



CITY OF FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

Council Chambers, 715 Princess Anne Street
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401

ITEM #9D

HON. MARY KATHERINE GREENLAW, MAYOR
HON. CHARLIE L. FRYE, JR., VICE -MAYOR, WARD FOUR
HON. KERRY P. DEVINE, AT-LARGE
HON. MATTHEW J. KELLY, AT-LARGE
HON. JASON N. GRAHAM, WARD ONE
HON. JONATHAN A. GERLACH, WARD TWO
HON. DR. TIMOTHY P. DUFFY, WARD THREE

City Council Work Session

March 8, 2022

Tourism Updates

The Council of the City of Fredericksburg, Virginia held a joint work session on Tuesday, March 8, 2022, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Council Present. Mayor Mary Katherine Greenlaw Presiding. Vice-Mayor Charlie L. Frye, Jr., Vice-Mayor Charlie L. Frye, Jr., Councilors Kerry P. Devine, Timothy P. Duffy, Jonathan A. Gerlach, Jason N. Graham and Matthew J. Kelly.

Also Present. City Manager Timothy J. Baroody, Assistant City Manager Mark Whitley, Assistant City Manager David Brown, City Attorney Kathleen Dooley, Economic Development Director Bill Freehling, Assistant Director of Tourism M.C. Morris, Tourism Marketing and Communications Manager Danelle Rose, Tourism Stadium Sports & Sales Manager Victoria Matthews, Tourism Coordinator Renee Dunn, Fire Chief Mike Jones, Deputy Chief Victor Podbielski, Police Chief Brian Layton and Clerk of Council Tonya B. Lacey.

Tourism Update. Ms. Morris presented a PowerPoint presentation and she said this was an update of Council Priority #6. She said tourism wanted to come out bold by embracing the FXBG brand. In 2022 they began working on the rebrand of social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter). She said by doing so this has brought engagement to the younger generation. She noted that the social media engagement was really high.

Ms. Morris turned the presentation over to Ms. Dunn to present the new website. She said some of the goals was to incorporate the new brand, vivid imagery, accessibility, best practices, featuring activities, events, blogs and local businesses.

Ms. Rose stated that starting in April there would be a marketing campaign, in May there would be a spread in Southern Living and they were working with Meridian to do video around

ITEM #9D

the website encouraging people to come visit. Ms. Dunn said they would continue to do marketing on the social media pages.

Councilor Kelly asked if the market was shifting away from history, which is what the City was known for and Ms. Morris said she did not know the statistics on whether the market was going down. She said with the new website they will be able to broaden the ability to show a variety of different activities and with targeted social media and other ad campaigns they will be able to direct people back to the things they will be most interested in.

Councilor Devine asked that the University of Mary Washington be more present on the website because it is a selling point for families.

Council was impressed with the new website. Councilor Kelly asked if the Council could get an update on the numbers to know how many people are visiting the website.

Ms. Morris gave special thanks to the many people who helped with the website. She said this was a living organic website.

Ms. Morris said they want to represent the City's authentic brand once the visitors get to the City and she said what happens onsite needed to happen in the marketing world and she asked if the current Visitor Center reflected the new brand? Is it a space that can invite new stories does it have high energy, does it represent who the City is today and who it will be ten years from now? She said with the advice of the DMO Proz report and with the advice of Council they have sought proposals from across the Commonwealth and they interviewed two firms to do visioning work for the City and they awarded a contract to Frazier Associates. They have done a lot of Main Street work and historic renovation work and this was the best and highest way to approach the use of the 601 Caroline Street building. Staff believes this is a great approach for this building. She said this could be more than a Visitor Center. She said Frazier was well positioned to talk to stakeholders.

Ms. Morris introduced Ms. Matthews, who's title was changed from Tourism Sales Manager to Tourism Stadium Sports and Sales Manager. Ms. Matthews stated that the City currently pursue meetings, conventions, markets, group tour markets, motor coach, military and family reunions and they are adding sports to the offerings. In the past the City has responded to sports leagues as they have come into the City and with the opening of the Virginia Credit Union Stadium and the Fredericksburg Expo Center and the surrounding hotels the City has a remarkable asset to offer. Ms. Matthews said they were having discussion with

ITEM #9D

industry experts and Sports Virginia, the state's marketing arm for sports. This approach will help the City to go after targeted groups because the stadium is a specific asset. Ms. Matthews said she would be looking at other ways to get in front of sports planners.

Ms. Matthews reported that the Historic Marine Half Marathon would be back in the City on May 22 and in August they were hosting with Stafford County a Babe Ruth Baseball Tournament and in October the grand cycling client will be returning after a two-year hiatus. She noted there was an uptick in group markets since the pandemic. There have been more leads for military reunions, family reunions and conventions. She said she continues to attend trade shows, responding to leads and servicing clients. She was looking forward to welcoming Virginia Rescue Squad, Virginia Chess Federation, the US Marine Corps TBS basic reunion, Star Bus Tours and Association of Games and Puzzles over the next couple of months.

Ms. Morris presented the new tourism video and Mayor Greenlaw said this was all very exciting.

Closed Session Approved. Upon a motion Councilor Graham, moved approval of a closed session under Code of Virginia 2.2-3711 (A)(3), for discussion or consideration of the acquisition of the real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real estate property, namely, for a new fire station site, where discussion in a an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the City Council; seconded by Councilor Gerlach and passed by the following recorded votes. Ayes (7) Councilors Greenlaw, Withers, Devine, Duffy, Frye, Graham and Kelly. Nays (0).

Return to Open Meeting Approved. Upon the motion of Councilor Devine; seconded by Councilor Graham and passed by the following recorded votes, Council approved a return to an open meeting. Ayes (7) Councilors Greenlaw, Frye, Devine, Duffy, Graham, Kelly and Withers. Nays (0).

Resolution 22-13, Approved, Certifying Closed Meeting. Upon the motion Councilor Devine approved Resolution 22-13 certifying the closed meeting; seconded by Councilor Graham and passed by the following recorded votes. Ayes (7) Councilors Greenlaw, Frye, Devine, Duffy, Graham, Kelly and Withers. Nays (0).

ITEM #9D

Adjournment. There being no further business to come before the Council at this time. Mayor Greenlaw declared the session officially adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

**Tonya B. Lacey, MMC
Clerk of Council
City of Fredericksburg**