

Virginia Statewide Directional Signing Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2015

Meeting time: 9:30 a.m.

Virginia Tourism Corporation, West Tower, 19th Floor
Richmond VA 23219

1. Introduction

Rick Burgess served as Chair in place of Ray Khoury. Rick opened the meeting while a sign-in sheet was distributed to the attendees.

Committee Members Present:

Val Guffy Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC)

VDOT Support Staff:

Rick Burgess VDOT – Traffic Engineering Division

Anne Margaret White VDOT – Traffic Engineering Division

Virginia Logos Staff:

Bill Jones Virginia Logos – Regional Manager

Jason Newcomb Virginia Logos – General Manager

Todd Pitcher Virginia Logos

Chip Dicks Future Law, LLC

Committee Members Not In Attendance:

Michael O'Connor Virginia Petroleum, Convenience, and Growers Association (VPCGA)

Ray Khoury VDOT Traffic Engineering Division

Martha Mitchell Meade American Automobile Association (AAA)

Karen King Federal Highway Association (FHWA)

Roger Cole National Association of Truck Stop Operators (NATSO)

Katie Frazier Virginia Agribusiness Council

Kristan Havard Virginia Hospitality and Travel Association (VHTA)

Dale Bennett Virginia Trucking Association (VTA)

Leighton Powell Scenic Virginia

Guest:

Marie Henderson Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC)

2. Previous Meeting Minutes: November 12, 2014

Copies of the previous meeting's minutes were distributed and accepted.

3. IDSP

a. Status of Participation (Virginia Logos)

Virginia Logos distributed and update report dated May 13, 2015. Continued growth was noted in the active schedule, especially in the TODS program. The Logo renewal period recently completed with a 97% renewal rate, slightly higher than expected. VDOT and VL are working with two hospitals in Williamsburg to consolidate their hospital (H) General Motorist Service Signs (GMSS) signs. This effort should result in less confusion to motorists about which facility is closest in an emergency.

b. Electric Vehicle Charging Station GMSS Update (VDOT)

Anne Margaret reviewed background information about electric vehicles and charging stations. Rick reviewed the GMSS sign for electric vehicles (EVs). The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has offered interim approval for VDOT to use the GMSS D9-11b (alternative) sign for EVs. VDOT needs to determine the use of these signs within the Integrated Directional Sign Program (IDSP) and establish a criteria for their use. Current signs that are at rest areas were a result of a partnership between Dominion Power and VDOT and are not part of the IDSP. The current criteria for the use of the gas (G) GMSS was discussed and compared against the proposed requirements, especially access to the public, the certifying group for the charging stations (such as the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy), and whether the type of charging station should be indicated. The number of charging points that would be required to use an EV GMSS. Rick felt that four points at a station indicated a commitment to providing a service rather than displaying a novelty that might be indicated with only one or two points provided. He stated that the FHWA views the EV designation as an amenity (like Wi-Fi) on Logo signs for Food and Lodging and will not grant permission to use an EV indication on this type of Logo sign. It is a possibility that FHWA will permit the use of the EV indication to be displayed on a gas Logo this will have to be discussed with FHWA. Currently Virginia Logos has not received a request from a service station to have the EV symbol indicated on their Logo.

Chip suggested that the requirement of 4 charging points might require site and space planning. Depending upon the space needed for the charging points, parking spaces, and the needed infrastructure, there might not be enough room for four charging points at a facility. He recommended that an analysis of site plans could help determine if two or four charging points might be most practical.

Jason pointed out that space planning would also be needed when considering retrofitting an existing location (such as a service station). He suggested that the locations of the existing charging stations be mapped to determine their eligibility for GMSS signs (within 3 miles of the interstate) and whether they are in rural or urban locations.

Rick indicated that there might be a conflict with local ordinances and parking space needs for charging stations. He didn't want to create an undue burden for businesses providing a service to the traveling public.

Jason noted that if most people are charging their stations at home and/or have smart phones, these EV GMSS signs might serve more of a function as the H GMSS signs: used by people in emergency situations.

Rick asked the committee if we needed to consider indicating types of charging. Jason responded that with technology changing, we shouldn't limit the use of the EV GMSS to designated charging types.

Val asked what the next step would need to be and Rick replied that the SDSAC needs to recommend a list of criteria with input from participating members, VDOT would then decide on the final list and it would be presented the criteria information to by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) for approval.

Chip then added that he would like to know the cost of installation and whether there is a cost advantage to installing multiple charging points. He also discussed the lack of cover for charging points and their safety in the rainy or wet conditions.

4. Open Discussion

Rick offered an update on legislation (HB125) from the 2014 General Assembly session concerning "Virginia's World War II Alliance Route". The bill directs VDOT to place signs between the seven sites included in the Alliance. Rick and Jason met with the committee's representatives and presented signing options. The representatives intend to present the information about sign location and cost to their committee and will move forward when they decide to.

Val asked about Welcome Center signing for Main Street Station. Welcome Center will have a mobile presence at Main Street Station during the World Road Cycling Championship in September 2015 and then plans to open a permanent location there within one year. Jason advised that the Welcome Center make their request immediately in order to fabricate and install the signs before September.

Rick updated the Committee on the status of the City of Richmond corridor attractions logo sign program. The project is underway and fabrication has begun on this plan to replace all existing logo signs on the I-95 corridor through downtown Richmond with blue background panels and more appropriately sized logo panels.

Chip requested that VDOT consider offering a conference call option to all future SDSAC meetings. He is concerned that attendance has slipped. He would like to continue with the current bi-annual meeting schedule but wants to increase attendance to facilitate the goals of SDSAC. He suggested that we make in-person meetings an option if controversial topics were to be presented, but to always have a conference call option. Rick suggested that one of the values of the SDSAC meetings was to meet in person to maintain relationships and to foster conversation. He plans to discuss the option to offer conference calling into the meetings for participates with Ray Khoury.

5. Next Meeting Agenda Topics:

No items were offered by the group.

6. Next Meetings:

The upcoming meeting dates are Thursday, November 12, 2015 (our usual Wednesday meeting date of November 11th is Veteran's Day) and Wednesday, May 18, 2016 (this second date is a change).

7. Adjourn