



External Legislative Advisory Committee Minutes
Wednesday, April 17th, 2024
Norfolk, VA
1:30 PM

Commissioners in Attendance:

August Bullock, Chair, ELAC
Commissioner Andria McClellan, Norfolk

Attendees:

Janice Taylor, League of Women Voters
Philip Bianchi, Squire Patton Boggs

HRT Staff:

Noelle Pinkard, Organizational Advancement Officer
Gene Cavasos, Director of Marketing and Sales
Amy Jordan, Director of Business Development
John Powell, Telecommunications Specialist, Technology
Thomas Becher, Communications Manager
Petra Jovanovic, Executive Assistant, Marketing & Communications
Tammara Askew, Administrative Support Technician

The meeting began at 1:30 pm with Commissioner August Bullock, Chair, calling the meeting to order. Chairman Bullock asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 20, 2024, External and Legislative Advisory Committee (ELAC) meeting. Commissioner Andria McClellan made a motion to approve minutes, seconded by Chairman Bullock. The minutes were approved by the committee.

Legislative Update

Federal Update

A federal legislative update was provided by Phil Bianchi of Squire Patton Boggs. Congress is currently considering legislation to provide additional foreign aid to Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan as well as a ban of Chinese ownership of Tik Tok. Additionally, there are efforts to oust Speaker Johnson from his position in the House of Representatives. The Senate will be hearing testimony on the impeachment of the Department of Homeland Security Secretary.

State Update

A state legislative update was given by Noelle Pinkard. The Virginia General Assembly reconvened on April 17, 2024, to consider Governor Youngkin's legislative and budget vetoes. The Governor's 233 budget line-item vetoes were rejected. A special session to consider a negotiated budget is scheduled for May 13th, 2024, with a vote expected on May 15th, 2024.

Marketing & Strategic Communications Department update



Amy Jordan gave the Marketing & Communications update.

Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) celebrated the installation of its 500th bus shelter with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on April 5th, 2024. The new shelter is located across the street from the Historic Cavalier Hotel and Beach Club on Atlantic Avenue in Virginia Beach. About 50 people attended his event, including State Senator Aaron Rouse and Delegate Anne Tata. Guests and speakers included William Harrell, President, and CEO of Hampton Roads Transit; Mayor Bobby Dyer, Virginia Beach; Rob Howard, Chief Investment Officer of Gold Key/PHR Hotels and Resorts; and Councilwoman Dr. Amelia Ross-Hammond, Virginia Beach.

Trolley season will officially start in May 2024, and this will be VB Wave Trolley's 40th anniversary. HRT is excited about some frequency increases on route 35.

The Traffix team working with the HRT Marketing team to put together a new Military Families in Hampton Roads Guide. Traffix is working with all Military bases and groups in Hampton Roads to ensure that information and resources are provided to families as they come to this region.

The new HRT Activity book called "Gus and Friends" is currently in print. HRT will distribute these activity books while working with organizations and children's groups in Hampton Roads. This activity is a fantastic opportunity to teach children about transportation.

DC Advocacy Visit

A DC Advocacy Trip is scheduled for May 8th- 9th, 2024. HRT is currently working with Squire Patton Boggs to schedule meetings with members of the Hampton Roads Congressional delegation. HRT will use this opportunity to ask for additional funding to expand its paratransit fleet. This additional funding would allow HRT to buy 24 more paratransit vehicles.

Local Advocacy City Council Presentations

HRT will engage with all member City Councils after the budget cycle season is completed. A meeting to discuss the South Side Operating Division progress with Virginia Beach City Council is planned for this summer. Also, a meeting with Chesapeake City Council was recently held to discuss the ongoing High-Capacity Transit Study. The committee continues to work on this idea, and updates will be provided once more information is available.

Earth Day-Commission Rides

This year, in celebration of Earth Day and HRT's free fares, members of HRT's governing board, the Transportation District Commission of Hampton Roads, will be hosting round-trip rides to meet the public in their cities. The goal behind these hosted rides is to offer a familiar face for anyone who might be new to trying transit and offer a place for constituent conversation during the ride.

Commissioner Andria McClellan, Norfolk; Commissioner Amelia Ross-Hammond, Virginia Beach; Commissioner Don Carey, Chesapeake; Commissioner Tony Goodwin, Portsmouth; Commissioner Jimmy Gray, Hampton and Commissioner August Bullock, Newport News will be hosting these rides with help from HRT staff.



The meeting adjourned at 2:00pm.

May ELAC meeting is cancelled, next meeting is scheduled for June 20th, 2024 in Norfolk Boardroom.