



Location: Stryker Building,
City Council Chambers
412 N. Boundary St,
Williamsburg, Virginia 23185

📅 Date: Friday, August 23, 2019
🕒 Time: 10:30 am – 12 noon

Tourism Development Grant Review Committee Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Tourism Development Grant Review Committee was held on August 23, 2019 at 10:30am in the Stryker Center, 412 N. Boundary Street.

I. Call to order

- a) The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Caracci at 10:30am.

II. Roll call

- a) The following members were present:
Chairperson Chris Caracci, Vice-Chairperson Andrew Voss, Craig Reeves, Sally Wolfe and Ex-Officio Planning Commission Member Elaine McBeth. Committee Member Scott Foster later joined the meeting by phone at 10:33am.

III. Special item

- a) Ms. DeWitt presented the special item: Authorization for Committee Members to participate in TDGRC meetings remotely pursuant to City Council Ordinance #19-16, establishing an electronic participation policy for City Council and the appointed board, commissions and committees thereof.

Moved by Caracci and seconded by Voss, approval of Authorization for Committee Members to participate in TDGRC Meeting remotely carried by a roll call vote:

Ayes: Caracci, Voss, Reeves and Wolfe

Mr. Foster joined the meeting by phone at 10:33am subsequent to the approval of the special item.

IV. Approval of minutes from last meeting

- a) Minutes from July 26, 2019 TDGRC Meeting

Moved by Wolfe and seconded by Reeves, approval of the July 26, 2019 minutes carried by a roll call vote:

Ayes: Caracci, Voss, Reeves and Wolfe

V. Open forum

- a) **Tom Cameron of 135 Lakewood Drive (James City County)** spoke in favor of a recreation center as he believes this would drive overnight stays. He spoke against Goodwin Square, saying Colonial Williamsburg should fund the project.
- b) **Cindy Strube of 3509 Danbury Place (James City County)** spoke against Goodwin Plaza, and stated she believes the unspent funds from the Committee should carry over into future years.
- c) **Vickie Nase of 4700 Hickory Sign Post Road (James City County)** spoke against Goodwin Plaza because she believes parking will be an issue.
- d) **Suzanne Masten of 241 Quarterpath Rd (City of Williamsburg)** came to the meeting hoping to learn more about the process, and shared with the committee that citizens are open to exploring this new process.
- e) **Sarah Gunn of 131 Hunting Cove (City of Williamsburg)** spoke against Goodwin, saying that the loss of parking would negatively impact the businesses surrounding it.
- f) **Lisa Akdogan of James City County**, owner of the Precious Gem on Duke of Gloucester Street spoke against Goodwin Square, saying the parking situation would negatively impact her business.
- g) **J. Mott Robertson, Jr., M.D. of 5 Whittakers Mill (James City County)** spoke against Goodwin Square. He expressed concern over a lack of a publicized business plan and feasibility study. He would rather have funds go to the restoration of Kimball Theater.
- h) **Sylvia Keewan of James City County** spoke against Goodwin Square citing the Williamsburg is largely a community of retirees meaning the majority of the community will be negatively impacted by the reduction in parking.
- i) **Gunter Brant of 101 Lakes Head Drive (York County)** stated that the Goodwin Square project does not fit the “academic identity” of Williamsburg.

VI. Reports

- Chairperson Report – Chairperson Caracci reported that all of the projects were debated thoroughly last month by the committee. Furthermore, it is not this committee’s purpose to generate ideas, it is to review project proposals and recommend to City Council whether to fund them. All of the projects will then go before City Council next month, and they will make the final decision. Many of these projects have already been through ARB and Planning Commission.
- Economic Development Director Report – Economic Development Director Michele Mixner DeWitt provided background of the Tourism Development Fund and a timeline of not only the TDGRC but also SB 942, which created the fund. She spoke about financial considerations and constraints of local government and reviewed the funding plan. A committee of City Staff took

the committee's deliberations from their July meeting and used the policy that Council created to create a funding recommendation.

- Timeline – new 1% sales tax is collected on purchases made in Greater Williamsburg area. Half of that 1% goes to Tourism Council to spend on marketing outside of our region. Their focus is to bring overnight visitors to this area. The other half of the 1% goes back to the locality in which it was collected. \$2.2million is estimated for City of Williamsburg in fiscal year 2019. SB942 says that localities can use that money however they see fit. City decided to put those funds in the Tourism Development Fund. This committee was appointed by City Council in January and had first meeting in February. They spent their first few months creating policies and guidelines. Twenty-two applications were submitted for Phase I. Eleven were invited back for Phase II. Ten applicants were submitted for Phase II, and the June meeting consisted of presentations from the applicants. At their July meeting, the TDGRC discussed all of the applications in depth.
- Financial considerations of local government – Local Government is different than a private business or non-profit. Two clear ways to fund projects: they can appropriate funds for current year, and they can make moral obligations to future years of funding. A current Council cannot appropriate funds for future years, meaning they cannot tell a future Council how to spend its future funds. A City Council can use bonds (future revenue). That goes beyond a moral obligation; it is an actual financial transaction.
- The purpose of the Tourism Development Fund is to increase patronage to City of Williamsburg restaurants, attractions hotels and events. Four ways that the money can be spent – 1) Development, expansion, or renovation of tourism product and infrastructure for tourism products, 2) place-making projects and events, 3) EDA projects and programs, and 4) Administrative expenses. The policy lists examples of projects, but there was no way to create an exhaustive list of all possible projects.
- Policy asks that there be a 5 year plan that estimates \$2.23million per year. Funds can be carried forward.

VII. Old business

- a) There was no old business discussed at the meeting.

VIII. New business

Approval of TDF grant funding recommendation for City Council

- **Goodwin Square** – The project is pending approval by Planning Commission so this recommendation would be contingent on that approval. It is a #2 (Placemaking Project) type of expenditure and it meets five of the example projects listed. Staff recommends \$400,000 be committed this year, \$400,000 for next four years for total of \$2 million. Staff proposes requiring that it will be open to the public.

- **Committee Discussion:**

Chairperson Caracci stated that it fits into the criteria of the program and fits into the downtown vibrancy plan. He noted that this project was discussed at length at the last meeting.

Vice-Chairperson Voss noted that the permanent screen was removed from the application, and that the number of handicap parking spaces will increase from four to eight.

Mr. Reeves asked if the property owner is expending funds as well. Ms. DeWitt responded that this is a \$3.5 million project. \$1.5 million will come from other sources, and \$2 million from TDF. Maintenance would be covered by the applicant.

Vice-Chairperson Voss noted that a lot of public opinion has come out over this project, and valid concerns have been expressed. However, 46 parking spaces do not encompass the problem of parking. Continued focus should come from the landlord to address those concerns, but the 46 spots in this lot are not the answer.

Mr. Foster said that the family traveler is the group that we try to recruit to come here in our outside marketing. The visitor to Williamsburg is a much broader representation of age and demographic than what lives in the Greater Williamsburg area.

Moved by Foster and seconded by Voss, the motion to recommend \$2 million in funding over five years subject to the area remaining generally open to the public carried as follows:

Ayes: Caracci, Voss, Foster, Reeves and Wolfe

- **Public Restroom Improvements** – Three of the proposed restrooms are mostly used by Colonial Williamsburg ticket holders while the Henry Street restrooms are used more by the public at large. Staff recommended that City funds go to refurbish the Henry Street restroom as it is used by the public generally, whereas the others are more of a deferred maintenance issue on CW's part.

- **Committee Discussion:**

Mr. Foster asked if there will be a performance agreement. Ms. DeWitt responded yes, there will be. \$350,000 has been recommended, and staff proposed this grant be made as a reimbursement after the work is completed.

Mr. Reeves asked if this project will be completed in a timely matter. Ms. DeWitt responded that a timeline could be put in the performance agreement. A 12 month timeline was proposed. The project will need to be done by the end of December 2020.

Vice-Chairperson Voss asked to clarify scope, and asked if the plan is to rebuild the restroom. Mr. Jeff Duncan, a representative from Colonial Williamsburg, responded from the audience that the plan is to gut the building, but the current building would remain. New infrastructure would be provided.

Mr. Reeves asked Mr. Duncan if there is an existing timeframe in place. Mr. Duncan responded that a timeline will be developed once funding is approved. Mr. Duncan stated that he thinks it could be done in 12 months.

Moved by Caracci and seconded by Wolfe, the motion to recommend \$350,000 of funding for the Henry Street Restroom remodel, to be paid as a reimbursement and with the condition that the remodel be completed by December 31, 2020, carried as follows:

Ayes: Caracci, Voss, Foster, Reeves and Wolfe

- Downtown Parking Lot Improvements – At its July meeting, the committee asked staff to create a recommendation with consideration to future maintenance. Staff discussed the issue at length, but could not reach a conclusion and agreement that would benefit both parties.

Moved by Caracci and seconded by Reeves, the motion to recommend no funding carried as follows:

Ayes: Caracci, Voss, Foster, Reeves and Wolfe

- Historic Area Streetscapes – Staff recommended no funding. There was no committee discussion.

Moved by Foster and seconded by Voss, the motion to recommend no funding carried as follows:

Ayes: Caracci, Voss, Foster, Reeves and Wolfe

- Historic Area WiFi – Staff recommended no funding. There was no committee discussion.

Moved by Caracci and seconded by Wolfe, the motion to recommend no funding carried as follows:

Ayes: Caracci, Voss, Foster, Reeves and Wolfe

- Boundary Street Plaza – Staff recommended \$100,000 grant be appropriated to City Parks & Recreation to purchase a portable stage that will be managed by the City and to be used by the Library and elsewhere in the City.

- **Committee Discussion:**

Chairperson Caracci noted that he would like to add \$10,000 for more outdoor furnishings in the Library Plaza at City Square.

**Moved by Caracci and seconded by Wolfe, the motion to recommend \$100,000 to the City Department of Parks and Recreation to purchase a portable stage for use by the library and other groups in the City and \$10,000 to the Williamsburg Regional Library to purchase more outdoor furniture for the downtown City Square carried as follows:
Ayes: Caracci, Voss, Foster, Reeves and Wolfe**

- Kiwanis Park 4th Softball Field – This is a shovel ready project, and Staff recommends dividing funding over two years. Staff recommendation is to provide \$600,000 this year and \$600,000 next year.
 - **Committee Discussion:**
Chairperson Caracci noted that the addition of this fourth field will significantly increase our ability to compete for competitions to come to Williamsburg than we are able to do now.

**Moved by Caracci and seconded by Wolfe, the motion to recommend funding \$1,200,000 to the City Parks and Recreation Department over two years for the construction of a fourth softball field at Kiwanis Park carried as follows:
Ayes: Caracci, Voss, Foster, Reeves and Wolfe**

- Prince George Street Signage– The Committee had asked to expand this wayfinding signage project beyond Prince George Street to benefit all of downtown. Staff recommended \$250,000 in FY20 to be granted to the EDA. Staff departments will manage this project. The City’s procurement process will be used to bid out this work.
 - **Committee Discussion:**
Ms. Wolfe asked if staff knows how long this will take. Ms. DeWitt replied that she has spoken with the Public Works Director and the hope is to be done in 12 months. Implementation will not take long, but the design element will take some time.

Mr. Reeves asked what the timeline is. Ms. DeWitt explained that the recommendation will go to City Council, and if Council approves then the funds will go to EDA. The EDA will begin a 2-3 month RFP process that includes time for submissions and interviews. From there, there would be a 6 month design phase and installation would follow shortly after.

Vice-Chairperson Voss asked if there will be opportunity for input. Ms. DeWitt said that the agreement can be structured to include resident and business input. We can hire a consultant that knows how to do that.

**Moved by Caracci and seconded by Foster, the motion to recommend \$250,000 in funding for the Downtown Wayfinding design and sign installation carried as follows:
Ayes: Caracci, Voss, Foster, Reeves and Wolfe**

- Quarterpath Recreation Center Expansion/Indoor Sports Facility – Staff recommended \$25,000 in funding be granted this year, and \$500,000 in the second year.
 - **Committee Discussion:**
Chairperson Caracci stated that sports tourism is at its height, and it would be good for Williamsburg to have the ability to participate. This project is in its infancy and he would like to give it momentum. Caracci suggested \$225,000 additional funding be recommended, for a total of \$250,000.

**Moved by Caracci and seconded by Foster, the motion to recommend \$250,000 of first year funding, \$250,000 for second year funding carried as follows:
Ayes: Caracci, Voss, Foster, Reeves and Wolfe**

- Temporary Pavilion – Staff explained that the concept of a permanent shelter at the DeWitt-Wallace Lawn has merit and should be further explored. This will require coordination with Colonial Williamsburg and the City to develop a plan for consideration in a future grant cycle that reflects the community aesthetics and commitment to history. Staff recommended no funding. There was no committee discussion.

**Moved by Caracci and seconded by Wolfe, the motion to recommend no funding carried as follows:
Ayes: Caracci, Voss, Foster, Reeves and Wolfe**

IX. Open forum

- a) **John Cole of 113 Elwood Dr (James City County)** spoke in favor of the sports complex and suggested a public-private partnership be explored.

X. Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Next Meeting: 10:30am, Friday, September 27, 2019

APPROVED:

Christopher Caracci, Chairperson