



Charlotte County Tourist Development Council

Meeting Minutes

September 11, 2015

B-106 Conference Room

Members Present

Commissioner Chris Constance
Kathy Burnam
Judy Malbuisson
Julie Mathis
Vice Mayor Kim Devine
Kelly Williamson
Robin Madden

Members Absent

Councilmember Rachel Keesling
Rick Brunette

Staff Present

Lorah Steiner, Director - Tourist Development
Chip Futch, Marketing Director
Jerry Jones, Charlotte County Film Director
Sean Doherty, Sports Marketing Manager
Elizabeth Parker, Admin Svc Coordinator
Jennifer Huber, Public Relations Manager
Julie Pennock, Admin Asst.
Natalie Hinger – Fiscal Services
Diane Mitchell – Internal Audit
Jim Finch, Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center
Lori Tetreault, County Attorney's Office

Guests

Ed Hill, Englewood Chamber of Commerce
Patti Allen, Fishermen's Village
Ryan Castendyke, Medieval Renaissance
Troy Conner, Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association
Cate Peterson, Peace River Botanical Gardens

1) Call to Order/Roll Call/Meeting Minutes Approval

Lorah Steiner welcomed everyone to the TDC Meeting, She introduced our newest staff member Julie Pennock. She also mentioned some special guests in attendance. Roll call was taken, all members were present except for Councilmember Keesling and Rick Brunette whose absences were excused. Commissioner Constance welcomed Robin Madden the newest member of the TDC. A motion was presented by Vice Mayor Kim Devine seconded by Judy Malbuisson and unanimously carried to approve the minutes as written for the Tourist Development Council Meetings July 10 and July 27, 2015.

2) Citizen's Input

- Ed Hill briefly talked about the Let's Eat Englewood event coming up in the next couple of weeks. He also gave a brief overview on the Water Fest event taking place in November.
- Jim Finch gave an overview of bookings at the Event Center.
- Ryan Castendyke made a presentation to the members on bringing a Medieval Renaissance Pirate festival to Charlotte County.
- Cate Peterson with the Peace River Botanical Gardens gave a presentation on the progress of the new Botanical Gardens to open in the fall of 2016 in Punta Gorda.

3) Director and Staff Reports

- Ms. Steiner would like to put together a By-laws committee. She asked council members if they would like to volunteer with this group. Ms. Malbuisson offered to help with the new committee. Vice Mayor Devine also volunteered.
- Mr. Futch went through the FY 2016 tourism budget numbers. He went over more detailed expense information. Vice Mayor Devine inquired about posting ROI with some of the bureau's advertising efforts. Mr. Futch said that yes this can be done, and that he is putting a new data base together to collect some of this information.
- Ms. Steiner gave the council a recap of bureau initiatives and upcoming projects. She went through her report to include updates on increases in tourist tax, Vietnam Wall, I-75 visitor center, and the new MVIX monitor system. Ms. Steiner mentioned the destination video and Opinionmeter which is a stand-alone kiosk and talked about Mr. Suriol's idea for an Art Festival in Punta Gorda.
- Ms. Williamson talked about the Art on The Harbor event. This will be the second year for this expanding art weekend.
- Ms. Steiner met with Bill Akins and discussed the laser engraving on the planned Vietnam Wall attraction. After further review, the consensus was that the type of laser engraving previously

planned could not be rubbed which is an important and expected tradition for Vietnam War memorial walls. Commissioner Constance briefly talked about the progress with the Vietnam Wall group as well. They will be retooling and will have to go with a different type of engraving which might necessitate additional fundraising and create a slight delay in the construction of the Wall.

- Ms. Huber talked about the exciting fishing FAM tour groups that visited our area. She mentioned that the earned media from these visits generated nearly 5.6 million exposures.
- Mr. Doherty talked about the bid he is working on to bring the Sugar Bert Boxing championships to our area. This event could possible bring in 300-500 boxers and their families in June of 2016.
- Mr. Jones discussed some of the film initiatives he is working on to include video and television shows. He also talked about Reel Scout which is a database program. This is an important tool for industry film producers looking for film locations.
- Commissioner Constance briefly gave an update on the Visitor Center and how important this will be for Charlotte County.
- Ms. Burnam inquired about the timeline for the new Visitor's Guide. Ms. Steiner said everything is in place to move forward and the new guide will be distributed in January 2016.
- Ms. Mathis asked about additional hotels in the area. Ms. Steiner said that at this time, although she has had inquiries, she does not know of firm plans for new hotels.
- Ms. Malbuisson asked about the application for the event process and how it was progressing. Commissioner Constance suggested bringing the attraction process back to the council and discuss it at the Nov TDC Meeting.

4) Vice Mayor Kim Devine – Budget Report

- Vice Mayor Devine went through the budget numbers for council members. She mentioned that the marketing plan will correlate with the budget numbers and be much easier for board members to follow.

5) Diane Mitchell – Financial Report

- Diane Mitchell presented the financials for the nine months ending June 30, 2015. Total collections for the period were \$479,888 (an increase of 19%) compared to the prior year. She briefly went through some geographical statistics and fund balance figures.

6) Natalie Hinger – County Budget Report

- Ms. Hinger briefly went through some of the budget numbers. She feels that the numbers should be right in line. Some account lines have been changed to more accurately reflect the

purpose of the expenditures.

7) Citizens Comments

- Ms. Patti Allen gave a Fishermen's Village renovations update.

8) Council Comments

- Ms. Mathis mentioned the 37th annual Christmas parade which will take place on Dec 5th.
- Ms. Malbuisson needs volunteers for the parade.
- Ms. Williamson said occupancy is running 90%. She said the hotel is Number 2 in growth in North America.
- Ms. Robin Madden said they have 43 high end vacation rentals and their occupancy numbers are up 40-50% over last year.
- Ms. Burnam said the fall festival is this Saturday, please come by.
- Commissioner Constance mentioned the new meeting room for the TDC Meetings will be held in B-106. He also talked about the Comedy for a Cause event taking place at the Event Center.