

City of Tybee Island
Alcohol Ordinance Workgroup

Draft Minutes – 12/15/20

In Attendance: Shawn Gillen, Joel Fobes, George Shaw, Robert Bryson, Demery Bishop, Bubba Hughes, Alice Jonsson, Lawanna Tsoulos, Paula Crowe, Dillon Patel, Jenny Orr, Anne Delaney, Kathryn Williams, Mary McLemore, Matt Harrell

Called Meeting to Order – SG - 10:06

Approve Minutes from 12-8-20. DB Made motion. Anne seconded the motion. Motion approved.

SG – cont. Improve Communication and Behavior Messages. Then 9 – Festival Zone – Corrals – DB – isn't sure our sidewalks would be correct. ADA concerns. SG – logistically may not work (corrals). Remove corral concept. Group unanimously agreed. SG – Festival Zone (Jenny Orr) Party Zone – we should change wording to 'control zone'. Spoke about ease with which people could be checked for age. Also they can offset the cost of events.

BH – Explained the zone issue on Tybee and how we are different than Savannah.

SG – went around table to check to see interest in topic for group.

Cat mask – Zone limits freedom for residents and we shouldn't abandon them.

Jenny Orr – FZ – check tape

KW – wants to be fact oriented – most issues occur during the height of the season – could there be a FZ during season? Peak weekends? Maybe live entertainment. Generate revenue. Increase control?

SG – There will be resistance to closing off Tybrisia. Must take into consideration.

JO – Every parade it gets closed-down. It will be a hard sell.

DB – Control Zone – during weekends and peak seasons – if you want to drink you need a wristband even on the beach. Revenue generator potentially. Only need a wristband in that zone.

Group discussed changing ordinance to make it viable. Passes expense to the people driving it. How would we enforce it?

SG – We could try it out during a season.

Who will sell the wristbands and how would it be enforced?

Mary McLemore – limiting consumption but not eliminating it.

Dillon Patel – We should look at each event and decide. What are we giving with the wrist band. Sounds hard to enforce. No general use of wristbands.

SG – the money would go towards enforcement only.

Lawanna Tsoulos – Helps with illegal consumption – under-age.

SG – We are considering a control zone that will focus on the busiest area. We need to talk with the PD about it.

JO – How would it be enforced?

PC– How does this help with over-consumption and taking a burden off the PD?

SG – could it just be a revenue generator to shift the expense to the people driving the cost.

Kathryn Williams - trial could designate some peak weekends this year to see how well it works. Do wristbands help with over-consumption?

SG – Memorial Day and July 4th are the busiest weekends. Chief Bryson agreed. Those would be the best weekends to try.

DP – Should we try it on an easier weekend?

SG – Should we increase parking costs on weekends?
There is already a system in place for that.

DB – Then everyone is paying not the people driving the cost.

AG – Do residents need to pay for wristbands? How do we enforce it? Manpower issues? Can we legally do it?

BH – Renourishment agreements need to be checked.

SG – Let's leave the beach piece out for now. The group is split on the entire control-zone/wristband issue. Legal issues take time to go through.

BH – Can we legally control the consumption of alcohol in certain areas? Yes.

SG – Should we let Council know this is worth exploring.
Paula made motion Anne seconded. 4-4 split.

SG - Let's revisit at the next meeting.

Beach issue – people drinking on beach also causes problems. Is there something we can do to impact this?
We could sep. the beach, create a zone on the beach to drink?

SG – Wristband on the beach – Who sells it?
Enforcement? Demarcation of location? Legal questions?

JO – In Savannah you can have a serving in your open-container. Can't have a cooler full with you.

KW – Enforcement is key. We have the laws now. We just need to enforce. We need a reputation that we will enforce it. People know we will absolutely enforce parking rules. We will need to enforce it strictly for a few years to do this. Problem are cooler drinkers

SG – Agenda for next week – Control Zone will still be on the agenda. Enforcement - enforce the laws we already have could be a statement we make to Council.

Matt Harrell – gave TIFD perspective – explained what TIFD does. Seen everything. Cover entire beach. We only have one stand on North. South tends to rowdiest place, near pier.

KW – lifeguards – if they see a bunch of out-of-control drinkers do they call PD? MH - Under-age drinkers they do call the PD. Out-of-control behavior, too. They try to approach them first, then call. KW-What if restaurants all agree to serve from cans it could help us identify if it came from a business.

JO – Can we raise fines?

SG and BH – discussed the fine issue. Judge sets number eventually, in some circumstances. Court costs explained.

Paula Crowe – drunk in public is fine. Bad behavior while drink in public not fine. New visitors don't know yet.

SG – We have so much signage that eliminates the excuse of not knowing.

RB – End game of TIPD, arresting people immediately is not the current approach. You need to tell us what you want. It's you department. We do write a number of tickets that is high for our population. We do arrest a lot of people. Justice Department does look at those numbers. This process lets us know what you want. It changes over the years how much and how we enforce.

SG – We leave some discretion for officers, so we don't do 'Zero Tolerance' across the board. It's not great for officers and the public. Except for dogs and glass on beach.

MM- Alcohol related calls?

MH – We don't have a reporting system that can handle keeping track of those.

PC – Told story about visitors who brought champagne to beach. Point was a question about glass on beach enforcement. How strict are we? Are visitors to be expected to know everything on first trip?

SG – People will be upset and we need to show we understand.

Discussion of presence increase vs increase in writing tickets and arresting people.

Robert Bryson – explained how Code Enforcement helps PD so they can step back.

KW – Wants an attractive sign getting the rules right out front. We may need to involve the lodging industry in communicating our expectations and rules.

SG – We will send out the rules again every month to remind visitors what the rules are. Beach Comber also publishes the rules. They are in a prominent on the website.

LT – What other communities allow glass? Asked Chief.

RB and SG – We will not allow glass. No “I didn’t know” excuses. We are bending over backwards to get the messages out, but there will always be people who don’t know and will get tickets they are angry about.

Paula Crowe – magnets with rules could be another approach – cute ones that people will take.

TIFD – MH – we are looking at a tri-fold to communicate with the community. We get all kinds of visitors. Some

have never seen the beach and who don't understand tides at all, for example.

RB – People don't understand the impact of heat and sun on how they will react with alcohol.

SG – Increase of enforcement of current laws related to behavior.

On 29th we will discuss control zones.

Finalize the rest of the policy statement.

Voluntary aluminum can concept.

MH – Control Zones – Remember that people will be pushed to another area. That makes the FRs more spread out. We would need more stands.

Alternative idea – charge a bunch for parking during certain weekends.

Goal – have solid statements by end of next meeting.

Motion to Adjourn. Moved by AD. Seconded by DP.

Motion passed. Adjourned. At 11:46.