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**MINUTES
OF
VIRGINIA STATEWIDE DIRECTIONAL
SIGNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

Date: June 8, 2004

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Place: Virginia Tourism Corporation
901 East Byrd Street, West Tower 19th Floor
Richmond Virginia 23219

INTRODUCTIONS

Ray opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. The following were in attendance:

Committee Members

- Ray Khoury, P.E. VDOT Mobility Management – Chair
- Ralph Earnhardt, Virginia Tourism Corporation
- John Shenal, American Association of Retired Persons
- Donna Pugh Johnson, Virginia Agribusiness Council
- Michael O'Connor, Virginia Petroleum, Convenience and Grocers Association
- Richard McDonnell, Virginia Hospitality and Travel Association
- Lawrence J. Land, Virginia Association of Counties
- Kimberly Pollard (for Mike Edwards), Virginia Municipal League
- Leighton Powell, Scenic Virginia

VDOT Support Staff

- Phil Hopkins, P.E. VDOT Mobility Management
- Byron Marshall, VDOT Mobility Management
- Mauris Mackenzie, P.E. VDOT Mobility Management
- Joy Shepherd, VDOT Mobility Management
- Jeff Hores, VDOT Fredericksburg District
- Donna Purcell Mayes, VDOT Public Affairs
- Robin Dolatowski, VDOT Administrative Services

Virginia Logos Inc. Staff

- Floyd Williams, Interstate Logos, Inc.
- John Spacek, Virginia Logos, Inc.
- Jason Newcomb, Virginia Logos, Inc.
- Chip Dicks Counsel, Virginia Logos, Inc.

Other attendees

- James Carr, Office of the Secretary of Transportation
- Phil Grant, VDOT
- Dennis Prescott, Outback Steakhouse
- Chris Jankowski, Outback Steakhouse
- Neal J. Barber, Virginia Economic Development Partnership
- Meriwether German, Shenandoah Valley New Market Travel Association

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The following members were unable to attend:

Dale Bennett, Virginia Truck Association
Mike Edwards, Virginia Municipal League
J. P. Eck, National Association of Truck Stop Operators
Martha Mitchell, American Automobile Association
Trice L. Craddock, North Carolina DOT
Martha Kapitanov, Federal Highway Administration

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Ray Khoury opened the meeting by asking committee members, staff and other attendees to introduce themselves. Phil Hopkins stated the meetings are open to the public but discussions should be limited to members only.

PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The May minutes were approved.

STATUS OF IDSP SCHEDULE

Phil distributed the current Integrated Directional Signing Program Schedule and reminded members it is updated monthly. He stated that an executive decision was made to bring a fee schedule and criteria proposal for the Commonwealth Transportation Board's consideration at their July 15th meeting. Final action on this proposal will take place at the Board's September meeting in order to allow additional time for public comments.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS FOR IDSP

Donna Mayes thanked committee members for attending the four public hearings. She emphasized that the hearing transcripts and public comments received have been posted on the website. Additionally, all emails concerning the IDSP are available at the site.

PRESENTATIONS WITH DISCUSSIONS

a. IDSP Full Serve Pilot – MUTCD Experiment (attachments)

Phil handed out a May 17, 2004 letter with attachments to Mr. Don Askew from FHWA approving a Full Serve food Pilot. The pilot will be evaluated for safety impacts and a public survey will be conducted to determine if there is motorists' confusion about the signs. Richard McDonnell thanked VDOT for their willingness in moving forward with the pilot and indicated interest in reviewing the survey results.

b. IDSP – APA requirements

Phil distributed copies of a February 1, 2004 letter from the Attorney General's Office stating that since the signing program is part of the MUTCD it is considered to be a traffic control device and is exempt from the APA process.

c. IDSP - Criteria

Phil stated that the general comments from the public hearings were in support of the proposed criteria with the exception of the removal of Gas, Food and Lodging from the TODS program. Richard McDonnell stated that he was strongly opposed to the removal of the Gas, Food and Lodging from the proposed TODS criteria. Ralph Earnhardt agreed with Richard and offered to have Secretary Schewel write Secretary Clement. The committee agreed that Gas, Food and Lodging should not be removed from the proposed TODS criteria. Donna Johnson asked that the 13- week proposal for participation of Farmers Markets be changed to 12 consecutive weeks. She also asked that the proposed hours of operation for wineries be changed from eight to six hours a day. Ray and Phil agreed to both. Any changes will be discussed at future

meetings. Larry Land asked if it is standard practice to charge a supplemental signing facility for the fabrication, installation and maintenance for their signs. Ray said that was standard VDOT procedure.

d. IDSP – Bumping

Phil stated that a great amount of opposition to the bumping policy was not voiced during the public hearings however some emails did state some opposition to the proposed policy. Ralph indicated that VTC received over 90 communications related to the program but none dealt with the bumping policy. Mauris indicated there was some opposition to bumping. He further stated the greater problem lies with the Attractions since there is no process in place to allow new attractions on the program.

e. IDSP - Excess Space

Phil said the proposed Category II for Gas, Food and Lodging was well received at the meetings. Category II allows businesses that cannot meet the Category I criteria to participate if there is room on the sign. A Category I can bump a Category II business from the program.

f. IDSP – Fees

Most of the opposition at the public meetings was about the fees. Phil explained there would be changes to the proposed fee structure. For those who will pay an annual fee, VDOT proposes to allow for a graduated increase achieved over a period of five to six years and also provide considerations for many entities with limited resources. Larry Land asked for a clarification of what the fee revenue will be used for. Ray told him the funds would be used for rest areas.

g. Logos on Parkways

The committee discussed logos on parkways and it was concluded that there is no clear definition of what constitutes a parkway. John Shenal stated that older drivers prefer concise directions as opposed to too many signs that create driver distraction. Richard McDonnell said his group supports more signage where practical and the general theme of this committee has been to allow signing where opportunities present themselves. Some committee members consider the Parkway designation to be an arbitrary term. Floyd Williams said Virginia Logos would be happy to survey any parkways for logos from a listing provided by VDOT.

h. Logo – Restaurants without interior seating

Phil said VDOT had a request from Sonic Restaurant to participate in the logo program. They meet all criteria except the requirement for indoor seating for twenty people. Sonics consider indoor seating to be the customers' vehicles. There was discussion whether to allow this type of restaurant as a Category II and remove the indoor seating requirement from that category. Ray said the request needs to be further investigated by VDOT.

i. Regional Retail Facility Criteria – (Virginia Tourism Corporation)

The committee discussed the Definition of Regional Retail Facilities provided by Ralph Earnhardt. Mauris asked if Ralph would be willing to provide a listing of facilities that would be acceptable regional retail facilities that would qualify for an Attraction logo. Ralph agreed to provide this list as well as work with VLI to examine Attractions requests.

OPEN DISCUSSION

It was brought to the committee's attention that this would be the last meeting for Richard McDonnell. The committee expressed its gratitude for his active participation and regrets his leaving.

Meriwether German asked if the blue and white Tourist Information Center signs would remain in place after the five-year period was over. Ray said the Information Center signs would stay.

NEXT MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

- Logos on Parkways
- Retail Facilities
- Restaurants/Interior Seating Request

The committee members were given the following publications for review:

"Definition of Regional Retail Facilities", June 2004, Ralph Earnhardt, Virginia Tourism Corporation

"Letter to Mr. Donald R. Askew, Deputy Commissioner, VDOT, from Regina S. McElory, Director, FHWA", with attachments-Full Service Pilot, May 17, 2004

"Letter to David L. Roberts, Quality Assurance and Strategic Management, VDOT, from John J. Beall, Jr. Senior Assistant Attorney General, Certification Opinion for Amendment to Guidelines for the Logo Program (24 VAC 30-550-10), February 1, 2002

NEXT MEETING

The next IDSP meeting will be Tuesday, July 13, 2004 at the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

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