

## **TDC MEETING MINUTES**

April 14, 2016

Vice TDC Chair, René Affourtit called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Council members in attendance: Fran Myers, Colleen DePasquale, Mike Gibson, Tony Lapi, Rob Wells, Jeff Webb, and Anita Cereceda. Commissioner Frank Mann, Pamela Cronin, and Bill Waichulis were excused.

Vice TDC Chair, René Affourtit welcomed Assistant County Manager, Glen Salyer to the TDC meeting. Glen thanked TDC Chair René Affourtit and said he was honored to be present and looks forward to working with the TDC.

Christine Davlin thanked Liz Linares and Emily Sosa for all their hard work assisting with the Guest First program. The TDC recognized 61 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 327. There is an addendum attached which lists the most recent recipients.

Anita Cereceda made a motion, seconded by Rob Wells to approve the TDC Meeting Minutes of February 11, 2016. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Public to be Heard**

- None to be heard

### **Municipalities to be Heard**

- Judie Zimomra, Manager, City of Sanibel, thanked the TDC for all their assistance this season. She noted the record rainfall in January. She stated that they appreciate the partnership with the VCB and TDC over the years. The City of Sanibel had 2 CGSP graduates today. Judie thanked the TDC for offering this program as both excellent and economical training.
- Scott Baker, Town of Fort Myers Beach Public Works Director and Rexann Hosafros, Council Member for the Town of Fort Myers Beach, requested to change their line item for bay and beach improvements from beach and shoreline funding to the Hercules Dock replacement which would request \$91,000 as opposed to the \$400,000 prior request for three projects. Scott noted that it's an area open to the public and mid-island with ample parking as well as close to the Calusa Blueway. Rexann added that there is public support of this dock.

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

- Tamara Pigott reported that the bed tax collections for the month of January 2016 were \$4,574,090, a 5.6% increase over January 2015 preliminary collections of \$4,329,585. Fiscal year over year collections increased 4.5%, with a total of \$4,377,409 collected. For the month of February 2016 the bed tax collections were \$4,945,284, a 2.9% increase over February 2015 preliminary collections of \$4,808,121. Fiscal year over year collections increased 2.4%, with a total of \$4,827,685 collected.
- STR Report – Occupancy for January was down 3.8%, ADR increased by 7.5% and RevPAR was up 3.5%. Occupancy for February was down 6.8%, ADR increased by 6.6% and RevPAR

was down 0.7%. Colleen replied that in February hotels were down and we thought it was related to water quality issues, but the state of FL was down as a whole, it wasn't cold enough and they didn't stay as long. Tamara replied that during a presidential election year tourism is tied to consumer confidence, economic time is rocky and they tend to not travel as much along with the Zika virus announcement, but the numbers are still up. Jeff asked "what are we going to do next to make sure they come back?"

- RSW Report – Total Passenger count of 918,929 for January 2016, an increase of 7.5% over January 2015 and there was Total Passenger count of 989,845 for February 2016, an increase of 9.2% over February 2016.
- Pamela Johnson and Stefanie Zinke gave the international sales report update. Pamela updated everyone on the campaign in UK with Visit Florida called the "London Takeover." They made several marketing efforts in London on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday in January, which the UK calls "Blue Monday" It is the longest day so Visit Florida decided it was the perfect time to takeover. They did a Bus Shelter ad, took over a Nail Salon on January 31<sup>st</sup> and hosted pedicures and manicures with our brand colors. They then invited them to upload them to social media, including an Instagram campaign and sunburst activation with a pop up vehicle handing out shell necklaces with video on the vehicle and getting out to talk to people. Additionally, there was an online takeover with Thomas Cook and Trip Advisor in UK. The Canada market continues to be a top market but saw some softening with exchange rates. They did a promotion with Marilyn Denis TV Show and partnered with Itravel 2000 to monitor bookings from this show. Lee Rose participated on the Chris Robinson Travel Show in Canada. Stefanie reported on all the tradeshow and consumer shows that we partner with Visit Florida reaches 480 agents. TUI asked to partner with us again to do in house training for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row. With TUI, there was a campaign on Instagram which reached 4,000 posts that consisted of a photo contest and had 30,000 likes on that campaign. Commissioner Frank Mann joined the German team, Tamara Pigott and Stefanie in participating in 49 meetings and key media events while at ITB in Berlin. The highlight was an impressive opening speech at the annual Visit Florida PAN AM event that we sponsored this year Commissioner Mann spoke in German for several minutes it was well received. He got a standing ovation. For other markets, we attended WTM Latin America in Brazil, San Paulo for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time and apart from attending a media event, which reached 34 key media outlets in Brazil both for trade and consumer. We also attended Vakantiebuers in the Netherlands which is the largest consumer show in Northern Europe and partnered with Benelux to do training with travel agents. For the first time this year we attended the Icelandair Midatlantic tradeshow. Icelandair flies out of 16 cities connecting to 27 cities in Europe, largest from Scandinavia and flies non-stop into Orlando, FL. The international team is doing a lot of Destination training and brand awareness in all our new markets. We will be hosting a lot of FAMs from these new markets.
- Anna Stone gave the domestic sales report update. For the first quarter we had 211 RFPs, 371 RFPs year to date and a 30% increase year over year. 48% of our lost business declined our area due to board/group preference. We participated in several tradeshow in some new markets as well as lots of group business. We reached out to 29,000 consumers and had partners that attended with us as well as promote the songwriters festival. We will be attending HelmsBriscoe annual meeting which last year booked 1 billion dollars in US. Wedding leads account for 115 RFPs and we have seen a 22 % growth in destination wedding market since last year. Brides and planners are moving more towards outdoor events such as beach BBQs and unique settings and we offer the best outdoor locations for beach weddings. We will continue to market in our feeder markets. Meetings market is up 35% and according to successful meetings the trend is that the lead time will become shorter and shorter. The first annual Global Industry Day is April 14, 2016 and was started by North American Meetings Industry. In honor of global industry day, we found out in January that the VCB won the 2015 smart meetings platinum choice

award. Jeff Webb asked “What types of things (trends) are they saying as to why the board/group doesn’t pick us?” Anna responded that it could be many things such as one of the board members live in different area or they visited the area they’d like to be in, but we also offer the island incentive in non peak season for groups and we are up 50%, sponsoring a coffee break for a board meeting or a information given to the planner for them to present and we are countering it. Really depends on the group coming to the area. René Affourtit asked about Florida Travel Marketing (FTM) and do they have an annual contract. Anna responded that Shelley and her team are very knowledgeable about the area and the feeder markets the shows we do are in and yes they do have a contract, but it isn’t yearly.

- Judi Durant gave the visitor services update. Judi thanked “Elvis” (Lee Rose) for making all the ladies happy at the Prom. Volunteers did 7,200 hours this quarter participating in 7 different projects. Edison Ford Winter Estates is still the #1 asked about attraction.
- Brian Ososky thanked the VCB for being such a fantastic team to work with. He gave the marketing report update and presented new spring TV commercials and “thank you” radio campaigns airing in target markets. A successful emergency digital media campaign requested by the Tourist Development Council (TDC) in February to combat regional challenges has resulted in 14,233,070 impressions. Brian introduced Q1 resident artist Jamie Williams, who presented a collection of his photographs, and Q2 resident artist Dennis Gingerich was announced. Jamie thanked the VCB and TDC and said it was “an absolute pleasure to be a part of this program.” Tamara commented that this program broadens our relationship with our arts and culture community and all the photos taken will be available in our AMS system. The VCB also presented a new summer sweepstakes promotion and a three-month “shellebration” campaign, including National Seashell Day on June 20.
- Nancy MacPhee gave the TDC a beach and shoreline program update. The TDC will begin reviewing 22 project requests for 16/17 fiscal year funding. The total requested is \$13,559,003.50, while estimated funding available is \$10,215,000. The Beach & Shoreline workshop will be held on Thursday, April 28 at 1:30 p.m.
- Francesca Donlan gave the public relations report update. They had a record number of film permits for March due to David Ortiz retiring. Francesca thanked Tony Lapi for hosting Chinese journalists for dinner. Charniece Jarman did Florida media calls around the state and secured coverage. Francesca and Shelley attended North American Travel Journalists Association and met with 75 top travel journalists. Lee Rose attended a Visit Florida New York media reception with 40 journalist and bloggers. Hobie will be in town at Tarpon Lodge May 14-20, 2016 and the President will be coming this year. Francesca thanked Ken Wells for hosting all our journalists. Ding Darling Tarpon Tournament will be on May 6-7, 2016.

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

- Jeff Mielke gave the sports development update. This past October was the best in our history with events we haven’t seen before. Perfect game was in October during Columbus Day weekend and went up from 216 teams to 256 teams. 61 million spent in our area during these events. He said that 2016 should surpass 2015 economic impact. Twins and Red Sox Spring training was the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in the country for attendance. They did 115 events in FY 2015 with 1,325 average room nights per event and 148,000 people came to town for amateur sports not including spring training.

### **New Business**

- None to be heard.

### **Old Business**

- Pete Winton, Assistant County Manager and CFO gave a status update of the TDC reserves. As a result of the work session on November 17<sup>th</sup> they have talked about a reserve that will provide

consistency with the general funds. It will be called the TDC common reserve. It was adopted by BOCC in December 2015. They held 2 stakeholder meetings in January and February with industry partners: René Affourtit, Pam Cronin, Rob Wells, John Lai, Judie Zimomra, Jeanne Bigos, Chris Pendleton, Lee Bellamy, Lydia Black, Colleen DePasquale and Jeff Webb. There was a split but a general agreement on a common reserve policy that should be 20% which is the same as the general fund reserve policy. 20% of revenues of this year's \$39 million will be a common reserve with a \$7.8 million with \$9 million excess reserves. In the coming years, the minimum reserve will be \$7.8 million and will not be less than that. Next steps would be a revision of ordinance to reflect the board's policy.

- **TDC Member Items**
- Anita Cereceda thanked the VCB for the digital campaign. It was noticed right away on Fort Myers Beach.
- Jeff Webb reminded everyone of the upcoming LCHA meeting on Thursday, April 28th at Sanibel Harbour Marriott. The speaker will be Nick Dunn, Vice Mayor of Sanibel. Tickets are available on the LCHA website.
- Fran Myers gave everyone the air service update.
- Colleen DePasquale reminded everyone of the Chrysalis Awards May 20<sup>th</sup>. There are still tradeshow booths available. All winners have been notified and will be shooting their videos Friday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Hockey playoffs start this weekend.
- René Affourtit reminded everyone of the Beach and Shoreline workshop on Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup> and the next TDC meeting on Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m. The next regular meeting of the TDC will be held on **Thursday, May 12, 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.

## *Addendum #1*

### **Newest Class of Certified Guest Service Professionals:**

- Danielle Olds, Candlewood Suites Fort Myers Sanibel Gateway
- Joseph Termini, Cape Spirits
- Mike Baugh, Casa Ybel Resort
- Julie Vineburg, Casa Ybel Resort
- Victoria Mancha, Castaways Beach & Bay Cottages
- Mary Hagemann, City of Fort Myers
- Dana Raco, City of Sanibel
- Holly Vetter, City of Sanibel
- Rachel Rainbolt, Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife
- Jennifer Ott, DiamondHead Beach Resort
- Frederick Yakle, Drip Castle Management, LLC
- Vicki Yakle, Drip Castle Management, LLC
- Portia Pace, FMB-Sanibel Welcome Center
- Rebecca Barbosa, GullWing Beach Resort
- Samantha Cornellier, GullWing Beach Resort
- Janna Faust, GullWing Beach Resort
- Cesar Moreno, GullWing Beach Resort
- Sue Robbins, Harborside Event Center
- Robyn Valenti, Harborside Event Center
- Angie Millican, Homewood Suites
- Kim Hawxhurst, Lani Kai Island Resort
- Suzanne Smith, Lani Kai Island Resort
- Eryn Cope, Lee County Parks & Recreation
- Marcela Doyle, Lee County Port Authority
- Sharon Smith, Lee County Supervisor of Elections Office
- Judi Durant, Lee County VCB
- Terri Krass, Lee County VCB
- Berta Maldonado, Lee County VCB
- Kathleen Stobbe, Lee County VCB
- Anna Stone, Lee County VCB
- Viola Weis, Lee County VCB
- Jill Brown, Lee County Transit
- Jim Berger, Mystic Weddings
- Patricia Downey, Mystic Weddings
- Brittany Hill, Outrigger Beach Resort
- Maria Adams, Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina
- George Cardenas, Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina
- Odalis Gonzalez, Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina
- Nikki Johnson, Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina
- Glenda Ludwig, Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina

*Addendum #1 cont'd*

- Shannon Pool, Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina
- Meredith Rizzo, Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina
- Josh Sprague, Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina
- Danielle VanCoeur, Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina
- Michael Zachmann, Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina
- Cyndi Hessling, RAL Resorts
- Nick Bestrom, Red Coconut RV Park
- Richard Boese, Red Coconut RV Park
- Chris Dawson, Red Coconut RV Park
- Rhonda Regnone, Resort Sports, Inc.
- Debbie Regnone, Resort Sports, Inc.
- Alexa Stephenson, Resort Sports, Inc.
- Scott Safford, Sea Gypsy Inn
- Travis Gayle, South Seas Island Resort
- Rachele Noce, South Seas Island Resort
- Tamara Duran, SunSplash Family Waterpark
- Lynn Anklam, Surfrider Beach Club
- Todd Reed, TR Designs & Events
- Bridget Toler, Tween-Waters Inn
- Deanne Serwin, Wa-ke Hatchee Recreation Center
- Andy Clavadetscher
- Cheryl Loughrev