



TDC MEETING MINUTES

May 10, 2019

Rob Wells, vice-chair called the Lee County Tourist Development Council (TDC) meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Council members in attendance: John Carioscia, Pamela Cronin, Colleen DePasquale, Tony Lapi, Fran Myers, Holly D. Smith, Bill Waichulis and Rob Wells. Brian Kramer was excused.

Wells asked the TDC to have a moment of silence in honor of Commissioner Larry Kiker and City of Sanibel Police officer, Anthony Neri. Smith thanked the TDC for the time to say a few words about each and asked that we keep their families, and loved ones in our thoughts and prayers.

Smith made a motion to approve the April 11, 2019, TDC meeting minutes. Myers seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Public to be heard

Beth Oliver, marketing director, Offshore Sailing School, announced they recently wrapped up the 19th annual Performance Race Week at South Seas Island Resort with 50 people. The 20th anniversary of the event will be held next year at the Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina with more than 50 participants. Oliver thanked the TDC and VCB for their sponsorship of the Hobie 16 Worlds in November at South Seas Island Resort. Oliver said Offshore Sailing School is a supporting sponsor and was responsible for rallying residents and business organizations with boats to help Hobie run their races and they now have a full contingent and fleet. She thanked the following groups for their boats: Members of the St. Charles Yacht Club; Caloosahatchee Marching and Charter Society Sailing Club; Sanibel/Captiva and San Carlos Bay Sail & Power Squadron; Sea Rats for search and rescue and for coordinating with the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary. Oliver said Hobie is very pleased that we already have a full contingent in May for an event in November. Oliver also reported that Offshore offers many teambuilding and leadership development programs that attract organizations outside the area that have the financial means. Oliver mentioned they will be hosting the fourth Annual Suffolk University Executive MBA program again this year and they will stay for a week at Pink Shell for the second year in a row.

Regina Hicks, site director, Education First thanked the VCB for the opportunity to participate in Travel Rally. Education First uses travel to expand the language skills of students who come to Southwest Florida from France, Spain, Germany and China to learn English. Education First can always use more host families. Students are in this area up to three weeks at a time. The site school this year is Estero High School. Students attend classes from 8 a.m. to noon and then participate in a total language immersion in the community to practice their language skills. The students will arrive July 4 and classes start July 8.

Municipalities to be heard

Judie Zimomra, Sanibel city manager, expressed condolences from City Hall regarding the deaths of Commissioner Larry Kiker and police officer Anthony Neri. Zimomra noted that due to TDC funding, Bowman's Beach Miccosukee Tiki Hut has been made ADA compliant and now more people have the opportunity to visit it.

Report of the Executive Director

Tamara Pigott reported the preliminary tourist development tax collected for March 2019 was \$8,793,221. Figures represent a 0.3 percent increase over March 2018 preliminary collections of \$8,766,349. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$26,590,712, a decrease of 2.1 percent year-over-year.

During March 2019, 1,482,239 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport. Figures represent an increase of 7.4 percent compared to March 2018. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is up 7.4 percent from the same period last year.

Phillip Downs, Downs & St. Germain Research, offered a first-quarter tourism snapshot. While visitation declined by 4 percent, room nights increased 2.6 percent and direct visitor, expenditures increased 5 percent to \$1,251,828,600.

Jeff Mielke, Sports Development director, reported that 26,300 room nights sold in the first quarter of 2019 with direct visitor spending of \$10.3 million. February broke a historical record for the month with 7,882 room nights.

New Business

Lucy Maldonado, finance manager, presented the 2nd quarter budget report. Fran Myers made a motion to approve the 2nd quarter budget report. Tony Lapi seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Formalize FY 2019-20 Beach & Shoreline Funding, Nancy MacPhee

Legislative findings were made on the following projects:

- **City of Sanibel, Beach & Shoreline Erosion Survey**
The TDC must make a legislative determination that conducting a Shoreline Erosion Survey is primarily related to promoting tourism.
Fran Myers made a motion, seconded by Pamela Cronin.
- **Town of Fort Myers Beach, Beach Erosion Monitoring**
The TDC must make a factual determination that Beach Erosion monitoring is primarily related to and promotes tourism.
Holly D. Smith made a motion, seconded by Pamela Cronin.
- **City of Cape Coral, Beach Park Facility Maintenance**
The purchase of vehicles will need a legislative determination that is primarily related to the promotion of tourism in the county and will only be used for maintenance of beach park facilities.
Holly D. Smith made a motion, seconded by Pamela Cronin
- **Captiva Erosion Prevention District, Beach Park Facility Maintenance**
The TDC must make a legislative finding expending funds for parking lot improvements is directly related to and primarily related to and will promote tourism within the county.
Fran Myers made a motion, seconded by Holly D. Smith.
- **Lee County Parks & Recreation, Beach & Shoreline Maintenance**
Make a legislative finding that the purchase of town John Deere utility vehicles is directly related to and primarily promotes tourism within the county.

Fran Myers made a motion, seconded by Holly D. Smith.

- **Lovers Key State Park, Beach Gazebo Repairs**

Make a legislative finding that this project promotes tourism within the county or that fixing the gazebo will improve, maintain, or restore beach park facilities.

Holly D. Smith made a motion, seconded by Pamela Cronin.

- **City of Sanibel, Changing Room Rehab at Bowman's Beach Park**

Make a legislative finding that this changing room is a beach park facility that primarily promotes tourism.

Tony Lapi made a motion, seconded by Pamela Cronin.

- **City of Fort Myers, Legacy Island Development Project**

Make a legislative finding that funding educational signage, two gazebos and benches promote tourism.

Holly D. Smith made a motion, seconded by Fran Myers.

- **"DING" Darling Wildlife Society, ADA Kayak Launch System & Kiosk**

Make a legislative finding that this project relates to and primarily promote tourism.

Fran Myers made a motion, seconded by Holly D. Smith.

- **Lee Tran, Fort Myers Beach Expanded Tram Service**

Make a legislative determination that funding a transportation service enhances the County's ability to attract tourists and must be promoted to tourists in a way that demonstrates that tourism is one of its central purposes.

Fran Myers made a motion, seconded by Holly D. Smith.

After the necessary legislative findings were made, the TDC recommended the Lee Board of County Commissioners approve 21 projects totaling \$10,061,046 as part of the FY 2019-20 budget.

Holly D. Smith made a motion, seconded by Fran Myers. The motion passed unanimously.

TDC Member Items

- Holly D. Smith thanked the TDC and VCB for a great experience serving on the board. Smith noted it is her last official meeting as she will not be able to attend June's meeting. Smith resigned from all subcommittees she had been a part of as her term expires on June 30. Smith attended the South Florida Water Management District meetings. The new board has been selected and she attended a 9-hour educational workshop on water quality. The old mission statement talked about flood control and the new one will focus on our environment and more transparency.
- Fran Myers gave the air service update. She recently attended an event at the Mound House, and encouraged those who have not been there to visit this unique attraction on Fort Myers Beach. Myers also attended an event at Matanzas Pass Preserve and was amazed at how many tourists have been visiting the preserve. Myers mentioned that the beaches are looking very good.
- Rob Wells thanked Holly D. Smith for all her time and effort on the TDC. Wells said Smith has been a champion for water quality and he has enjoyed her time spent on the TDC.
- Colleen DePasquale reminded everyone that June 14 is the 10th Anniversary Chrysalis Awards and that there are still tradeshow booths available. DePasquale announced that Brian Ososky and Pamela Johnson, VCB will be giving a presentation at the upcoming Greater Fort Myers Chamber luncheon, which will be held at Campo Felice. DePasquale said that there are seven chambers that meet the first Wednesday each month about water quality and other regional

issues. The chambers will be partnering with News-Press to collaborate and produce a Water summit, from 8:00 a.m. to noon Aug 21.

- Bill Waichulus reported that the new No. 1 platform for customer reviews is Google (30% increase), No. 2 is Booking.com, No. 3 is Trip Advisor and No. 4 is Expedia. Waichulus said, “If you aren’t watching Google, you should be.” Waichulus also mentioned to watch your lights, as it is now turtle season.
- Tony Lapi reported that the Old Captiva House, (which is on the National Registry of Historic Places) underwent under a full multi-million dollar renovation. Karen Benson’s team put together a great design and Old Captiva House will be open for the SanCap chamber luncheon on Tuesday, May 14 and to the public for dinner that evening. Lapi announced there would be an event by invitation on May 28 for the restaurant. Lapi thanked Rob Wells for filling in for Commissioner Pendergrass and said he did a great job.
- Rob Wells invited everyone to sing Happy Birthday to Tamara Pigott. Wells reminded TDC of the next meeting on Thursday, June 13.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Next TDC meeting

The next TDC meeting will be held at 9 a.m. **Thursday, June 13, 2019**, at the Lee County Admin East building, Conference Room 118, 2201 Second St., Fort Myers. To view a complete tax collections report, go to www.LeeVCB.com. Contact: Tamara Pigott, TPigott@leegov.com, Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.