



MANATEE COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Minutes – February 12, 2018

Members who were Present: Chairman Carol Whitmore, Jack Rynerson, Vernon DeSear, Doug Copeland, Jiten Patel, and Dale Sconyers

Members who were Absent: Vice-Chairman David Teitelbaum, Mayor Wayne Poston, and Ed Chiles

Members of Press were also in attendance.

Meeting was called to order at 9:00AM at the County Admin Bldg, 1112 Manatee Avenue West, Bradenton, Florida

Moment of Silence; Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes

A motion was made by Vernon DeSear, seconded by Doug Copeland, to approve the December 4, 2017 TDC Meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Bharat Patel, local hotel owner, asked for the TDC to write a letter of opposition to HB 773 and SB 1400 regarding short term rental legislation. TDC Members agreed with Mr. Patel's comments.

Election of TDC Vice-Chairman for 2018

Chairman Whitmore opened the floor to nominations. Vernon DeSear nominated David Teitelbaum. Hearing no further nominations, Whitmore closed nominations.

A motion was made by Vernon DeSear, seconded by Dale Sconyers, to appoint David Teitelbaum as the Vice-Chairman of the TDC for 2018. Motion carried unanimously.

County Administrator's Update

Ed Hunzeker, Manatee County administrator, thanked the TDC for the honor given to him at National Tourism Week last year (Hospitality Leadership Award). Hunzeker also thanked the TDC for their expertise in offering recommendations to the County Commissioners on how the tourist taxes can be used. Hunzeker also gave an update on the convention center hotel and the projects coming soon to the county.

TDC members thanked Hunzeker for his service to our community.

Request to Move Monies from Reserves Acct to be used for Airline Incentives

Elliott Falcione, Bradenton Area CVB Director: For past 2 years, CVB has budgeted \$100,000 per year for airline incentives; however, SRQ is doing a great job of bringing in new airlines/flights to the airport and that fund for 2018 has already been depleted. Falcione requested to move \$150,000 from Reserves to be used for Airline Incentives, and to re-allocate the already budgeted \$100,000 that was to be used as matching dollars for a Federal Aviation marketing grant that has since expired, which would replenish the fund to \$250,000 total for Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019.

A motion was made by Jack Rynerson, seconded by Dale Sconyers, to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners approval of moving \$150,000 from reserves to be used for Airline Incentives, and re-allocate the \$100,000 that is currently budgeted for Federal Airline Grant Match to also be used for Airline Incentives. Motion carried unanimously.

SRQ-Update

Fredrick "Rick" Piccolo, CEO/President of SRQ Airport, expressed deep appreciation to the TDC/CVB for the support in helping to get new airlines to the airport; the SRQ/CVB partnership is a critical element for the Airport. Pleased that Allegiant is starting service at SRQ for Cincinnati, Indianapolis, and Pittsburgh; however, Elite Airways couldn't compete with the pricing of Allegiant, and had to pull out of SRQ. Piccolo gave update on other SRQ airlines as well as the upcoming projects taking place at the airport.

Elliott Falcione: There are laws that prevent airports from using too much money for incentives; that's why the CVBs need to help support these initiatives; asked community to embrace SRQ and use the airport.

Vacasa (Anna Maria Island)

John Lefner, rep for Vacasa Rentals, has been working for Island Real Estate for years; however, the short term rental inventory has been purchased by Vacasa, a Portland OR based company. They have a huge Worldwide presence but a strong presence on Anna Maria Island; Vacasa wants to keep tourism alive and well on the island, all while being a good neighbor by following all Island short term rental rules.

Elliott Falcione: 16% of Manatee County's short term rental base are hotels/motels, the rest are homes and condos.

Introduction to Judith Tilton, CVB's Director of Cultural Affairs

Janene Amick and Norma Kennedy, both members of the Arts Working Group for the past 2 years, were happy to introduce Judith Tilton, the CVB's Director of Cultural Affairs.

Judith Tilton: thanked TDC for going forward with budgeting for the new position and shared her excitement to get started with working with the Arts, Culture, and Heritage organizations in the County.

Elliott Falcione: Thanked the Arts Working Group for all their help, especially Norma and Janene for also serving on the interview committee.

State of Tourism – Update

Dr. Walter Klages, Research Data Services, gave update on visitor profile stats for first quarter of FY 2017/2018. December, 2017. Dr. Klages shared the occupancy, ADR, and other visitor profile statistics. His only concern was for the slight decrease in first time visitors to our destination. Dr. Klages also gave state of the economy projections, as well as European market projections.

Discussion took place re: first time visitation decrease; average length of stay in our area is higher than the state average; Hurricane Irma and its impact to first time visitors during the first quarter of FY 2017/2018.

Sports Update

Sean Walter, Bradenton Area CVB Sports Commissioner: gave update on the sports events held in 2016 and 2017 and showcased the events coming to the area in 2018, the county purchase of Premier Sports Campus (PSC); and introduced Ebony Livingston, the CVB's Sports Marketing Rep.

Elliott Falcione: sports tournaments are singlehandedly the best way to get first time visitors to our area; excited about the transition of PSC to a county facility.

Public Comment

1. Rob Ferguson, Director of Sales for the EVEN Hotel: the hotel formerly named Holiday Inn Lakewood Ranch is now fully converted to the EVEN Hotel; invited everyone to attend the Bradenton Sarasota Hotel Meeting on Feb 20, which will feature sports update.
2. Caryn Hodge, Chiles Group, invited everyone to upcoming events: Yappy Hour (Feb18) and Anna Maria Island Historical Society Heritage Day (March 3).
3. Bharat Patel: gave definition of Home Rule in regards to pending legislation; requested TDC write letter opposing HB 773 and SB 1400 which would stop Home Rule. Peter Patel, Owner of Best Western Cortez Road, reiterated the opposition of HB 773 and SB 1400.

Discussion was held regarding the TDC's thoughts on opposition of the House and Senate bills.

A motion was made by Doug Copeland, seconded by Jiten Patel, to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners opposition of HB 773 and SB 1400. Motion carried unanimously.

New/Old Business

There was no New/Old Business.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:38am.

APPROVED in Open Session: April 16, 2018