

## TDC MEETING MINUTES

April 10, 2015

Commissioner Brian Hamman called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Council members in attendance: Bill Waichulis, Jeff Webb, René Affourtit, Tony Lapi, Mayor Kevin Ruane, Rob Wells and Pamela Cronin. Colleen DePasquale, Councilman Forrest Banks and Fran Myers were excused.

The TDC recognized 26 participants that recently earned the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute's Certified Guest Service Professional (CGSP) designation. Christine Davlin, VCB announced the total of hospitality graduates to date is now 158. There is an addendum attached which lists the most recent recipients.

René Affourtit made a motion, seconded by Mayor Kevin Ruane to approve the TDC Meeting Minutes of March 12, 2015. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Public to be Heard**

- Dave Loveland, Director of Lee County Department of Transportation gave an update on the upcoming Estero Boulevard project on Fort Myers Beach. Phase 1 of the construction will take place one mile at a time, in six segments and it is estimated that it will take one and a half years to complete each segment. At this time, they have received funding for the first 4 segments. Additional information is available at <http://www.lee.gov/gov/dept/dot/Pages/default.aspx>
- Beth Oliver, Director of Marketing, Offshore Sailing School thanked the VCB for their collateral materials for the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Race Week which will be taking place at South Seas Island Resort April 19-26<sup>th</sup>.
- Alfred Bea, Assistant Park Manager for the Koreshan State Historic Site thanked the TDC for their consideration of funds through the beach and shoreline program to assist in repairs, maintenance and a pavilion.
- Lisa Sbuttoni, Director of Marketing and PR for Captiva Cruises, thanked the TDC for their support in funding Captiva Holiday Village. It was a well received and highly attended month long event that increased room nights. Captiva Cruises has been officially named the concessionaire for the Cayo Costa State Park system.

### **Municipalities to be Heard**

- Judi Zimomra, City Manager of Sanibel, shared a review of Ding Darling from trip advisor and thanked everyone who assisted Sanibel in having a successful season.

### **VCB Executive Director's Report**

- Tamara Pigott reported that the preliminary bed tax collections for the month of February 2015 were \$4,808,121, a 17.3% increase over the preliminary collections in February 2014.
- STR Report – Occupancy for February was up 2.6%, ADR increased by 15.3% and RevPAR was up 18.3%. Lee County experienced a 19.5 % increase in Room Revenue while Available Rooms increased by 1% and Rooms Sold were up by 3.6%.
- RSW Report – Total Passenger count of 906,039 for February 2015, an increase of 5 % over February 2014.

- Tamara Pigott introduced and welcomed a new staff member, Anna Stone, Director of Sales. As the VCB's director of sales, she will be responsible for guiding the group sales team in prospecting for new business, identifying emerging trends and opportunities, and coordination of the VCB's participation in trade shows. Stone will also lead tour and travel efforts with domestic tour operators, travel agents and other leisure travel professionals.
- Pamela Johnson, Deputy Director gave the sales report. Pamela shared that there was a 27% increase compared to last year for leads and definite bookings to our area. The sales team attends a total of 150 events, tradeshow, sales calls, and sales missions per year. Sales Managers Jovina Huber and Candice Cocco conducted an educational webinar in partnership with Travel Weekly. There were 650 travel agents on the webinar. This webinar will also remain available on Travel Weekly's website for one year so that additional travel agents may view it.
- Stefanie Zinke, International Sales Manager, gave an update of our international markets. During ITB Berlin, the world's leading travel trade show, the VCB's team saw 175,000 visitors in a five day period and held 36 meetings. The VCB's UK contractors attended destination training along with tradeshow and media calls. The international sales team is busy with four upcoming FAM tours hosting sales professionals from the UK, Scandinavia, Canada and Germany. During Florida Huddle, which is Florida's foremost travel trade event, VCB staff conducted 45 one-on-one appointments. Stefanie thanked our industry partners for their collateral and support.
- Tamara Pigott gave a "hats off" to Judi Durant and her Visitor Services team for the great job they did with the Volunteer Ambassador Luncheon held on Wednesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Judi Durant, Director of Visitor Services gave a quarterly update to the TDC. More than 100,000 passengers received assistance from tourism ambassadors this quarter and saved the county \$150,000. Judi reminded everyone to attend the Chrysalis Awards on Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup> and the Southwest Florida Travel Rally on Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Nancy MacPhee presented a beach and shoreline funding update. There are currently 33 active projects in Lee County. Beach Nourishment Funding since 2000 has totaled \$24,232,401, Capital Projects Funding of \$21,079,559, and Maintenance Projects Funding of \$41,887,606. The TDC Beach & Shoreline Workshop will be held on April 30, 2015 at 1:30p.m. There are 35 FY 15/16 Project Requests with \$17,671,263 being requested.

### Old Business

- None to be heard

### New Business

- Mayor Kevin Ruane made a motion, seconded by René Affourtit to approve the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Budget Report. The motion passed unanimously

### TDC Member Items

- Tony Lapi will not be able to attend the Travel Rally or the beach and shoreline workshop.
- Rob Wells is very happy the ADR has been climbing. He's glad everyone had a great season.
- Commissioner Brian Hamman thanked everyone for their efforts. Numbers are still increasing and we are continuing to achieve growth.
- Jeff Webb reminded everyone of the LCHA monthly meeting that will be held on April 23rd at noon at Crowne Plaza. The speaker will be Mayor Henderson. He also mentioned The Chrysalis Awards and Tradeshow will be held at Harborside on April 16<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting adjourned at 10:23 a.m. The next regular meeting of the TDC is scheduled for **Thursday, May 14, 2015 at 9 a.m. at Lee County Admin East, Conference Room #118, 2201 Second Street, Fort Myers, 33901. All reports are included with Minutes on file at the VCB and available at [www.leevcb.com](http://www.leevcb.com).**

## *Addendum #1*

### **Newest Class of Certified Guest Service Professionals:**

- Kenna Buldak, VCB Airport Ambassador
- Maria Cabrera, The Westin Cape Coral
- Kyle Carper, Hampton Inn & Suites
- Barbara DiMaria, Coconut Point
- Dana DeSousa, J.N. Ding Darling
- William Dukes, Homewood Suites
- Lisa Ewing, Lee County Government
- Amin Faridi, Tween Waters Inn
- Jessica Gamrat, The Westin Cape Coral
- Scott Getman, Lee County Parks & Recreation
- Kallin Horne, Sundial Beach Resort & Spa
- Joshua Lambert, Florida Gulf Coast University
- Moira Larkin, Florida Gulf Coast University
- Liz Linares, Lee County VCB
- Alicia Lotz, Gasparilla Inn
- Dawn Lyons, Lee County Parks & Recreation
- Khandyce Mosely, Lee County VCB
- Staci Noto, Bell Tower Shops
- Alice Nye, VCB Airport Ambassador
- Andrew Payne, Lee County Parks & Recreation
- Robin Rosario, Pure Florida
- Tina Stanley, City of Sanibel
- Bailey Tilton, Simon Property Group
- Susan Warren, The Westin Cape Coral
- Andrea Weidemeyer, Homewood Suites
- Adam Wright, Red Coconut RV Park