

## TDC MEETING MINUTES

May 8, 2014

Vice Chair René Affourtit called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Council members in attendance: Joe Murgalo, Rob Wells, Fran Myers, Jeff Webb, Councilman Forrest Banks, Colleen DePasquale, Mayor Kevin Ruane, and Tony Lapi. Pamela Cronin and Commissioner Larry Kiker were excused.

Fran Myers made a motion, seconded by Kevin Ruane to approve the TDC Meeting Minutes of April 10, 2014. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Public to be Heard**

- Carl McAloose, Director of Intercollegiate Athletics for Edison State announced the return of athletics at Edison State College beginning in 2015. Plans to build an arena on the Lee Campus will begin later this year.

### **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 March 2014 at \$7,023,621, a 12.3% increase over March 2013 and a record-setting collection for the month of March. The fiscal YTD collections totaled \$20,242,234, an increase of 15.7 % over the same period in 2013.
- STR Report – For the month of March 2014, occupancy was up 2.6%, ADR increased by 8.5%, and RevPAR was up 11.3%. Lee County experienced an 11 % increase in Room Revenue, while Available Rooms decreased by 0.3% and Rooms Sold increased by 2.2%.
- RSW Report – Total Passenger count of 1,147,059 for March 2014, an increase of 2.8% over March 2013.
- Key indicators for the month of March were up, including total inquiries, total leads, and partner referrals.
- Marcia Wood, DPA gave the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2014 research report. During the winter of 2014, The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel hosted about 1.4 million visitors who spent an estimated \$1.07 billion while visiting – an increase over the prior year, according to Davidson-Peterson Associates. Visitors staying in paid accommodations spent an estimated \$763 million (71 percent of the total). Lee County's lodging industry experienced year-over-year increases in average occupancy rate and average daily rate for the winter season, producing significant growth in RevPAR.
- Tamara Pigott announced two new interns that started recently at the VCB. Wynter Rose will be working with the Marketing and Communications (MarCom) team, and Maya Mathis will be working with the Visitor Services team.

### **Report of the Sports Development Executive Director**

- Jeff Mielke reported a strong finish to the first quarter, hosting 23 events that brought 15,136 sports visitors to Lee County in January, February and March 2014. The average number of

room nights per event was 799, and the total economic impact per event averaged \$498,885.

### **Special Presentations**

- Ron Riley, of RJ Riley & Company, Inc. will be hosting American Dream Seekers at Harborside Event Center on October 25, 2014. It will be a competition for entrepreneurs, similar to *Shark Tank* as seen on T.V. The event hopes to attract national attention and sponsors to bring long-term businesses to the area.

### **Old Business**

- None to be heard.

### **New Business**

- Fran Myers made a motion, seconded by Kevin Ruane to approve the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2013-14 Budget Report. The motion passed unanimously.
  - Kevin Ruane made a motion, seconded by Fran Myers to approve and formalize FY 2014-15 Beach & Shoreline Funding for 23 projects totaling \$7,463,000. The motion passed unanimously. There were 7 legislative findings that also needed approval as follows:
    - Fran Myers made a motion, seconded by Rob Wells to approve the Beach & Shoreline Erosion Survey project submitted by the City of Sanibel with the legislative finding that surveying the shoreline of Sanibel promotes tourism. The motion passed unanimously.
    - Kevin Ruane made a motion, seconded by Fran Myers to approve the Coastal Management Plan project submitted by the Town of Fort Myers Beach with the legislative finding that developing an understanding of coastal process controlling shoreline erosion promotes tourism. The motion passed unanimously.
    - Kevin Ruane made a motion, seconded by René Affourtit to approve the Bayside & Beach access improvements project submitted by the Town of Fort Myers Beach with the legislative finding that amenities such as bike racks, foot showers and drinking fountains along with proposed signage promote tourism. The motion passed unanimously.
    - Kevin Ruane made a motion, seconded by Rob Wells to approve the ADA Public Comfort Station project submitted by the Town of Fort Myers Beach with the legislative finding that a comfort station is a beach park facility. The motion passed unanimously.
    - Forrest Banks made a motion, seconded by Jeff Webb to approve the ADA Gulf Lookout Shade Structure project submitted by the City of Sanibel with the legislative finding that a shade structure project promotes tourism. The motion passed unanimously.
    - Kevin Ruane made a motion, seconded by Rob Wells to approve the Truck & Tram project submitted by Cayo Costa State Park with the legislative finding that the purchase of vehicles with TDC funds promotes tourism. The motion passed unanimously.
    - Forrest Banks made a motion, seconded by Kevin Ruane to approve the Beach Park Habitat Protection & Education project submitted by the City of Sanibel with the legislative finding that visitor friendly signage is an authorized expenditure of TDC funds. The motion passed unanimously.
- Kevin Ruane made a motion, seconded by Rob Wells to approve the change of scope for Phase III of the City of Bonita Springs River Park project. The motion passed unanimously.
- Fran Myers suggested that the TDC send a letter to the City of Bonita Springs encouraging better road signage to increase visitation to Bonita Springs River Park. René Affourtit asked for a motion upon Fran's request. Forrest Banks made a motion, seconded by Fran Myers. The motion passed unanimously.

**TDC Member Items**

- Councilman Forrest Banks shared that he attended a wonderful golf event at Cypress Lake Country Club sponsored by Chico's. He reported that Fort Myers Country Club is undergoing a major renovation and is scheduled to re-open to the public in September.
- Jeff Webb reminded everyone that the next LCHA meeting will be a late afternoon mixer on May 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Alliance for the Arts. Lydia Black will be the speaker. Richard Michaels will be the speaker for the June meeting which will be held at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort and Spa in Bonita Springs. He said that his team at the Hampton Inn greatly enjoyed the Travel Rally, won some tourism races, and thought it was an amazing event that really brought the community together.
- Colleen DePasquale reminded everyone that the Chrysalis Awards and Tradeshow will be held on May 15<sup>th</sup> at Harborside Event Center.
- Fran Myers shared that March was a record-breaking month at RSW, boasting the largest amount of traffic since its opening, despite over 300 cancelled flights due to the polar vortex.
- Joe Murgalo shared that The Hyatt Regency Coconut Point is now officially part of the City of Bonita Springs due to its annexation.
- Tony Lapi reminded everyone of Island Night on June 4<sup>th</sup> at 'Tween Waters Inn.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m. The next regular meeting of the TDC is scheduled for **THURSDAY, June 12, 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](http://www.leevcb.com).*