



Charlotte County Tourist Development Council

Meeting Minutes

November 6, 2015

B-106 Conference Room

Members Present

Commissioner Chris Constance

Judy Malbuisson

Julie Mathis

Vice Mayor Kim Devine

Kelly Williamson

Robin Madden

Mayor Rachel Keesling

Rick Brunette

Members Absent

Kathy Burnam

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

Natalie Hinger – Fiscal Services

Diane Mitchell – Internal Audit

Jim Finch, Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center

Denise Dull, Hospitality Association

Lori Tetreault, County Attorney's Office

Guests

Ed Hill, Englewood Chamber of Commerce

John Wright, Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce

Ken Stead, Cape Haze Marina

Patti Allen, Fishermen's Village

Ryan Castendyke, Medieval Renaissance

Craig Holt, Sheraton Four Points

John Zacarri, A to Z Management

Joe Suriol, Interdevco Hotels
Dave DiMaggio, Aqua
Katie Varano, Aqua
Geri Waksler, McCrory Law Firm

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

Commissioner Constance welcomed everyone to the TDC Meeting. Roll call was taken, all members were present except Kathy Burnam who was excused. A motion was presented by Julie Mathis and seconded by Vice Mayor Kim Devine and unanimously carried to approve the minutes as written for the Tourist Development Council Meeting September 11, 2015.

2) Citizen's Input

- Denise Dull gave an update on the Hospitality Association.
- John Wright updated the council on the final numbers from the Blues, Brews and BBQ event. The event was a complete success and the Chamber will be doing a repeat next year. Mr. Wright briefly spoke about the tourism conference, discussing bringing in events such as the Blues Event into our area.
- Craig Holt briefly spoke on sports tourism and asked the council to look into the tourism budget to hire an assistant for Sean Doherty to bring in more of these sporting groups to Charlotte County.
- Ken Stead handed out posters and briefly talked about the Englewood Waterfest coming up in Englewood.
- Jim Finch gave an overview of bookings at the Event Center.
- Patti Allen briefly updated the council on the construction progress at Fishermen's Village. She also talked about the exciting holiday event happenings.
- Geri Waksler representing Mr. Joe Suriol spoke to the council about the TDC Members and what their role should be in making recommendations as to how tourist development tax funds are spent. She suggested by laws should be established.
- Ed Hill with the Englewood Chamber updated the council on the Let's Eat Englewood event. He also talked about the Waterfest Event coming up in Englewood.

3) Director and Staff Reports

- Ms. Steiner briefly talked about red tide issues in the area and how to better inform our visitors when it is present at our local beaches.
- Ms. Steiner thanked Mr. Futch for all his hard work on getting the new website on line.
- Ms. Steiner talked about branding efforts for multi-day local events and that the role of VCB should be to market these events.

- May 12th will be the Tourism Luncheon and Hall of Fame Awards.
- Ms. Steiner also talked about the retreat with VCB's creative agency, Aqua.
- Mr. Futch reviewed the Advertising and Promotional plan for the Bureau. Mr. Futch went through more details on the budget line items.
 - Ms. Steiner talked about the billboards and the Brazil market. Ms. Williamson questioned the Billboard spending and suggested advertising more in the Miami area. Ms. Steiner said that the bureau has looked at different avenues for penetrating the Miami market.
 - Mr. DiMaggio added that this market takes several years and can be very expensive. He said there are more opportunities to be explored. Vice Mayor Devine also commented that she feels that the new branding of the area will help facilitate advertising more in these markets.
 - Ms. Steiner mentioned that the new 2016 visitor guides will be out in January.

4) Review of Attraction Development Funding

- Ms. Steiner went through the draft of the attraction development fund guidelines.
- Ms. Mathis asked how this information will be broadcast.
- The council members went over the Draft funding application and made the following revisions:
 - Ms. Malbussion commented that the in-kind service should be a percentage, such as no more than 25%.
 - Commissioner Constance suggested to go through the whole document and then vote on the final draft.
 - On paragraph 3.2 the in-kind should change to not more than 25%. Ms. Steiner also mentioned that this in-kind money, once committed, should be dedicated to other project or donation. funding. Ms. Steiner will also edit the paragraph on 1-to-1 funding match.
 - Ms. Malbussion mentioned paragraph 5.2, one-third of funds approved, disbursed once a contract is signed, and then it also says one-third again, which needs to be removed.
 - Ms. Steiner will make these revisions and will bring it back to the TDC for the next meeting for approval.

5) Dave DiMaggio – Aqua

Mr. DiMaggio made a presentation to the council on their upcoming initiatives and public relations efforts for the bureau.

6) Diane Mitchell – Financial Report

- Diane Mitchell presented the financials. The numbers came out for Sept collections with a 26 % increase over last year. Overall year to date collections were \$3,562,783.00.

7) Natalie Hinger – County Budget Report

- Ms. Hinger briefly went through some of the budget numbers. Some account lines have been changed to more accurately reflect the purpose of the expenditures.
- Ms. Steiner went through some of the contractual services expenditures.

8) Citizens Comments

- Mr. Suriol asked the council what procedure is used in the TDC for requests for funding per Ms. Geri Waksler 's comments. He also talked about the video he would like created for the area. Mr. Suriol mentioned a few of the account streams that were discussed earlier in the advertising and promo plan.
- Ms. Steiner said the video was a good thing but the film director has worked on this video for many hours. At this time it is still a work in progress. She also mentioned the budget and how it all comes together. She also said the TDC can always make recommendations. Commissioner Constance asked the group not to cross talk at the meeting.
- Ms. Tetrault suggested that the council look at rules of procedure as well. She said Roberts Rules of engagement would be helpful for the council.

9) Council Comments

- Vice Mayor Devine asked about this budget, which is already approved. This budget is on a two year cycle.
- Ms. Steiner asked if the Promotional and Advertising plan needed council approval. Commissioner Constance said the budget was already approved so the Promotional and Advertising plan should be good to go.
- Mayor Keesling asked about the extra person that the bureau is trying to recruit. Mayor Keesling inquired about the budget line items, mostly the new technology purchases, and if these items had corresponding websites they could explore. She also inquired about the maintenance for these products. Ms. Steiner said if there is maintenance it will be very minimal. Mayor Keesling thanked Ed Hill for all his hard work on the Restaurant Week and Waterfest events coming up.
- Ms. Malbussion asked about working on by-laws for the TDC. Ms. Steiner will be working on gathering information from local Visitor and Convention Bureau's and then meet with legal to get by-laws in place for the TDC.
- Ms. Madden said that July and August occupancy at Islander Properties was up 50%.
- Mr. Brunette mentioned the numbers are looking great at Palm Island Resort. Stump Pass

will be going through the last part of the permitting process and will start the dredging around mid-January. Mr. Brunette shared his Adopt an MPA Fundraiser Banquet information with the council.

- Ms. Williamson mentioned her goal is to represent all of Charlotte County not just the Interdevo properties.
- Commissioner Constance adjourned the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.