



TDC MEETING MINUTES

January 15, 2016

Commissioner Frank Mann called the meeting to order at 9:00 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.

The TDC recognized 34 participants that recently earned the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute's Certified Guest Service Professional (CGSP) designation. Christine Davlin, VCB training and development manager, announced that the total number of hospitality graduates to date is 293. There is an addendum attached which lists the most recent recipients.

René Affourtit made a motion, seconded by Fran Myers to approve the TDC Meeting Minutes of December 10, 2015. The motion passed unanimously.

Public to be Heard

- John Naylor, Executive Director of the City of Palms Basketball Classic, thanked the TDC and VCB for their continued support of the tournament. This year, all games will be played at Bishop Verot High School. Beginning in 2017, all games will be held at the new FSW stadium, which will increase the number of spectator seats available by more than 1,000. John shared an impressive statistic that 51 of the current NBA players (11.3% of the roster) have played a least once in the tournament.
- Cathy Incardona, Practice Director, Lee Convenient Care, wanted to remind and educate the public and visitors as to where proper health care can be accessed in Lee County so that we are not flooding the emergency rooms with minor illnesses. Lee Convenient Care has three convenient locations that are open from 7am to 7pm that can treat minor illnesses. Pamphlets were provided to industry partners to offer at their places of business to inform visitors of their medical services and locations.
- Sharon McAllister, Executive Director, ArtFest Fort Myers, thanked the TDC and VCB for their support of ArtFest through the TDC Events Marketing grant program. ArtFest is featured in the center 24 pages of Travelhost magazine for their three day event in February. Local artist Leoma Lovegrove created the poster art for this year, and her design will be featured on posters and shirts available for purchase during the festival.
- Carol Obermeier, Director of Aviation Marketing, Southwest Florida International Airport, (SWFIA) reported a record-breaking year at the airport. Frontier Airlines added 2 more cities: Cincinnati and Indianapolis; which increases non-stop cities to 10. Delta increased and updated their aircraft at their hubs. Sun Country has added a third nonstop flight to San Juan, PR due to the popularity of that flight. SWFIA updated their incentive program in October, and will have increased funds to target specific markets such as the UK, Germany and in Europe for up to \$500,000 per market for specific nonstop carriers. As part of the incentive program, rates, charges, and landing fees will be waived for two years.
- Theresa Schober, Archaeologist & Museum Consultant, encouraged the TDC and the BOCC in opposing House Bill 803 and Senate Bill 1054 as written, which essentially legitimizes the looting of historical and archaeological artifacts from state owned submerged lands. Anita Cereceda made a motion, seconded by Pam Cronin to approve that the TDC chairman ask the County Commission to express its opposition to HB 803 and SB 1054 by resolution to the Lee County legislative delegation.

The motion passed unanimously.

Municipalities to be Heard

- Anita Cereceda, Mayor, Town of Fort Myers Beach, gave an update on the current projects on Fort Myers Beach. Estero Boulevard road construction continues with a storm water project and a potable water project. There is a new hotelier that has proposed a major project to improve the downtown Times Square area of Fort Myers Beach. Mayor Cereceda encouraged everyone to visit www.grandresortsfmb.com for up-to-date information on the project.

VCB Executive Director's Report

- Tamara Pigott reported that the bed tax collections for the month of November 2015 were \$2,040,654, a 9.1% increase over November 2014 preliminary collections of \$1,869,592. Fiscal year over year collections increased 12.4%, with a total of \$4,038,523 collected.
- STR Report – Occupancy for November was up 6.3%, ADR increased by 5.5% and RevPAR was up 12.1%.
- RSW Report – Total Passenger count of 720,556 for November 2015, an increase of 7.6% over November 2014. Year to date, passenger traffic was 7,536,442, a 4.6% from the same period last year.
- At the next TDC Meeting on February 11th, a photographer will be present to take a group shot of the TDC Board, and individual head shots of each TDC member.
- On March 19th, FGCU will be holding their annual Wanderlust fundraiser for the School of Resort & Hospitality Management at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point in Bonita Springs.
- Tamara welcomed the VCB's new Marketing Director, Brian Ososky. Ososky will coordinate the day-to-day efforts of a multi-million dollar advertising contract, oversee the development of all creative work, and evaluate technology and content of social network websites to devise strategies to further marketing and branding efforts online.
- Jeff Mielke welcomed Angel Natal to Lee County Sports Development as their Senior Sales Manager. He was the Sports Director at the Visit Tuscan CVB and also worked with the sports commission in St. Petersburg. Natal has an extensive knowledge of International sports as well as contacts within Canada, Europe, and Latin American.

Special Presentation

- Clayton Reid, MMGY Global shared a presentation regarding how the sharing economy brands are destroying traditional operators. AirBnb is now bigger than Marriott and valued at \$24 Billion. Uber has 8 million users and continues to grow. Millenials are leading other groups to use shared services. In Fort Myers there are 223 AirBnb listings. We have over 7,000 accounts that pay the bed tax in our community and a high number of them are vacation rentals. AirBnb's are also trying to grow their influence with the business and meeting traveler.

New Business

- Nancy MacPhee presented an overview of Attractions Marketing and Events Marketing funding. The subcommittee has requested a guideline change to the new FY 17 funding which is opening shortly for the attractions and the events marketing programs. Attractions Marketing has an annual budget of \$350,000 and Events Marketing has \$200,000. This year TDC funded thirty nine attractions and ten events. Pam Cronin gave an overview about the past practices where events received seed money and then they are able to stand on their own, but because the events marketing are very restrictive, it's limiting the amount of organizations that can apply.
- René Affourtit made a motion, seconded by Fran Myers to approve a criteria change recommendation that allows eligible organizations Attraction and/or Event Marketing funding applicants to submit two

TDC funding requests per year (two event funding applications or one attraction and one event marketing funding applications). The motion passed unanimously.

TDC Member Items

- Pam Cronin announced that The Shell Factory will hold its largest event, The Gumbo Festival on Sunday, January 31st from 11:00am-6:00pm. The fundraiser is for their environmental education foundation. She also stated that it's important to have an ongoing conversation before making a decision on the reserves.
- Jeff Webb reminded everyone of the LCHA meeting, Thursday, January 28th at the Embassy Suites in Estero. The speaker will be Tamara Pigott, Executive Director for the VCB and the topic will be tourism in the New Year. Tickets are available on the LCHA website. Jeff said he would also like to discuss further the two issues still on the table, BP settlement funds and TDC reserves. Andrea Fraser commented that that we have entered into the agreement to receive the BP funds but have not received them yet. Commissioner Mann said we have plenty of time to get the information to TDC members to review and recommend on how to utilize those funds. Tamara noted that that a group of constituents (hotel partners, TDC members, attractions, and municipal partners) have begun a conversation to make suggestions regarding the reserves. The conversation was led by Pete Winton, Assistant County Manager. The group will meet again to discuss it further.
- René Affourtit stated he appreciated the discussion. He then encouraged the TDC to receive input from partners.
- Colleen DePasquale announced Chrysalis nominations are due by January 22nd. The awards and luncheon will be held at Harborside Event Center on May 20th, 2016.
- Rob Wells advised the TDC board to continue working on the reserves issue.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m. The next regular meeting of the TDC will be held on **Thursday, February 11, 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. Contact: Tamara Pigott, TPigott@leegov.com, Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.