



TDC Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2021

Commissioner Brian Hamman, chair, called the Lee County Tourist Development Council (TDC) meeting to order at 2p.m.

Council members in attendance

Commissioner Brian Hamman, Pamela Cronin, Colleen DePasquale, Rexann Hosafros, Brian Kramer, Tony Lapi, Jon McLain, Fran Myers, Bill Waichulis and Robert Wells III.

Cronin made a motion to approve the May 13, 2021 meeting minutes. McLain seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Public to be heard

None to be heard.

Municipalities to be heard

None to be heard.

Cronin recognized Ben Seigel, executive director, Lee County Port Authority, for being recently named 2020 Air Carrier Airport Director of the Year by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Hamman thanked Seigel for his hard work and that the honor is a reflection of his team.

Report of the executive director

Tamara Pigott, VCB executive director, reported preliminary resort tax collected for April 2021 was \$5,671,871 an 1182.23% increase over April 2020 preliminary collections of \$442,344. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$33,413,954, an increase of 18.8% year-over-year.

Pigott also reported that the average hotel occupancy rate in April 2021 was 80.6%, which is up 366% from April 2020 (17.3%). The average daily rate for April 2021 was \$190.35, up 148.5% from April 2020 (\$76.61) and RevPAR for April was \$153.45, up 1057.9% from April 2020 (\$13.25).

For vacation rentals, the average occupancy rate in April 2021 was 67%, which is up 378.6% from April 2020 (14%). The average daily rate for April 2021 was \$268, which is up 69.6% from April 2020 (\$158) and RevPAR for April 2021 was \$178, which is up 747.6% from April 2020 (\$21).

During April 2021, 1,107,004 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW), an increase of 1973.9% compared to May 2020. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is up 12% from the same period last year.

Marketing update

Brian Ososky, VCB marketing director, provided an update on the VCB's phased approach to COVID recovery. He also provided examples of summer creative placements in Expedia, Travelzoo and *The New York Times*, as well as a look ahead to fall media strategies and targeted fly/drive markets. Other

marketing team efforts include a new consumer website and new visitor guide, both slated for fall completion, while the Sun Saver Passport and Threshold 360 projects are ongoing.

Sports Development update

Jeff Mielke, sports development director, reported that 25,892 room nights sold in January through March 2021 with direct visitor spending of more than \$9.6 million. Mielke announced Tommy Cassel from the VCB has joined sports development as business development manager.

For council information

Pigott shared information regarding the Florida Governor's Conference on Tourism Sept 8-10 at the Diplomat Beach Hotel in Hollywood. Fran Belasco of the VCB will be sending out more information about registration; early bird rates end July 14.

TDC member items

Hosafros thanked the board for being so kind and friendly as this is her last meeting. She will continue to attend unofficially in the future.

Myers shared air service update and congratulated Siegel on being named 2020 Air Carrier Airport Manager of the Year. Myers said "The RSW staff works hard and is phenomenal." Also, the Red Coconut is full through summer.

Kramer mentioned that the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort & Spa beginning a \$17 million guest room renovation that will be finished by mid-October. During this time, the property will go from 454 rooms to 200 for the summer. The Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association (FRLA) will be partnering with the Sanibel Captiva Chamber of Commerce, Thursday, June 17 for its monthly luncheon at the Sundial Beach Resort & Spa. Featured speakers include: Samantha Padgett, FRLA general counsel and Dana Young, president and CEO of VISIT FLORIDA. They will be giving an update on the hospitality industry and tourism.

Hamman shared that the Lee Board of County Commissioners met with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) about its first iteration of the Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM) - Once approved the LOSOM will be in place for ten years. The Army Corps have complimented the Lee County team on working with them on the manual.

DePasquale shared that the chambers in Southwest Florida are working together on a plan to work with the Army Corps as well on LOSOM.

Glen Salyer, assistant county manager, also commended the commission for its hard work on the Herbert Hoover Dike over that last few years in lobbying to get repairs made.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3p.m.

Next TDC meeting

There is no July TDC meeting. The next TDC meeting is scheduled for **2 p.m., Thursday, August 12, 2021** at the Lee County Administration East Building, 2201 Second St., Room 118, Fort Myers. To view a complete tax collections report, visit www.LeeVCB.com. Contact: Tamara Pigott, TPigott@leegov.com, Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.