedule of TAC meetings.

D. Location for TAC Meetings

- V. Goode-Walker offered the Civil Rights Museum
 - All participants were in favor of this option.

E. TAC Structure: Adding Two Seats

- R. Buck initiated discussion on the addition of two TAC seats – Downtown Business Association seat and West Side neighborhoods seat.
 - V. Goode-Walker asked for clarification on what constitutes West Side neighborhoods and suggests specifying the names of the neighborhoods that would be included.
 - J. Marinelli and M. Owens expressed concerns about the West Side seat as there's no existing tourism there outside of the Enmarket Arena.
 - F. DiMassimo mentioned that there will be a Canal District plan in less than a year and suggested holding off on the west side seat until that plan is complete.
 - Participants agreed to table the West Side seat, but G. Patrick, N. Beskar, and V. Goode-Walker requested intentionality around the appointment of that seat and that the community be included in the discussion.

F. TAC Project for the Year – Noise Ordinance proposed

- J. Combs and M. Owens made a motion to approve, and it was unanimously approved.
- M. McCarthy charged everyone to read the existing noise ordinance and make notes on potential changes.
 - F. DiMassimo said work is in progress now and requested participants to gather notes and send them to SEFT Senior Director, J. Pagliaro.

G. Segway and Bicycle Ordinance to move forward

- R. Buck stated that this only regulates tour service for hire bicycles and tour service for hire segways and that there has been an increase in violations, as there are no specific rules and regulations due to it only existing as a policy.
 - Outreach to companies will be handled by J. Pagliaro and E. Clark.
- M. Linder asked about the potential for scooter tours.
 - D. Henderson noted that LuluRides is a company that has been cited infrequently for staging scooters on the right-of-way.

- M. Owens requested that members of the affected industry be invited to a dialogue around the drafting of ordinances to speak to the programmatic elements of that industry.
 - F. DiMassimo stated that members of the affected industry will be invited to forum with TAC during the ordinance drafting process.

H. Buskers Ordinance

- R. Buck stated the need for a buskers ordinance as it could indirectly effect tourism.
 - E. Clark mentioned that it is currently only a policy, and while permitted buskers/street performers know the policy, they choose not to adhere to it.
 - R. Buck and E. Clark stated that the rules that currently aren't being followed are as follows:
 - Must be confined to one 3 ft. table.
 - Must be actively displaying their art, craft, or performance.
 - Must be behaving with civility towards others.
 - E. Clark stated that during the ordinance writing process, rule-abiding buskers/street performers will have a voice in the discussion.

I. Electric Carriage Company-Business Proposal

- J. Layden proposed the following for the electric carriage company business:
 - History and ghost tours
 - 2 tours in the morning and 2 tours in the evening
 - Carriage specifications
 - 24 mph top speed
 - Seats 9 but will only do 6 plus the driver for ensured safety.
 - Continuously moving, will not be using any tour stands, and will be flexible on route.
 - Lights included
 - Seat belts included
 - No tag/license plate
- M. Owens expressed concerns about a residual effect of making an ordinance change and allowing 1 company.
- M. McCarthy expressed concern about putting another slow-moving vehicle on the street.
- M. Owens and G. Patrick stated that the lack of a tag/license plate on this vehicle would be an obstacle and that a state/federal VIN and state tag would need to be obtained.
 - R. Buck removed the option of ordinance change today and proposed that answers be obtained from the state on the categorization of and obtaining a VIN for this vehicle.

Meeting adjourned: 10:05 AM