

## TDC MEETING MINUTES

August 14, 2014

Fran Myers called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Council members in attendance: Jeff Webb, Colleen DePasquale, Tony Lapi, Pamela Cronin, Councilman Forrest Banks and Rob Wells. Mayor Kevin Ruane, Commissioner Larry Kiker, René Affourtit were excused.

Christine Davlin, VCB, and the TDC recognized the participants that earned the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute's Certified Guest Service Professional (CGSP) designation. The following participants received their pin and certificate: Leanne Criswell and Janet Wilson, Edison & Ford Winter Estates; Chuck and Harriett Smith, SWFL Museum of History; Aaron Weeks, Comfort Inn; Faye Benkert, Philip Benkert, and James Jackson, VCB Volunteers; Lauren Blasingim and Wynter Rose, VCB Interns.

Tony Lapi made a motion, seconded by Colleen DePasquale to approve the TDC Meeting Minutes of June 12, 2014. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Public to be Heard**

- John Naylor announced that he will be the new Executive Director for the City of Palms Classic. The basketball tournament kicks off on December 18, 2014 and runs through December 23, 2014. All games will take place at Bishop Verot High School.

### **Municipalities to be Heard**

- Judith Zimomra, Sanibel City Manager reminded everyone that this year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hurricane Charley affecting Lee County. She thanked the TDC for supporting the clean-up efforts following the storm on Sanibel Island that allowed them to get their three major beaches back open in time for season.

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

- Tamara Pigott reported the preliminary bed tax collections for the month of May 2014 were \$1,995,140, a 15.7% increase over the preliminary collections in May 2013. In June 2014, a preliminary total of \$2,175,364 was collected, a 10.5% increase over the preliminary collections in June 2013. Fiscal year-over-year collections increased 15.6% with \$27,307,765 collected.
- STR Report – Occupancy for June was up 7.3%. ADR increased by 2.7% and RevPAR was up 10.2%. Lee County experienced a 9.8 % increase in Room Revenue with Available Rooms decreased by 0.4% and Rooms Sold up 6.9%.
- RSW Report – Total Passenger count of 591,116 for May 2014, an increase of 2.5% over May 2013 and for June 2014 the total passenger count was 478,692, an increase of 1.2%.
- Pamela Johnson, VCB gave the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter sales report. 75 leads with an average group size of 136 and over 22,268 room nights were reported. The VCB partnered with the Port Authority to celebrate Air Berlin's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary flight from Dusseldorf, Germany to RSW. The VCB also partnered with BrandUSA to host the hugely successful BrandUSA UK MegaFam 2014 at the Pink Shell Beach Resort. Jan Doets, a Dutch tour operator was in destination for tour operator educational training during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. Jan Doets is large contributor to Air Berlin flights into RSW.
- Judi Durant, VCB gave the quarterly update for visitor services. The RSW airport volunteers

assisted 63,000 visitors and donated 5,000 hours of service in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. Judi thanked all the partners who have hosted the VCB volunteers for familiarization tours, or “FAMs”.

- Tamara announced that Lee County will be partnering with Charlotte County and Collier County in 2015 to hold a Regional Travel Rally Day at Lakes Park.
- Marcia Wood, DPA gave the 2nd quarter research report. During the spring season (April, May, June) 2014, The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel hosted approximately 1.4 million visitors who spent an estimated \$684 million – a modest increase over the prior year. Visitors staying in paid accommodations spent an estimated \$440 million (64 percent of the total). Lee County’s lodging industry experienced year-over-year increases in average occupancy rate and average daily rate for the spring season, producing significant growth in RevPAR.
- Tamara Pigott announced three new employees to the VCB Staff: Lorilei Barsh, who will be working with the MARCOM team as a Marketing Coordinator; Sean Corey, who will be working with the Visitor Services team at the airport as a Volunteer Coordinator; and Lisa Harmer, who will be working with the Fiscal team as an Account Clerk Sr.
- Lee County Sports Development Executive Director Jeff Mielke reported record-breaking numbers for spring 2014. During April, May and June 2014, Lee County hosted 44 events, bringing in 52,316 sports visitors to Lee County. The total direct and indirect economic impact during the three-month period totaled \$25.4 million. Jeff Webb thanked the Sports Development Office, Parks & Rec, and Alison Gruber for organizing these events. Councilman Forrest Banks also noted his appreciation for having FSW utilize the City of Palms Park facility.

### **Special Presentations**

- Hans Wilson and John Good gave an overview of the Southwest Florida Marine Industries Association. They organization was founded in Lee County in 1972 and have grown their membership up to Tampa/St. Petersburg area with over 200 members.
- John Brady with the Everglades Wonder Gardens gave a presentation on what’s new at one of the oldest roadside attractions in Lee County. He negotiated with the Piper Family to re-open the Gardens in June 2013 while they worked on purchasing it and transitioning to a non-profit organization.
- Marcia Wood, DPA shared the Leisure Traveler Market Assessment. This study was commissioned by the VCB. The report consisted of three components: 1. Overall market assessment, 2. Competitive analysis, 3. Attitudinal segmentation analysis.

### **Old Business**

- Rob Wells made a motion, seconded by Councilman Forrest Banks to approve the formalization of events marketing funds for FY 2014-15 for the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Sanibel Island Writers Conference in the amount of \$16,375. The motion passed unanimously.

### **New Business**

- Pamela Cronin made a motion, seconded by Colleen DePasquale to approve the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2013-14 Budget Report. The motion passed unanimously.
- Rob Wells made a motion, seconded by Tony Lapi to approve FY 2015-16 Events Marketing Subcommittee to include new member Jeff Webb, returning chair Pamela Cronin and returning committee members Colleen DePasquale, Mayor Kevin Ruane, and René Affourtit. The motion passed unanimously.

### **TDC Member Items**

- Tamara reminded everyone of upcoming VCB events. In addition to the Island Hopper Songwriter Fest, the E Awards will be held at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort & Spa on September 9<sup>th</sup>, the Governors Conference on Tourism will be held in Orlando September 22-24<sup>th</sup>, the VCB Annual

Meeting will be held on October 8<sup>th</sup>, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Restaurant Week kicks off on the first week of November. Tamara also announced a new late summer promotion in Chicago – an art mural to be created by a Chicago artist, depicting the artist's experience at The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel.

- Pamela Cronin is thrilled about the upcoming Island Hopper Songwriter Fest, and was thankful to host the Hope by Song local songwriter's competition at Capt'n Fistbones at the Shell Factory.
- Councilman Forrest Banks gave an update on the Fort Myers Country Club golf course's progress. They hope to reopen by the end of October.
- Colleen DePasquale announced that the Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce will be hosting a Business Symposium on August 28<sup>th</sup> at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort & Spa. Their chamber luncheon and 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Sports Summit will be held on August 21<sup>st</sup> at the Crowne Plaza.
- Jeff Webb reminded everyone of the next LCHA meeting on August 28<sup>th</sup> at the Crowne Plaza. Sheriff Mike Scott will be the speaker, and all are welcome.
- Fran Myers reported air service continues to increase at RSW.
- Tamara also announced an upcoming water quality informational session for tourism employees on Monday, August 25<sup>th</sup>. A morning session will take place at the Pink Shell at 9:30am, and an afternoon session will take place at Big Arts at 2 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m. The next regular meeting of the TDC is scheduled for **THURSDAY, November 13, 2014, at 9 a.m.** at Admin East, Conference Room 118, 2201 Second Street, Fort Myers, FL 33901. **The TDC will not meet in September or October. All reports are included with Minutes on file at the VCB and available at [www.leevcb.com](http://www.leevcb.com).**