



TDC MEETING MINUTES

February 13, 2014

Vice Chair René Affourtit called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Council members in attendance: Tony Lapi, Joe Murgalo, Rob Wells, Pamela Cronin, Fran Myers, Jeff Webb and Councilman Forrest Banks. Kevin Ruane, Commissioner Larry Kiker and Colleen DePasquale were excused.

Jeff Webb made a motion, seconded by Pamela Cronin to approve the TDC Meeting Minutes of January 9, 2013. The motion passed unanimously.

Public to be Heard

- Tom Cronin, Shell Factory, gave an update on the new additions to the attraction that will be opening soon. The first zip line in Lee County will open in early April. They will also be opening a fossil museum.
- Steve Tutko, Babcock Ranch, announced their 100th anniversary celebration will take place February 14-16 and the Babcock Lumber Co. will also be celebrating their 127th anniversary.
- Cathy Incardona, Lee Convenient Care announced the opening of a third convenient care location and then shared the hours of operation are: every day from 7am-7pm, 7 days a week. These facilities are in response to reducing the long wait lines in hospital emergency rooms and can be especially useful to visitors during high season.

Municipalities to be Heard

- Judith Zimomra, Sanibel City Manager gave an update on the Island and announced they had a record breaking 1,100 people come through the Sanibel/Captiva Chamber one day in February.
- Don Paight, City of Fort Myers gave an update on Harborside. They have spoken to a new developer and a new proposal will be presented to the City of Fort Myers during a workshop on February 18th.

VCB Executive Director's Report

- Tamara announced that the new Deputy Director is Pamela Johnson and that the VCB also has a new International Sales Manager, Stefanie Zinke.
- Tamara reported the preliminary bed tax collections for the month of December 2013 at \$2,414,494 a 18.5 % increase over December 2012 collections. The fiscal YTD collections totaled \$5,630,381, an increase of 13.7 % over the same period in 2012.
- STR Report – Occupancy was up 15.3%. ADR increased by 3.4% and RevPAR was up 19.2%. Lee County experienced a 19.2 % increase in Room Revenue with Available Rooms flat and Rooms Sold up 15.3%.
- RSW Report – Total Passenger count of 735,739 for December 2013, a increase of 8.2% over December 2012.
- Key indicators were up including page views, accommodations services and visitor guide books.
- Tamara gave Marcia Wood's 4th quarter research report as she was unable to attend due to weather related travel issues. As 2013 drew to a close, Lee County posted historical statistics in visitation and

expenditures for both the year and the fourth quarter. Visitors staying in paid accommodations during fall 2013 was the highest it has been over the past five years, increasing 17.5% during that period. Similarly, visitor expenditures among those staying in paid accommodations during fall 2013 have grown over the last five years by 23.4%. While total visitation has fluctuated over the last five years, visitation amongst those staying in paid accommodations has increased 20.2%. Visitor expenditures showed a similar pattern of growth to the visitation trends, with expenditures by those in paid accommodations increasing 20.6% since 2009.

Report of the Sports Development Executive Director, Jeff Mielke

- Lee County had a record year for sports tourism in 2013 with nearly 142,000 room nights sold and \$100 million in direct and indirect economic impact from amateur sporting events alone. The destination hosted more than 100 amateur sports events, and amateur baseball events alone accounted for 85,000 of the room nights. JetBlue Park hosted events two out of three days last year, more than any other facility in the nation. December 2013 was a great month for sports tourism, due in part to the return of the Florida Senior Games. During that month, amateur sports generated 12,353 total room nights sold and a direct and indirect economic impact of \$7,418,273. Lee County Sports Development has far surpassed its goal of generating 40,000 room nights per year set at the inception of the organization in 2003.

Special Presentations

- TJ Cannamela, owner of Buckingham Farms introduced his business and shared some background on how they got started and have grown. They have already booked 27 weddings this year. They will be hosting the TDC Meeting on March 13th.

Old Business

- None to be heard.

New Business

- Tony Lapi made a motion, seconded by Rob Wells to accept the 1st Quarter 2013-14 Budget Report. The motion passed unanimously.

TDC Member Items

- Pamela Cronin announced that the Shell Factory will be hosting the K-9 Capers on Presidents Day, February 17th.
- Jeff Webb reminded everyone of the next LCHA meeting on February 27th at the Holiday Inn on Alico. Bill Smith from the Twins will be the speaker and you can register online and pay with paypal.
- Fran Myers said the airport had no meeting last month and that she will be attending the Edison Light Parade and staying downtown.
- Joe Murgalo is enjoying season and rates are strong. The Hyatt is getting ready for the Red Sox to come to town.
- Rob Wells said there's been a good kick-off to season and hopes everyone has a good weekend with the Presidents Day holiday.
- Tony Lapi will not be at the next TDC meeting in March as he will be in Tallahassee for Tourism Day.
- René Affourtit reminded everyone that the next TDC meeting is at Buckingham Farms.

The meeting adjourned at 10:37 a.m. The next regular meeting of the TDC is scheduled for **THURSDAY, March 13, 2014, 9 a.m.** at **Buckingham Farms, 12931 Orange River Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33905.** *All reports are included with Minutes on file at the VCB and available at www.leevcb.com.*