**Mayor's Task Force for a Safer Virginia Beach**
**Meeting #6 Summary**
**October 29, 2026**

## ***BACKGROUND***

The Mayor's Task Force for a Safer Virginia Beach has been assembled by Mayor Robert M. "Bobby" Dyer to engage the community and stakeholders and develop recommendations to ensure our community remains a safe place for our residents and a desired tourist destination for our visitors. The Task Force is anticipated to complete work in late 2026 and then submit its recommendations to City Council for consideration.

The Task Force had six meetings that took place at City Hall, Rm. 1009/1010, except for the September 3rd meeting, which took place at the Voter Registrar Building:

- July 6, 1-5 p.m.
- July 21, 3-7 p.m.
- Aug. 31, 1-5 p.m.
- Sept. 3, 1-5 p.m. Voter Registrar's Office. 500 Studio Drive, Training Room 200
- Sept. 28, 1-5 p.m.
- Oct. 29, 1-5 p.m.

## ***WELCOME & FRAMING***

The Task Force convened its sixth meeting on Thursday, October 29, 2026, at City Hall. This meeting was attended by City staff, facilitators from Berkley Group, and appointed Task Force members. Mayor Dyer made opening remarks, thanking the Task Force members for their work and acknowledging the diverse group of people that came together to tackle problems facing the City. He encouraged Task Force members to attend the City Council meeting on November 10 to be recognized. Deputy City Manager Monica Croskey explained that the final recommendations will be presented to City Council on November 10. The Hon. Christie New Craig thanked everyone for their work over the last six weeks and felt the group accomplished what they set out to do.

Task Force Attendance:

- The Hon. Christie New Craig
- The Hon. Michael Feggans
- The Hon. Colin Stolle
- Alvie Culanding
- Chuck Cayton
- Debbie Lou Hague
- Dr. Cynthia Romero
- Gabe Niles
- Gregory Smith
- Jamal Gunn
- John Zirkle
- Kevin Will
- M. Conrad Agresti
- Melissa Lukeson
- Paul Neudigate
- Robert "Bobby" Jamison
- Veronica Coleman

- Paul Neudigate

City Staff Present:

- Monica Croskey (Deputy City Manager; Task Force Support)
- Raven Emanuel (Task Force Admin Support/Notetaker)
- Dana Harmeyer (Acting City Attorney)
- Jessie Williams Reynolds (Legislative Affairs)

Facilitators Present (Berkley Group):

- Eric Campbell (Executive Manager)
- Laura Hamilton (Executive Manager)
- Tori Haynes (Senior Planner)

## ***FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS DISCUSSION***

After the September 28 meeting, members voted on the recommendations they would like to move forward via an online survey. Items that scored at least 40% qualified for moving forward as a formal recommendation to City Council, pending the Task Force's final review and confirmation. Out of 54 potential recommendations, 27 were chosen to move forward. Laura Hamilton of Berkley Group gave a brief reminder of the rules of engagement, stating that today's discussion would be focused on verifying the content and intent of each recommendation.

The following summary captures discussion of and suggested revisions to each recommendation but may not reflect final wording.

## RESORT AREA SPRING SEASON

### Strengthen Communications + Engage in Brand Management Locally

A. Develop a communications strategy that focuses on countering the disproportionate negative media coverage of the Oceanfront

There were no substantive changes, but the task force discussed merging A and B.

B. Educate the public on the City's values.

A previous meeting suggested that short welcome videos could be displayed in hotels and other public areas. Task Force members cautioned that it should be positive in tone with diverse community representatives conveying the community's values.

C. Utilize existing City apps to…[to be completed during discussion]

Task Force members discussed merging C and T, noting that the City's multiple apps can make it difficult for users to determine where to find the information they need. One app to consolidate all City information for residents and tourists would be beneficial.

**Better Manage the Resort Area's Physical Footprint**

D. Each Friday and Saturday during the Spring season temporarily convert portions of Atlantic Ave. into a pedestrian mall to create an open streets concept, and partner with Beach Events to program the space with entertainment.

Following a brief discussion, there were no substantive changes, but it was noted that this concept had been proposed in recommendations from the Atlantic Avenue Commission before but has not yet materialized.

E. Similar to airports, sporting events, and concerts, establish ridesharing pick-up and drop-off zones.

There were no substantive changes.

F. Establish and/or refine hours of use for the City's open spaces/parks located on the Oceanfront.

There were no substantive changes.

**Enhance the Resort Area's Physical Appearance**

G. Move Forward with Atlantic Avenue improvements that address infrastructure and the pedestrian experience.

There were no substantive changes.

H. Enhance business property standards resulting in cleaner storefronts, secured vacant buildings, and better lighting in parking lots.

Task Force members discussed the need for consistent enforcement – some businesses are cited for small imperfections while others are in substandard condition. Members discussed interest in Portsmouth's interdisciplinary compliance approach but ensure that the corrective recommendations are not so punitive as to impede businesses.

I. Enhance and continue commercial façade grants.

Discussion included promoting and communicating that the City has lowered the match requirement for grants. Discussion focused on promotion, ease of application, ease of match requirements as important elements of the grants.

### Strengthen Public Safety through Partnerships

J. Partner with violence interrupters throughout the City.

Discussion included the role of violence interrupters, noting that this strategy tends to be most effective with long-term application in the community and some were concern as to whether it would be effective in deterring mass youth-oriented pop-up gatherings. Chief Neudigate stated that a pilot program that would bring non-police professionals to the oceanfront to assist with deescalation was being considered. The dual goals of prevention and intervention were discussed.

K. Collaborate with pop-up event organizes to develop more structured events.

Task Force members discussed ideas for coordinating with pop-up organizers to channel their energies into organizing special events. A sandbox area for pop-ups was also suggested.

L. Enforce alcohol overserving laws at bars and clubs more consistently; hold establishments accountable for patron behavior tied to nightlife incidents.

Chief Neudigate briefly discussed how VBPD officers monitor and enforce overserving laws. He noted the desire to have an ABC Agent embedded in VBPD.

## BROADER COMMUNITY

### Legislation and Policy

M. Advocate for HB778 or successor pop-up gathering legislation that includes the ability to establish no-gun zones near entertainment districts and the ability for cost recovery from pop-up event organizers.

The Hon. Stolle explained some of the factors that go into pursuing misdemeanors committed by out-of-state offenders and the extradition process/costs. It was also noted that "community safety zones" is the preferred term to "pop-up" zones.

N. Maintain citywide curfew for unaccompanied minors.

There were no substantive changes.

O. Review the legislative authority for law enforcement use of drones.

The Hon. Stolle stated the current legislation allows the use of drones for crowd control of special events, but not for unofficial events. Task Force members discussed a potential statutory amendment allowing jurisdictions over a certain population (e.g., 300,000) to use drones for crowd control.

**Enhance Mental Health Infrastructure**

P. Request that the General Assembly fund a Virginia Beach pilot program to establish an integrated mental health model that increases accessibility to mental health professionals and available bed space.

Task Force members discussed the procedural and funding difficulties of finding beds for people in crisis situations, noting that if there are no beds available at Eastern State Hospital, Central State Hospital, or Western State Hospital (which are secured psychiatric facilities), then there is little recourse for individuals in crisis. Members also discussed support for the Crisis Receiving Center locally.

Q. Virginia Beach Police Department should move forward with utilizing Special Conservators of the Peace to relieve sworn police officers from custodial and transport duties for Temporary Detention Orders and Emergency Custody Orders.

Chief Neudigate reiterated that this was in progress. There were no substantive changes.

R. Expand mobile crisis teams and non-police healthcare interventions.

Task Force members discussed mobile crisis teams for both police and human services.

S. Leverage the City's communication mediums to develop and implement an educational campaign on gun storage safety, being sure to highlight existing tax incentives offered by the Commonwealth and storage device initiatives offered by the Virginia Beach Police Department and Virginia Beach Sherriff's Office.

Chief Neudigate explained that the VBPD received a partial grant to buy additional gun locks. There were no substantive changes.

T. Use social media influencers to promote positive events, programs, and perceptions of Virginia Beach, being sure to leverage the influencers to reach local youth and young adults.

Task Force members discussed merging this recommendation with B. It was noted that influencers should be recognizable locally as well as in a broader context.

U. Offer and support youth and young adult apprenticeships and career training.

Task Force members discussed medical and EMT training specifically.

V. Increase youth access to jobs and programs by providing or funding youth transportation and microtransit options.

There were no substantive changes.

W. Leverage youth-centered digital platforms and mobile apps to assist with peer-to-peer connections and to raise awareness of existing youth and young adults' programs and events.

There were no substantive changes.

X. Enhance street lighting.

Task Force members discussed pursuing smart lighting for the Oceanfront area, which allows brightness to be increased or decreased depending on the situation.

Y. Build out a comprehensive citywide microtransit strategy.

There were no substantive changes.

Z. Ensure starting salaries for police officers are competitive with the market in the region.

There were no substantive changes.

AA. Enhance community partnerships by creating agreements among agencies to track resource connections.

Task Force members discussed creating a community partnership hub that matches residents with resources (e.g., housing, mental health, etc.). It was suggested that the City look into resources already used by VBPS which match broader student needs with a local provider.

***CLOSING***

DCM Croskey discussed next steps in presenting the final report to City Council. Task Force members were encouraged to submit any edits/suggestions through track changes to DCM Croskey by Tuesday, November 3. The group was also encouraged to attend and be recognized at the City Council work session where these recommendations will be presented: November 10, time to be determined. The group adjourned at approximately 4:15 p.m