



TDC MEETING MINUTES

August 9, 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, Fran Myers, Pamela Cronin, Colleen DePasquale, Brian Kramer, Tony Lapi, Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, Holly D. Smith, Bill Waichulis and Rob Wells.

Holly D. Smith made a motion to approve the July 12, 2018, TDC meeting minutes. Fran Myers seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Public to be heard

Jack Carver, Florida RV Trade Association, announced the 35th annual FRVTA State convention will be at Hyatt Regency Coconut Point & Spa, Sept. 6-9, 2018.

Richard Johnson, representing Bailey's General Store, Island Inn and Sanibel thanked Commissioner Pendergrass for emergency funding. He recommended that the TDC use the reserves to bring visitors back to our area once we have cleaned it up and asks we have a call to action that is a consistent message across the community to invite visitors back.

Michael Flanders announced he is the new president and CEO of Edison & Ford Winter Estates. He thanked the TDC for the Arts & Attraction grant this year. He has been an architect for over 30 years and is also a preservationist. He is working on constructing a master plan to expand amenities at the estates.

Rose Young, representing the artists in Southwest Florida area invited the public to attend along with The Workforce arts speaks for the earth environmental group and area artists a show at the Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center November 2019 to educate and instruct people on the environment.

Lydia Black, Executive Director, Alliance for the Arts, thanked the TDC for its continued support of the arts. The Alliance is undergoing a \$1.7 million campus enrichment project that includes a streetscape and a public art piece along McGregor Boulevard.

Municipalities to be heard

Alison Giesen, Museum Director, Mound House spoke on behalf of the Town of Fort Myers Beach to give a status update and thank the TDC for its support of the Town. To date, they have removed 71 tons of fish at a cost of over \$173,000. In addition, Fort Myers Beach has spent \$102,000 to continue to keep the beaches clean and safe. The Town has also waived pool and parking fees to encourage visitation.

Report of the Sports Development Executive Director

Jeff Mielke reported April-June 2018 highlights, including a record-breaking number of hotel room nights booked in April, with 10,115 room nights. During this time period, more than 51,000 sports tourism visitors generated direct visitor spending of \$14,759,687. Mielke is excited to welcome four

NCAA basketball teams to the destination's first Fort Myers Tip-Off to be held at FSW's Suncoast Credit Union Arena Nov. 19-21, 2018. The field includes Boston College, Loyola Chicago, University of Richmond and University of Wyoming. Games will be broadcast live on FS1.

Report of the Executive Director

Tamara Pigott reported that the preliminary resort tax collected for June 2018 was \$2,948,364, a 11.7 percent increase over June 2017 preliminary collections of \$2,638,772. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$36,362,113 an increase of 8.6 percent year-over-year.

June 2018, the STR Report shows occupancy up 3.8 percent and ADR up 4.6 percent for a total RevPAR increase of 8.5 percent.

During June 2018, 546,159 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW). Figures represent an increase of 3.4 percent compared to June 2017. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is up 5.2 percent.

Marketing Trends

Clayton Reid, CEO, MMGY Global, reported a softening in the leisure travel market for the next one to two years. Price is the most influential factor with leisure travel. Business travel is on the rise, as is "bleisure" travel, a combination of business and leisure travel. Major leisure travel themes include culinary with a focus on authentic food and drink experiences; and road trips are becoming more popular. Out of the Millennial cohort, MMGY recommends targeting millennial families. This group spends more money than other millennials, who tend to take short-haul trips. Reid mentioned that in the next 12 to 24 months, it is possible that Amazon will get into the travel business, curating travel experiences as packages. This entry could threaten OTAs and Google. MMGY will continue to monitor and alter plans to short-term challenges at the destination.

2nd Quarter Research Report

Bob Domine, DPA, reported on visitor statistics and both visitation and visitor spending is up. Four out of ten domestic visitors staying in paid accommodations during the spring of 2018 came from the Midwest. Boston and Chicago were the top domestic feeder markets for Lee County. Germany delivered the largest share of international visitation in the spring season at seven percent. Guest satisfaction remains high at 95 percent.

New Business

Rob Wells made a motion seconded by Holly D. Smith to recommend that the BoCC approve the purchase of two Surf Rake machines to be used for beach and shoreline cleanup. Holly D. Smith made a motion seconded by Pamela Cronin to give approval for the funds necessary to cover emergency beach cleanup expenses through the end of FY 2017-18 (Sept. 30) in an open-ended amount. Both of the motions passed unanimously.

Fran Myers made a motion seconded by Pamela Cronin to ask the County to set aside \$1 million for a marketing campaign to be used when the destination's water quality has improved. The motion passed unanimously. All three items will be funded from tourist tax reserves.

Colleen DePasquale made a motion to approve the VCB third-quarter budget report. Holly D. Smith seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Nancy MacPhee presented a request for the formalization of FY 18-19 attractions marketing requests and thanked the committee for its hard work. Rob wells made a motion seconded by Tony Lapi to formalize the recommendation for FY 2018-19 Attractions Marketing funding for \$400,000 to be awarded to the Southwest Florida Community Foundation. The motion passed unanimously. Holly D. Smith made a motion seconded by Rob Wells to formalize recommendation for FY 2018-19 Attractions Marketing funding for \$50,000 be awarded to the Edison & Ford Winter Estates. The motion passed unanimously.

TDC Member Items

- Fran Myers distributed the Hotlist from the airport. Myers also provided everyone with a list of new flights.
- Tony Lapi announced that Tween Waters Inn is having a pool party on August 18 to celebrate 100,000 followers on Facebook. There will be a celebration and includes fireworks on the beach.
- Rob Wells thanked the TDC for a great discussion and was happy to see great attendance at the meeting. He noted it was great to have reserves and be able to use them in times like these. He encouraged everyone advocate where their voice can be heard.
- Holly D. Smith thanked the TDC for great conversation. She is proud of the mayors efforts and said it shows their strength around the state.
- Bill Waichulus reported he went to a FRLA seminar and shared information on employee retention tax credits and found it very helpful to businesses. He said more information could be found in Internal Revenue Code HR 3823 sec 503.
- Colleen DePasquale is excited for the awesome things happening in our non-profits and arts community. She shared the next chamber luncheon is August 16 and Sheena Brooke is performing to promote Island Hopper Songwriter Fest.
- Brian Kramer is looking forward to working with the TDC on the reserves. He announced the next FRLA meeting will be on August 23 at Sanibel Harbour Marriott and the topic will be about the education tax coming up in the next election.
- John Carioscia thanked the county for all the assistance with Cape Coral.
- Pam Cronin is excited for the Fort Myers Tip-Off basketball tournament coming in November to our area.

Tamara Pigott reminded the TDC that the annual E-Awards will be held Aug. 30 from 8 - 11 a.m., at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort & Spa. The popular recognition awards program is one of the area's most prestigious industry awards events, drawing 677 nominations this year for outstanding service providers in Lee County.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:14 a.m.

Next TDC meeting

There is no TDC meeting in September. The next TDC meeting will be held at 9 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 11, 2018, at the Lee County Administration 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.