



## **TDC MEETING MINUTES**

May 12, 2016

Commissioner Frank Mann called the meeting to order at 8:59 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Council members in attendance: René Affourtit, Fran Myers, Colleen DePasquale, Bill Waichulis, Mike Gibson, Tony Lapi, Rob Wells, Jeff Webb, Pamela Cronin and Anita Cereceda.

René Affourtit made a motion, seconded by Anita Cereceda to approve the April 14, 2016 TDC meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Public to be Heard**

- Jack Harper, Florida RV Trade Association, informed the TDC of a successful season of increased sales and stable interest rates.

### **Municipalities to be Heard**

- Judie Zimomra, City Manager of Sanibel, shared photos of the tiki hut recently completed at Bowman's Beach which was funded by the TDC. Tamara Pigott added that Bowman's Beach was recently named one of the top 30 beaches for families by the Travel Channel, and that the addition of new assets are enhancing the visitor experience. Tony Lapi asked Zimomra the projected expectancy of the tiki hut. Zimomra stated it is ten years.
- Todd King, City of Cape Coral special events coordinator, thanked the TDC for their continued marketing assistance through the Events Marketing Program, and their support of the Coconut Festival.

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

- Tamara Pigott announced new staff additions: Erin Congregane, sales manager, Moira Larkin and Josh Lambert, marketing interns. In addition, Pigott announced the promotion of Cindy Hinson, communications manager.
- Tamara Pigott reported that the bed tax collections for the month of March 2016 were \$8,052,654, a 5.2% increase over March 2015 preliminary collections of \$7,656,657. Fiscal year over year collections increased 6.6%, with a total of \$25,006,452 collected.
- STR Report – Occupancy for March was down 1.5%, ADR increased by 5.5% and RevPAR was up 3.9%. Pigott stated that prior to January 2015 the county has experience 64 consecutive months of occupancy increases.
- RSW Report – During March 2016, 1,269,961 passengers traveled through RSW, a 7.5% increase over March 2015 of 1,181,382. Year-to-date total is an increase of 8% with 3.8 million passengers.
- Marcia Wood, DPA, reported the 1st quarter research of the winter season, January - March. During the winter of 2016, The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel hosted about 1.3 million visitors who spent an estimated \$1.16 billion while visiting – an increase in spending year-over-year. Visitors staying in paid accommodations spent an estimated \$859.4 million (74 percent of the total). Lee County's lodging industry experienced a year-over-year decrease in average occupancy rate but an increase in average daily rate for the season, leading to modest growth in revenue per available room (RevPAR).

## **New Business**

- Nancy MacPhee asked the TDC to formalize the fiscal year 16/17 Beach & Shoreline funding recommendations reviewed at the April 28 workshop. The TDC was asked to find legislative findings for the following six projects:
  1. City of Sanibel- Beach & Shoreline Erosion Survey: *Make a legislative finding that this project is directly related to tourism and furthers the purpose of promoting tourism.* Rob Wells made a motion, seconded by René Affourtit. The motion passed unanimously.
  2. City of Sanibel- Island Wide Beach Management Plan Update: *Make a legislative finding that updating Sanibel's island wide beach management plan is directly relate to and promotes tourism.* Rob Wells made a motion, seconded by Anita Cereceda. The motion passed unanimously.
  3. Ding Darling Wildlife Society- National Wildlife Refuge Perry Tract Kiosk: *Make a legislative finding that the purpose of the expenditure of funds is primarily related to the advancement and promotion of tourism.* Anita Cereceda made a motion, seconded by Rob Wells. The motion passed unanimously.
  4. Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast- Pine Island Preserve at Matlacha Pass- Boardwalk & kayak Launch: *Make a factual determination whether this project is related to tourism and primarily promotes tourism.* Anita Cereceda made a motion, seconded by René Affourtit. The motion passed unanimously.
  5. Barrier Island Parks Society, Inc. - Gasparilla Island Lighthouse Pathways & Signage: *Make a legislative finding that interpretative signage, turtle-friendly lights, plant markers and way finding signs are related to tourism and primarily promotes tourism.* Fran Myers made a motion, seconded by Anita Cereceda. The motion passed unanimously.
  6. Town of Fort Myers Beach- Tram for Mound House: *Make a legislative finding that this project is related to tourism and primarily promotes that purpose.* Anita Cereceda made a motion, seconded by René Affourtit. The motion passed with one objection by Colleen DePasquale.

The TDC formalized funding for fiscal year 16/17 with an approved list of 19 projects and \$9,513,141 million in allocated funds.

- Tony Lapi, made a motion, seconded by Rob Wells to approve the 2nd Quarter 2016 budget report. The motion passed unanimously.

## **TDC Member Items**

- Pamela Cronin expressed her excitement to be back in town from vacation.
- Jeff Webb reminded everyone of the upcoming LCHA meeting on Thursday, May 26, at the Holiday Inn Gulf Coast Town Center. The speaker will be Mike Jung, president and publisher of the News Press. Tickets are available on the LCHA website. Webb reminded the TDC members of the money left in reserves (\$10.5 million) and their responsibility to spend the money appropriately, perhaps on marketing.
- Anita Cereceda thanked Tamara Pigott, Nancy MacPhee, and Glen Slayer for attending and presenting to the Fort Myers Beach council on May 25, 2016.
- Fran Myers referred everyone to the air service update sheet that she provided to them.
- Colleen DePasquale reminded everyone of the Chrysalis Awards May 20<sup>th</sup>. There are still tradeshow booths available. More than 300 participants have registered and tradeshow booths are almost sold out.

- Bill Waichulis informed the TDC of his and Tamara Pigott's recent participation in the VISIT FLORIDA Digital Innovation Forum in Silicon Valley and San Francisco. For five days the group visited Adobe Systems, Facebook, Google, Twitter, Airbnb and Uber to learn new digital strategies.
- Rob Wells would like to see a discussion on the agenda for Beach & Shoreline capital funding. Wells agrees with Webb that the money in reserves should be used to combat negative coverage and use the remaining money for advertising and marketing efforts.
- Tony Lapi agrees with Wells and Webb. He informs the TDC that he walked the beach and the water quality is in great condition but the guard must stay up to protect and keep the beaches in good shape.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m. The next regular meeting of the TDC will be held on **Thursday, June 9, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. at the Lee County Admin East Building, first floor conference room 118, 2201 Second Street, Fort Myers, FL 33901.** To view a complete tax collections report, go to [www.LeeVCB.com](http://www.LeeVCB.com). Contact: Tamara Pigott, [TPigott@leegov.com](mailto:TPigott@leegov.com), Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.