



## **TDC MEETING MINUTES**

December 10, 2015

Commissioner Frank Mann called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.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 and Jeff Webb. Pamela Cronin and Anita Cereceda were excused.

René Affourtit made a motion, seconded by Mike Gibson to approve the TDC Meeting Minutes of November 12, 2015. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Public to be Heard**

- Eric Ashton, General Manager of the Westin Cape Coral Resort at Marina Village welcomed everyone to their property and thanked the TDC for holding their meeting in Cape Coral.
- FGCU Resort & Hospitality Management (RHM) student Paige announced the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Wanderlust event to support the RHM program happening at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point on March 19, 2016. Tickets and packets for sponsorships are still available.
- Peter Kessack, partner, Cape Coral Brewing Company, thanked everyone for supporting their new craft beer business. They are up and running at 839 Miramar Street in Cape Coral.
- JoAnn Elardo, owner Wicked Dolphin Rum Distillery, one of the largest rum distilleries in Florida, announced that their annual holiday event is to take place December 10<sup>th</sup> from 5-8pm. Artisan rum produced from the distillery in Cape Coral is currently available at more than 3,000 restaurants, bars, and hotels over five states. Wicked Dolphin offers free tours at the distillery that end with a rum tasting. Call to reserve your spot for a great event opportunity.
- Lisa Sbuttoni, Captiva Cruises, thanked the VCB and TDC for their support of Captiva Holiday Village, which continues to be a record-breaking event. Holiday Stroll at South Seas will be going on for three weekends beginning December 12<sup>th</sup>. Tickets are \$10, children are free, and proceeds from the event benefit CCMI. The Captiva Lighted Boat Parade is on December 12<sup>th</sup> and the Golf Cart Parade will be on December 19<sup>th</sup>. Captiva Holiday Village have seen a significant increase in their website numbers since they have changed their marketing strategy and implemented more digital and print advertising.
- Jim Griffith, Director of the Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center, announced that to date, they have raised more than six million dollars for renovations of their historic building. Jim introduced Assistant Director/Grant writer, Devon Parker, who thanked the TDC for their Arts & Attractions funding. Devon encouraged the TDC to consider allowing organizations that produce large-scale events out of season to pursue Events Marketing funding in addition to Arts & Attraction funding.

Commissioner Frank Mann thanked Commissioner Brian Hamman for serving as TDC chair for the past year and presented him with a plaque of recognition. Commissioner Hamman thanked the TDC board and the VCB staff for making Lee County a world class destination, and the best place to visit in the state of Florida.

### **Municipalities to be Heard**

- Rana Erbrick, City of Cape Coral Councilwoman District 5, thanked the TDC for having their meeting in Cape Coral, and wished everyone Happy Holidays. She invited everyone to come out and enjoy the Boat Along on December 19<sup>th</sup> at 4pm at Four Freedoms Park in Cape Coral.

### **VCB Executive Director's Report**

- Tamara Pigott reported that the bed tax collections for the month of October 2015 were \$1,773,408, a 19.4% increase over October 2014.
- STR Report – Occupancy for October was up 10.1%, ADR increased by 8.2% and RevPAR was up 19.1%.
- RSW Report – Total Passenger count of 535,921 for October 2015, an increase of 6.5% over October 2014.
- Anna Stone, Director of Sales, reported that between October and December of 2015, the sales team had 133 leads, 8 FAMS, 1 site inspection, and 10,111 room nights. The largest group hosted in Lee County was the Hog Rally which produced 1,650 room nights. The largest percentage of lost business was due to board/group preference.
- Judi Durant, Director of Visitors Services, reported seeing significant increases in airport traffic during October and November at RSW. The VCB's tourism ambassador volunteers are staying busy attending events, assisting partners by providing conference registration services, and attending educational FAMS about the area to stay current. Visit Florida has a Certified Tourism Information Center Program, and the VCB's information booths at RSW are one of only 38 Visit Florida certified statewide information centers.
- Nancy MacPhee, VCB program manager, reported that during the 2nd annual Island Hopper Songwriter Fest, The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel hosted more than 70 songwriters who performed over 136 shows at 23 venues over 10 days on Captiva Island, Downtown Fort Myers, and Fort Myers Beach. There were approximately 12,000 attendees and 4,000 room nights sold. Media impressions for the event totaled over 500 million. The TDC was presented with a commemorative guitar signed by the performers.
- Katie Meckley, VCB marketing manager, gave an overview of upcoming marketing efforts. In January 2016, The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel partner with Visit Florida in a "London Takeover", consisting of interactive and social media experiences to entice Brits to visit our destination. Currently, the VCB is holding a photo contest. To date, there have been more than 2,500 entries. Clayton Reid, MMGY Global president, presented the Top 10 travel insights for 2016, including millennial travelers, smarter consumers and changing business models.

### **New Business**

- René Affourtit made a motion, seconded by Fran Myers to approve the final FY 2014-15 budget report. The motion passed unanimously.
- Fran Myers made a motion, seconded by Tony Lapi to re-appoint of René Affourtit as the TDC Vice-Chair. The motion passed unanimously.
- Rob Wells made a motion, seconded by Tony Lapi to approve the 2016 TDC Meeting dates. The motion passed unanimously.

### **TDC Member Items**

- Tony Lapi wished everyone a safe and happy holiday season.
- Rob Wells wished everyone Happy Holidays.
- Mike Gibson wished everyone Happy Holidays.
- Colleen DePasquale invited everyone to the Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce holiday open house Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup> from 3-6pm at the Chamber office and wished everyone Happy Holidays.
- Commissioner Frank Mann thanked everyone for a great meeting and welcoming him as the chair of the TDC. He wished everyone Happy Holidays.
- Fran Myers wished everyone Happy Holidays. There was no meeting at the airport this month.
- René Affourtit wished everyone Happy Holidays.

- Bill Waichulis noted that his hotel usually does renovations in September, but that the increase in room revenue from the songwriter's festival has filled their rooms; and is a great problem to have that time of year.
- Jeff Webb reminded everyone of the LCHA Holiday Party, December 18<sup>th</sup> at noon at The Pink Shell. Tickets are available on the LCHA website for Holiday Social. He thanked the BOCC for the budget workshop.

The meeting adjourned at 4:21 p.m. The next regular meeting of the TDC will be held on **Friday, January 15, 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](http://www.LeeVCB.com). Contact: Tamara Pigott, [TPigott@leegov.com](mailto:TPigott@leegov.com), Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.