



TDC MEETING MINUTES

April 12, 2018

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

Council members in attendance: Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, Vice Chairman Rob Wells, René Affourtit, John Carioscia, Pamela Cronin, Colleen DePasquale, Brian Kramer, Holly D. Smith and Bill Waichulis.

Fran Myers and Tony Lapi were excused.

René Affourtit made a motion to approve the Feb. 8, 2018, TDC meeting minutes. Rob Wells seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Public to be heard

Kenneth Weiss, Doug Kidd and Denis Catalano, Northwest Cape Coral Neighborhood Association members, presented information regarding the TDC Beach & Shoreline funding application for a kayak/canoe launch in Northwest Cape Coral. The proposed capital project, if funded, would provide paddling access to the Great Calusa Blueway in Northwest Cape Coral.

Lisa Sbuttoni, Vice President of community and visitor relations Edison & Ford Winter Estates, announced that there is still time to register for the Chrysalis Awards Tradeshow and Luncheon. Chrysalis will be held on Thursday, April 19, at the new meeting space at the The Westin Cape Coral Resort at Marina Village.

Jack Carver, Florida RV Trade Association, informed the council that its 23rd annual SuperSaver RV Show will be held April.20-22 at the CenturyLink Sports Complex.

Guests First recognizes newest graduates

Dr. Nicole King-Smith, training and development manager, VCB, awarded certificates to the newest certified guest service professionals, (CGSPs) bringing the total to 588 CGSP graduates

Report of the Executive Director

Tamara Pigott reported that the preliminary resort tax collected for February 2018 was \$5,323,507, an 11.4 percent increase over February 2017 preliminary collections of \$4,777,710. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$19,088,378, an increase of 11.2 percent year-over-year.

For the month of February 2018, the STR Report shows occupancy up 5.0 percent and ADR up 8.6 percent for a total RevPAR increase of 14.0 percent.

During February 2018, 1,053,817 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW). Figures represent an increase of 11.4 percent compared to February 2017. Year-to-date,

passenger traffic is up 9.8 percent from the same period last year. For the first time in the airport's 35-year history, more than 1 million passengers traveled through the RSW in February.

New VCB staff members

Tamara Pigott introduced two new VCB staff members, Jennifer Walla, sales coordinator, and McKenzie Lacko, marketing intern.

Sales update

Jill Vance, director of sales, VCB, reported on sales results for the first six months of FY 2017-18. Group meeting room nights booked are ahead of pace by 11,297 room nights. She reported on upcoming sales activities in cities including Boston, Las Vegas, Orlando.

Stefanie Zinke, international tourism sales manager, talked about events she has attended in the last three months in Iceland, Ireland, Norway and Germany. In March, she and VCB Executive Director Tamara Pigott attended ITB in Berlin and the Eurowings Launch Media Event in Munich. Upcoming events include Visit Florida Canada Roadshow in Toronto/Montreal and IPW in Denver.

Visitor Services update

Judi Durant, director of visitor services, VCB, reported 84,933 visitors assisted at Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW) for the first three months of 2018. Visitor Services volunteers were also busy promoting the destination during spring training at JetBlue Park at Fenway South and CenturyLink Sports Complex.

Communications update

Francesca Donlan, director of communications, VCB, presented media coverage highlights that included 1.3 billion impressions in the second quarter. Successful media missions to New York City and Boston's Fenway Park were presented. The Public relations team will host more than 75 top media at the Society of American Travel Writers (SATW) event in June.

Marketing update

Brian Ososky, director of marketing, VCB, reported year-to-date goals for website, paid media and social media. He also presented current Lee County marketing strategies. These include new initiatives with the Islandology campaign, a regional Allegiant Air partnership and a look ahead at National Seashell Day on June 21. He also introduced resident artist Shayne Wolfe, who presented some of the photos he has taken of the destination.

Beach & Shoreline update

Nancy MacPhee, product development manager, VCB, shared an update of the TDC Beach & Shoreline program funding since fiscal year 2000. The TDC will begin reviewing 21 project requests for 18/19 fiscal year funding. The total requested is \$9,677,813 while estimated funding available is \$10,623,032. The TDC Beach & Shoreline workshop will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday, April 25.

New Business

The TDC recommended that the BoCC approve the City of Sanibel's request for a transfer of \$200,000 in Beach & Shoreline funds. The request would allow funds from the Bowman's Beach Park Boardwalk project to fund the construction of a new restroom at Tarpon Bay Beach Park. René Affourtit made a motion to approve the request seconded by Coleen DePasquale the motion passed unanimously.

Holly D. Smith, the newest TDC member, was nominated to serve on the Events Marketing Subcommittee. Current members include Pamela Cronin, Fran Myers, Colleen DePasquale and Bill Waichulis. René Affourtit made a motion seconded by Rob Wells the motion passed unanimously.

TDC Member Items

- Bill Waiculis informed the council that the new tram on Fort Myers Beach has been well received and is full every day.
- Brian Kramer reminded the TDC of two upcoming event; FGCU School of Resort & Hospitality Management's annual event, Wanderlust, on April 14 and the Lee Chapter of the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association's (FRLA) inaugural golf classic fundraiser on May 18.
- Rob Wells shared his excitement on such an amazing start to the season.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Next TDC meeting

The next TDC meeting will be held at 9 a.m. Thursday, May 10, 2018, at the Lee County Admin East building, Room 118, 2201 Second St. Fort Myers. To view a complete tax collections report, go to www.LeeVCB.com. Contact: Tamara Pigott, TPigott@leegov.com, Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.