



TDC MEETING MINUTES

October 11, 2018

Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass called the Lee County Tourist Development Council (TDC) meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Council members in attendance: John Carioscia, Pamela Cronin, Tony Lapi, Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, Holly D. Smith, Bill Waichulis and Rob Wells. Fran Myers, Colleen DePasquale and Brian Kramer were excused.

Dr. Nicole King-Smith, Tourism & Hospitality Training Manager, recognized 40 new certified guest service professionals (CGSP), bringing the total to 680 CGSP graduates in Lee County.

Holly D. Smith made a motion to approve the August 9, 2018, TDC meeting minutes. Pam Cronin seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Public to be heard

Tamara Pigott, Executive Director, VCB, read the following letter on behalf of Jacki Lizak, President and CEO, Fort Myers Beach Chamber of Commerce:

“On behalf of the Fort Myers Beach Businesses and FMB Community, I would like to extend to you a heartfelt THANK YOU for this event. The festival filled the bars, restaurants, hotels, gift shops and streets with people laughing, drinking, eating, dancing and enjoying our island. The event sponsors were delightful, the singers and songwriters were humble and inspiring and the staff and support team from the VCB were top notch! After the events of this summer, we couldn't have asked for better medicine...you brought life back to our island... and we are so appreciative! Thank you, thank you, thank you, for everything you did to bring us this amazing event!... and I'm here to tell you... we can't WAIT for next year! With all the best.”

Municipalities to be heard

None to be heard.

Report of the Executive Director

Tamara Pigott reported that the preliminary resort tax collected for August 2018 was \$1,444,873, a 16.4 percent decrease over August 2017 preliminary collections of \$1,727,998. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$40,643,475 an increase of 6.8 percent year-over-year.

August 2018, the STR Report shows occupancy down 5.1 percent and ADR down 7.3 percent for a total RevPAR decrease of 12 percent.

During August 2018, 501,023 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW). Figures represent an increase of 4.1 percent compared to August 2017. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is up 5.1 percent.

VCB Departmental Reports

Domestic and International Sales update: Jill Vance, director of sales, reported sales goals final results from FY2017-18 including attaining 119% of the group meeting room nights booked goal. She also presented upcoming sales activities including six new shows with the intent to mine more corporate and education conference business.

Stefanie Zinke, international tourism sales manager, described the Europe sales mission conducted in September together with hotel partners covering five cities in Germany and the Netherlands, engaging with 175 trade professionals. The Beaches of Fort Myers and Sanibel were also featured during a live travel and tourism TV program last week in Argentina, during FIT – the largest trade show in Latin America. October activities are focused on B2C, consumer targeted events in Canada and Germany to kick off fall promotion coops with tour operators just in time for 2019 booking season.

Visitors Services Update: Judi Durant, director of visitor services, reported that the third-quarter calendar year showed 25,458 visitors assisted at RSW, bringing the year-to-date total to 148,781. Since January, the volunteer tourism ambassadors have served 19,178 hours at the airport, resulting in an in-kind value of \$462,957 to Lee County.

Communications update: Megan Contreras, communications manager, presented media highlights that included domestic and international coverage in major publications. She reported 430 million media impressions were achieved for the fourth quarter, bringing the total for FY17- 18 to 3.2 billion impressions. Contreras reported that the fifth annual Island Hopper Songwriter Fest had an attendance increase of 23 percent over last year, and an impressive 24 million media impressions. More than 150 local deals have been collected and promoted on onelee.biz for the #OneLee campaign, thanks to the efforts of multiple County departments.

Marketing Update: Lesley-Ann Thompson, marketing manager, introduced resident artist Don Hutchinson, who shared his experience working with the VCB, and presented some of the photos he has taken of the destination.

New Business

Rob Wells made a motion to approve the following TDC Members that were nominated to serve on the FY18-19 events marketing subcommittee: Pamela Cronin, Chair; Holly D. Smith, Colleen DePasquale, Bill Waichulis, and Fran Myers. Tony Lapi seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Holly D. Smith made a motion to approve the following TDC Members that were nominated to serve on the FY18-19 attractions marketing subcommittee: Pamela Cronin, Holly D. Smith, Colleen DePasquale, and Tony Lapi. Rob Wells seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

TDC Member Items

- Bill Waichulis reported that FRLA hosted the First Annual Taco Cook-off between culinary schools on October 4th. Five high schools participated. Oasis Charter was the winner and fan favorite was East Lee County High School. The proceeds go towards the High Schools Hospitality Scholarships that will be given out Spring 2019. There will be no member meeting in November as he encourages everyone to attend the Sales & Marketing Meeting on November 15. In

December, we have the Hops for Holiday Party at Palm City Brewery. Pink Shell won Conde Nast Reader's Choice Award for Top Resort and was 7th in the state.

- Commissioner Pendergrass stated that he met with Casey Desantis to get this commitment with the water crisis bill that just passed through the Senate. He thanked the cities for working together with the water quality issues. We are working with water management to stay on top of the water quality with all of our bodies of water.
- Holly D. Smith thanked the VCB for Island Hopper Songwriter Fest. Holly shared that it was a great event and her first time attending. She said it was such a pleasure to see the excitement around the county that really needed it. Holly stated she couldn't say enough about the VCB, BMI and all the hoteliers. She is cautiously optimistic of what's going on with the red tide. Seeing a bit of change with the levels going down. We hope it continues as we know how important that it is to tourism. Been great to see Red tide die down some. Great to see more hotel reservations as opposed to cancellations.
- Tamara Pigott shared a new marketing campaign should begin post-election for TV placements. The VCB received a \$77,500 grant that was approved for NY Times placement. We also received another grant request in partnership with other CVBs from Bradenton down to Collier county that was approved and our portion is \$112,500. She thanked Visit Florida for their support and IHeartMedia and BMI for Island Hopper. Food and beverage was up 28% up from responses received and made a significant difference during Island Hopper Songwriter Fest.
- Glen Salyer and the BOCC have engaged Edelman PR/Crisis Communications Firm to assist with immediate response for the water quality issues and are yielding good benefits. He also thanked everyone for the #ONELEE program and staff of VCB, Sports and EDO for their efforts for the #ONELEE program.
- Rob Wells thanked the staff at the VCB for Island Hopper Songwriter Fest. He reminded everyone to keep in mind that we are digital marketers and to keep sharing our destination with their friends.
- Tony Lapi thanked the VCB for the Island Hopper Songwriter Fest. It was truly a great boost to have this event the past two years especially with the hurricane and water crisis. Pool Party exceeded capacity and is a true testament how much Island Hopper has grown in past five years.
- Tamara thanked SWFL Community Foundation for their generous donation for the tolls for a two-hour period during the Captiva weekend of Island Hopper Songwriter Fest. She reminded the TDC that The Team Tourism Annual Sales and Marketing Summit will be held on Thursday, November 15, at 10:30 a.m. at The Westin Cape Coral Resort at Marina Village after the TDC meeting. The VCB will unveil its 2018-19 Sales & Marketing Plan.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Next TDC meeting

The next TDC meeting will be held at 9 a.m. on Thursday, November 15, 2018 at The Westin Cape Coral Resort at Marina Village, 5951 Silver King Blvd, Cape Coral, FL 33914. To view a complete tax collections report, go to www.LeeVCB.com. Contact: Tamara Pigott, TPigott@leegov.com, Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.