

TDC MEETING MINUTES

March 13, 2014

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

Kevin Ruane made a motion, seconded by Pamela Cronin to approve the TDC Meeting Minutes of February 13, 2014. The motion passed unanimously.

Public to be Heard

- None to be heard.

Municipalities to be Heard

- None to be heard.

VCB Executive Director's Report

- Tamara Pigott reported the preliminary bed tax collections for the month of January 2014 at \$3,163,195 an impressive 19% increase over January 2013 and a record-setting collection for the month of January. The fiscal YTD collections totaled \$8,912,401, an increase of 15.6 % over the same period in 2013.
- STR Report – Occupancy was up 9%. ADR increased by 5.3% and RevPAR was up 14.8%. Lee County experienced a 14.4 % increase in Room Revenue with Available Rooms decreased by 0.3% and Rooms Sold up 8.6%.
- RSW Report – Total Passenger count of 778,163 for January 2014, an increase of 3% over January 2013.
- Key indicators were up including page views, accommodations services and visitor guide books.
- Kevin Ruane made a motion, seconded by Pamela Cronin to approve sending a support letter from the TDC Board chairman to request increased state funding of beach nourishment projects in FY 2014/15. The TDC encouraged tourism partners to join them in sending letters and educating state leaders about the necessity and urgency of providing more adequate state funding for beach projects.
- Clayton Reid, MMGY Global, gave an update on the research and statistics of the travel intent for the Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel visitor.
- Laura Chmielewski, Marketing and Communications Director, presented a marketing update and announced the upcoming Summer promotion. She also announced the Colgate Offshore Sailing School will celebrate 50 years in business and a launch a fleet eleven sailboats displaying the Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel promotional sails on the Hudson River on May 22, 2014. Additionally, Laura also shared that Hobie will be here in May to photograph their product line with our destination as the backdrop, bringing in 15-20 journalists that will be attending and covering the event. VCB Public Relations received a Platinum Adrian award for the USS Mohawk Coverage, a Gold Adrian Award for Social Media for the Google Glass Campaign, Gold Adrian Award for Digital Marketing/eNewsletters and a Silver Adrian Award for Advertising, the Find Your Island Campaign.

Special Presentations

- Ron Hamel with Gulf Citrus Growers Association introduced Dave Nicely from SunHarvest Citrus. Dave gave a background on SunHarvest Citrus and how the business has grown. They are the #2 landmark and #10 attraction in this area.
- Councilman Forrest Banks introduced Jason Camp from Pincher's at The Marina at Edison Ford. Jason gave an overview of Pinchers and how the partnership between Edison Ford, Captiva Cruises and Pinchers was created. They now have restaurants from Tampa to the Keys. They opened for dinner March 10th and will open for lunch and dinner effective March 14th. April 24-25, 2014 they will be hosting Blues, Brews & BBQ event and they will be hosting a stone crab festival in November 2014.
- Christine Davlin presented for recognition the most recent group, and the third property, to earn their Certified Guest Service Professional designation. There are now 70 industry members certified.

Old Business

- None to be heard.

New Business

- Councilman Forrest Banks made a motion, seconded by Kevin Ruane to accept the proposed 2013-14 Budget Supplement of \$1.35 million for fiscal year 2014, bringing the budget total to \$15.35 million. The motion passed unanimously. The budget decision will now go to the Lee County Board of County Commissioners for approval. The additional funds, which come from bed tax dollars, will be used mainly for advertising and promoting the destination in key markets and internationally.
- Pamela Cronin made a motion, seconded by Rob Wells to approve an emergency funding request for \$51,000 from Lee County Construction and Design to stabilize the southern shoreline of the canal at Manatee Park due to rapid erosion. Pamela Cronin made a motion, seconded by Kevin Ruane to amend the first motion to include additional work for 2014/15 if there would be a cost savings realized by combining the projects. The amended motion passed unanimously.

TDC Member Items

- Pamela Cronin announced that the Shell Factory will be hosting a St Patrick's Day celebration on Monday, March 17th. They are seeing more growth from the Red Sox spilling over to them.
- Jeff Webb reminded everyone of the next LCHA meeting on March 27th at the Holiday Inn on Alico. Marshall Bower from the Lee County Public Schools will be the speaker and you can register online and pay with paypal.
- Colleen DePasquale announced that the Chrysalis Awards and Tradeshow will be held on May 15th.
- Fran Myers shared the hotlist from the airport meeting. There were 316 flights cancelled in January and they still saw a 3% increase compared to 2013. The Red Coconut is really busy and hasn't seen this much business in years.
- Joe Murgalo shared that there will be a Blues Festival at Bonita's Riverside Park this Friday, March 14- Saturday, March 15 and the proceeds go to charity.
- Kevin Ruane said it's great to hear everyone is having a great season, but encouraged that we plan or managing the success.
- Commissioner Larry Kiker was at the Twins ribbon cutting and noted people love the new additions to the stadium. He was with the Red Sox to celebrate their championship from last season and was able to throw out the first pitch on opening day.

The meeting adjourned at 10:34 a.m. The next regular meeting of the TDC is scheduled for **THURSDAY, April 10, 2014, 9 a.m.** at 2201 Second Street, First Floor Conference room #118, Fort Myers, FL 33901. *All reports are included with Minutes on file at the VCB and available at www.leevcb.com.*