



TDC Meeting Minutes
Feb. 11, 2021

Commissioner Brian Hamman, chair, called the Lee County Tourist Development Council (TDC) meeting to order at 9 a.m.

Council members in attendance

Commissioner Brian Hamman, Pamela Cronin, Colleen DePasquale, Rexann Hosafros, Brian Kramer, Tony Lapi, Bill Waichulis and Robert Wells III.

John McLain and Fran Myers were excused.

Lapi made a motion to approve the Dec. 10, 2020 and Jan. 14, 2021 TDC meeting minutes. Waichulis seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Public to be heard

Earl Morgan, Lee County resident on behalf of Restore Fort Myers Beach Arches, addressed the council about rebuilding the historic Fort Myers Beach arches at Lynn Hall Memorial Park or Bowditch Point Park. The project is in the planning stages and Morgan let the council know the group would like to work with the TDC on this project.

Municipalities to be heard

None to be heard.

Report of the executive director

Tamara Pigott, VCB executive director, reported preliminary resort tax collected for December 2020 was \$3,707,002, a 6.1% decrease from December 2019 preliminary collections of \$3,980,780. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$8,402,795, a decrease of 7.1% year-over-year.

Pigott also reported that the average occupancy rate in December 2020 was 52.4%, which is down 22.9% from December 2019 (67.9%). The average daily rate for December 2020 was \$147.20, down 5.9% from December 2019 (\$156.51) and RevPAR for December 2020 was \$77.09, down 27.4% from December 2019 (\$106.25).

During December 2020, 648,011 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport, a decrease of 39.9% compared to December 2019. For the 2020 calendar year, passenger traffic was down 41.5% from the previous year.

4th quarter visitor tracking report

Phillip Downs, DSG, reported on fourth-quarter visitation. Lee County welcomed 1,097,800 visitors between October and December 2020, a decrease of 12.1% from 2019. During this time frame, visitors spent more than \$644 million in the destination, resulting in a total economic impact of more than \$1 billion, down 13.4% from 2019. Downs said 96% of visitors came from the U.S. as compared to 87% in 2019. [See the full report.](#)

New business

The TDC formalized nominations for the FY2021-22 Attractions & Events Marketing Subcommittee. Council members Cronin, DePasquale, Lapi and Waichulis volunteered to serve on the subcommittee. A motion was made by Wells, which was seconded by Lapi and passed unanimously.

April Bonetz, VCB fiscal director, presented first-quarter budget reports for the VCB and Sports Development. A motion to approve the budgets was made by Lapi, which was seconded by Cronin and passed unanimously.

TDC member items

Hosafros presented the new Mound House book which was written in collaboration with the Friends of the Mound House and volunteer author, Patrick McKeown, that can be purchased at Mound House.

Cronin acknowledged that Ben Siegel was appointed executive director of the Lee County Port Authority and that Cape Coral councilwoman Jennifer Nelson has been appointed as executive director of the Captiva Erosion Prevention District.

Kramer updated the council that the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association (FRLA) partnered with the Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce and the Islands of Sanibel & Captiva Chamber of Commerce for a free, virtual legislative update from 9:30 to 10:15 a.m. Feb. 24.

DePasquale added that FRLA and the chambers planned this event with the goal of involving more people in our local legislative action. She added that she included TDC information in her Friday chamber newsletter, has received good feedback and will continue to share information.

Waichulis said there is a [free human trafficking awareness training through FRLA](#) for members that staff can participate in to meet the [Florida Statute 509.096](#) requirement that was implemented Jan. 1.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10 a.m.

Next TDC meeting

The next TDC meeting is scheduled for at 9 a.m., Thursday, March 11, 2021, at the Lee County Administration East Building, 2201 Second St., Room 118, Fort Myers. To view a complete tax collections report, visit www.LeeVCB.com. Contact: Tamara Pigott, TPigott@leegov.com, Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.