

TRAFFIC ADVISORY BOARD

AUGUST 2015 – SEPTEMBER 2018

Venice City Council created the TAB in summer 2015 to tackle burgeoning traffic issues Venice was experiencing, which included increasing auto congestion and perceived inadequate parking. The board had 10 members and met monthly at 5:00pm for 1 ½ hours. Within the first year, the meeting schedule was changed to bi-weekly frequency and the board lost several members.

During the first two years, the board did tackle these two issues as well as the idea of a trolley to move people through the main streets of the city without using their cars. The board was successful in having City Council approve a pilot trolley program for 2016 and 2017 Seasons. However, the Board had recommended a trolley route, which included the South Jetty and an adequate trolley turnaround, was created. However, City Council changed the trolley route eliminating all but the basic three main streets, ignoring our recommendations completely. This may have been due to pressure from Main Street Merchants who felt a trolley route, which included further destinations, took business away from them.... The board also identified specific traffic issues, such as Miami Ave. painted lines modification, etc. The board was unsuccessful in having any major impact on the traffic congestion Venice continues to experience especially between November and May of each year. The board tried to have signage installed on the KMI, Venice Ave, and Circus Bridges, to educate drivers of the bridges schedules to allow for boat traffic. That was unsuccessful. The Board was successful in suggesting installation of parking signs to identify spaces behind Venice Theater and other locations. The board was unsuccessful in finding a solution for traffic congestion during weekend events, which blocked off W. Venice, Tampa and Miami Avenues. Traffic trying to turn right or left onto 41 became immovable, compounded by bridge openings for boat traffic.

The initial two years were frustrating for both board and City Council for several reasons including, difficulty in obtaining requested information and/or data from CC prior to the next meeting. This stalled most of our agenda items for months. It would have appeared to CC that we were not productive as a board, which was not the case. City Council eventually rescheduled the start time from 5pm to 4pm to avoid having to pay staff OT and unnecessarily extending the work day as well.

The current Board has five members and meets quarterly for 1 ½ hrs for a total of 6 hours per year.

I do not believe we can be effective with this schedule and agree that Resolution 2016-12 is the appropriate action to take, effectively terminating the Traffic Advisory Board's existence.

I am deeply disappointed, however, as the original mission and reason for the Traffic Advisory Board's existence has not changed. Traffic congestion in the city of Venice has not improved at all during Season. Therefore, as a Board was given a specific task by Venice City Council, we have not succeeded, but not because of a lack of interest or concern by Board members, rather because City Council would not approve those Board initiatives which required additional funding or staffing. I am hopeful that City Council recognizes that although the Traffic Advisory Board is disbanded, the problems will most likely continue.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as Board Member and Chair Person of the Traffic Advisory Board since 2015.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol J. Barbieri". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned at the bottom left of the page.