



September 18, 2018

Honorable Mayor Louis Jones
Members of City Council
Municipal Center – City Hall, Building #1
2401 Courthouse Drive
Virginia Beach, VA 23456

RE: Support for the Proposed Dome Site Project and Atlantic Avenue Revitalization

Dear Mayor Jones and Members of City Council:

The Atlantic Avenue Association (AAA) Board of Directors is encouraged by all that is happening to reinvigorate our city and create a better community for both Virginia Beach residents and our guests to enjoy. Revitalizing Atlantic Avenue and developing the Dome Site are integral parts of that.

AAA is grateful and encouraged by new efforts to revitalize the Atlantic Avenue area: known as “Activate Atlantic Avenue.” From the outset, this initiative has been a transparent, grass-roots, community-driven process that we believe is the way of the future. AAA has had the true pleasure working side by side with the City, landscape design consultants (EDSA), resort stakeholders and community leaders to brainstorm ideas. In our recent meetings it has been said many times that Atlantic Avenue is the “front doorstep to Virginia Beach, often the first and last impression visitors have when they visit our city.” Shouldn’t it be paramount to all Virginia Beach citizens that the impression of our city be very positive? To that end, public and private efforts on many levels are focused on coming up with new ways to once again attract more local residents to their beachfront resort, specifically the Atlantic Avenue area. AAA believes these changes need to be significantly larger than a minor renovation. They need to be TRANSFORMATIVE. Conversely, without investment in this public amenity, the area will certainly fall further behind. We whole-heartedly support the “Activate Atlantic Avenue” initiative and hope Council, as well as the citizens of Virginia Beach, will unequivocally embrace this much needed revitalization of THEIR resort.

In 2017 the Atlantic Avenue Association (AAA) Board of Directors received the initial proposal from Venture Realty Group for the Dome Site Project. At that time AAA expressed concerns about retail/restaurant sales displacement, inconvenient beach parking, and the southwesterly

orientation of the development. Based on resort stakeholders' and the Virginia Beach Restaurant Association's (VBRA) concerns about displacement, an independent party was hired to study this important issue and make recommendations. On September 10, 2018, AAA received an updated presentation by Venture Realty. We are pleased the new proposal incorporates public parking closer to the ocean for beach goers and the orientation is more inclusive to the resort as a whole; however, we still have serious concerns about displacement.

While AAA supports most aspects of the Dome Site proposal, our primary concern remains displacement. Unfortunately, the recent Lambert Displacement Study presumes restaurants are at 100% capacity; therefore, we agree with VBRA that data derived from this assumption is misleading. Furthermore, AAA believes that demand numbers, even with local visitors included, would not justify the square footage of restaurant space proposed for this project (Please note these local consumers would come from somewhere else in the city.). Additionally, while there needs to be some retail and restaurant to support the project, the magnitude proposed would likely hamper public and private sector efforts to reinvigorate the Atlantic Avenue area. We also concur with VBRA that consumer traffic generated by this project should support Virginia Beach small businesses. In other words, rather than suffer because of subsidized competition, existing small, family-owned businesses (most owned by Virginia Beach residents) should benefit from this project.

AAA supports the development of the Dome Site, the "Activate Atlantic Avenue" initiative, as well as the new Sports Center, but these separate projects should all work together and complement one another. This requires a universal vision. It's time we think ahead and cast a community-driven vision for the Virginia Beach resort brand that separates us from our competitors and includes the residents of our city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Kotarides". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

George Kotarides
President, Atlantic Avenue Association
757-469-0031

CC – City Council Members