

## TDC MEETING MINUTES

Aug. 11, 2016

Commissioner Mann called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Council members in attendance: René Affourtit, Fran Myers, Anita Cereceda Colleen DePasquale, Rob Wells, Bill Waichulis, Mike Gibson, Tony Lapi, Pamela Cronin, Brian Kramer, and Colleen DePasquale.

Rob Wells made a motion, seconded by Pamela Cronin to approve the June 9, 2016 TDC meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

### Public to be Heard

- John Naylor, Executive Director, City of Palms Classic, expressed concern about current issues including Zika virus, beach conditions, etc. and asked the community to proactively paint a better picture of the area to the public.
- Beth Oliver, Offshore Sailing School, thanked the VCB for their positive efforts in marketing. She also shared the success of a joint effort with South Seas Island Resort on a sailing excursion hosting NY Daily News.

### Municipalities to be Heard

- None to be heard

### VCB Executive Director's Report

- Tamara Pigott introduced the new ex-officio TDC member, Brian Kramer. Commissioner Mann and Pigott presented previous ex-officio TDC member, Jeff Webb with a plaque and thanked him for his time served.
- Pigott introduced a new VCB staff member, Jackie Rodriguez, administrative specialist.
- Pigott reported that the bed tax collections for the month of May 2016 were \$2,216,553, a 0.4% increase over May 2015 preliminary collections of \$2,207,043. Fiscal year over year collections increased 5.4%, with a total of \$30,989,804 collected. For the month of June 2016, bed tax collections were \$2,557,534, a 2.8% increase over June 2015 preliminary collections of \$2,486,932. Fiscal year over year collections increased 5.1%, with a total of \$33,557,517 collected.
- STR Report – Occupancy for May was up 0.8%, ADR decreased by 3.7% and RevPAR was down 2.9%. Occupancy for June was up 0.1%, ADR increased by 1.3% and RevPAR was up 1.4%.
- RSW Report – During May 2016, 606,833 passengers traveled through RSW, an increase of 0.6% compared to the same period last year. For June 2016, 492,413 passengers traveled through RSW an increase of 2.3%.
- Pigott announced the Governor of Florida would announce the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter VISIT FLORIDA stats at RSW, in the conference room of Port Authority, at 2 p.m. on Aug. 12.
- KPIs- Inquiries are up more than 200%, leads are down 16%, and partner referrals are down 21%.
- Marcia Wood, DPA gave the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter research report for the Spring Season. During the spring of 2015, The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel hosted about 1.3 million visitors who spent an estimated \$704 million while visiting. Visitors staying in paid accommodations spent an estimated \$467.4 million.
- Anna Stone gave an update for Sales in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. From May to July, there were 166 leads, 590 RFPs sourced year to date and an economic impact of definite bookings totaling \$28,062,906. She also announced that Neil Curiel, sales coordinator was recently recognized at Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) for his acceptance into the '30 under 30 program'.
- Judi Durant gave an update on Visitor Services. They have assisted more than 40,000 visitors to date. This year we have more than 930 nominations for the E Awards, which will be held at the Sanibel Harbour

Marriott Resort & Spa on Thursday, Sept. 1.

- Brian Ososky gave an update on Marketing. National Seashell Day delivered over 1.3 million impressions, produced 25,611 leads, and prompted 6,675,943 inquiries. He announced that the Island Hopper Songwriter Fest won two Florida Festivals & Events “SunSational” awards in the program and PR/Media campaign categories. Ososky discussed Island Hopper media buys, advertising, and excitement surrounding five-time CMA award nominated headliner Maren Morris. He updated the TDC on the Arts & Attractions Marketing Program for FY 16/17, which included \$250,000 in funding recommended at the June TDC meeting. The Arts & Attractions review committee meets on Aug. 18 to review 45 requests totaling more than \$800,000. Lastly, Ososky gave a preview of the newly redesigned consumer website FortMyers-Sanibel.com. It includes ambient video, new content, and is optimized for mobile devices.
- Francesca Donlan gave an update on Communications. Information was provided about crisis communications in relation to beach conditions and Zika virus. For the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, media submissions reached a circulation of 12,499,367 in U.S., 11,627,676 in Germany, 8,690,197 in U.K. and 577,069 in Canada. In addition, a Red Sox media event was held in Boston, and media calls were conducted in Rhode Island. An update was given on the growing Chinese media market and recent coverage.

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

- Jeff Mielke reported numbers for January - May. During this period of 2016, Lee County hosted 50 events, bringing in 36,952 sports visitors to Lee County. The total direct and indirect economic impact during the five-month period totaled \$22.8 million.

#### **New Business**

- The Tourist Development Council (TDC) approved \$25,000 in matching funds for the City of Fort Myers to promote Harborside Event Center during FY 2016-17. René Affourit made a motion, seconded by Mike Gibson.
- Pamela Cronin made a motion, seconded by Bill Waichulis to approve the VCB 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter budget. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Old Business**

- None to be heard.

#### **TDC Member Items**

- Pamela Cronin invited the public to the Shell Factory to see Governor Scott on Aug. 12 at 5 p.m.
- René Affourit reminded TDC members and industry partners to attend the Governor’s Conference on Tourism in September.
- Fran Myers shared that there is information about new air service in TDC packets.
- Colleen DePasquale reminded the public that the Greater Fort Myers Chamber business symposium is coming up, and Aug. 12 is the last day to register. She mentioned that in partnership with FGCU, a School of Business scholarship fund has been created in memory of Terry Simon.
- Bill Waichulis stated that he is starting to see a softening in the market; consumers are starting to book rooms in a shorter timeframe.
- Brian Kramer reminded everyone of the upcoming LCHA meeting on Thursday, Aug. 25, at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point.
- Rob Wells mentioned that CWAs, or critical wildlife areas, put in place by the Florida Wildlife Commission (FWC) have been in the media a lot lately. CWAs were first proposed by the FWC in 1988, and there are currently approximately 20 throughout Florida. In 2016 alone, they plan to add around 16 new CWAs throughout the state – a number of which are located near the Pine Island Sound and Estero Bay areas. Rob encouraged the council to keep an eye on this issue in the media as it pertains to restricting areas for back bay fishing.
- Tamara Pigott introduced a Shell Love Bug promotional video and the Shell Love Bug (a 2006 convertible Volkswagen Beetle) made an appearance following the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m. There is no scheduled TDC meeting in September. The next regular meeting of the TDC will be held on **Thursday, Oct. 13, 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.